

Opening Scene "The Magician's Betrayal"

By

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EXT. PLAINS NEAR ROME - DAY

All is darkness. The fire crackles. Men cry out in battle.

NARRATOR

The year is 492; the Roman Empire
has fallen and Odoacer is king of
Western Rome.

Cut to:

A trail of camps litter the sprawling hills of Italy;
they're beastly, messy camps filled with the sound of
sharpening swords, pounding hammers, and roasting venison.

Men fletch arrows. Women sew tents. Smoke hisses as the
blacksmith dips a blade in water.

These are the Goth camps, sprawled out along Rome's
perimeter.

NARRATOR

The Goths, led by the the fearless
Theoderic, encroach upon the
weakened kingdom.

Cut to:

Goths attacking a a weak, wooden Roman outpost. Roman
soldiers flee as Goths swamp the ramparts.

The entire thing goes up in smoke.

As the smoke rises, in the distance, there's Rome herself:

Burnt fields; cracked, tumbling walls; temples destroyed and
re-purposed.

Past the ransacked outer villages and inside the falling
walls, the city is in shambles. Stalls are empty, if not
gone completely; tent cities have cropped up, the Romans
living in squalor; rats and dogs turn on spits over fires.

The luminous splendor of Rome has decayed.

NARRATOR

Attacks have gone on for years;
sieges last for months at a time.
The Roman people are desperate.

Cut to:

EXT. ROMAN ALLEY - SUNSET

Little hands clutch a round loaf of bread wrapped in cloth.

A tiny child dashes down a side street, checking behind her the entire time.

Menacing shadows follow her, slipping over the walls of the dirty alley.

The sound of footsteps spooks her and she scrambles into an old and cracked fountain, the well long gone dry. Clutching the bread close, she ducks out of sight, holding her breath.

NARRATOR

In the Roman Kingdom, law and order no longer exist. Desperation is the only rule. And the strong vanquish the weak. Always.

A hand reaches down and grabs the child by the hair. She screams as she's pulled out of the fountain.

A circle forms around her.

Her attackers are scrawny men and women, their legs and arms reduced to toothpicks, their cheeks hollow.

RINGLEADER

What'chu got there?

He makes a grab for the bundle of bread but she twists away.

He throws her to the ground and she curls up around the bread.

RINGLEADER

Looks like we got a little thief on our hands!

CHILD

I didn't steal it. It's mine.

The circle gathers closer around her.

RINGLEADER

You're in my territory now.
Everything that belongs to you now
belongs to me!

The Ringleader gives her a vicious kick.

(CONTINUED)

MENTOR

That's not a nice way to ask her to share.

The Ringleader pauses and everyone turns to regard a new addition to their circle: an old hag draped in a ragged cloak, a basket of stones on one arm.

The Romans around her sneer.

RINGLEADER

And what's an old woman like you going to do about it?

The Mentor raises a hand.

Beat.

She makes a downward slicing motion and fire erupts from her hand, striking the Ringleader.

The rest of the circle edges away, gasping and muttering. The Ringleader staggers back, shirt smoking, his chest a mess of burns. He snarls at her, spitting at her feet.

RINGLEADER

Sorcerer! Thought your kind were outlawed here.

The Mentor takes a stone from her basket and holds it out towards the Ringleader.

The remaining Romans shift nervously, step back.

The stone begins to glow.

Pull back. Sky-view of a small explosion in the streets.

Cut to:

ROMAN STREET - DAY

The child clings to the Mentor's side as she leads her down a street to an old stone building. It's held up by wooden posts, pieces of furniture, and possibly a little bit of magic.

A bunch of children are playing outside, and in the midst of them, a young adult minds them.

That young adult is the the Player. She looks up upon the Mentor's approach.

(CONTINUED)

PLAYER
Another one?

The Mentor and Player clasp arms in greeting.

MENTOR
They just keep following me home.
Rather like you did.

PLAYER
I don't think I was ever that
small.

MENTOR
You were smaller.

The Mentor sends the child off to play with the others. Once the children are preoccupied, the Player turns to the Mentor.

PLAYER
You were in another fight, weren't
you?

MENTOR
No need to sound so accusatory. I
didn't start it.

PLAYER
This time.

The Mentor sighs and they watch the child. She shares her bread with the other children.

MENTOR
Food sources are low again. Romans
are attacking each other like
beasts. Small alliances are
forming. There's a ringleader who
fancies himself in charge of this
section of the city.

PLAYER
You don't think he'll bother us, do
you?

MENTOR
He won't give us trouble if he
knows what's good for him.

She pats the Player on the arm and goes inside, calling the children around her. The Player isn't so reassured and stares out at the darkening city.

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5.

The sun sets.

CUT TO:

Playable content begins.