

WAYWARD CHILD

MORGAN - SAMPLE

Written by

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Mo1 EXT. WOODLAND - DAWN

Mo1

(Cut Scene)

The sun breaks over a woodland in winter. Trees grow wild, plants untamed. The air is still and heavy, the ground frozen.

In the boughs of a large tree, daybreak illuminates a rudimentary dwelling, half house, half hut. Ramshackle in appearance, it nonetheless sits securely above the forest floor. Smoke drifts from a window.

Mo2 INT. MORGAN'S HUT - DAWN

Mo2

(Cut Scene)

A collection of aged furniture, a bed, an armchair, a bookcase, fills the small space. A makeshift kitchen occupies one corner, fire smoking

Atop the bookcase sits several photos. The pictures all feature the same child, as a baby or a toddler. The central frame has been placed face down.

The sunlight falls on MORGAN SELKIRK. Slumped in the battered chair, he wakes with a jolt.

Rubbing sleep from his eyes he moves over to a chipped mirror. He assesses his appearance, especially the large, snaking web of blackened veins creeping across his neck and shoulder.

Pulling on a shirt, he covers the wound before glancing through a window toward a settlement in the distance. Behind a wall of iron sits a number of houses.

A CAW sounds outside of the window. A magpie waits on its nest.

MORGAN

Morning.

Another CAW.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I've got nothing for you.

Morgan looks down at the bird. He pauses.

Reaching through the window, he removes a shining ring, wrapped around a decaying finger, from beneath the bird. The magpie CAWS and snaps its beak.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
That'll do you no good.

Tossing the finger to the forest floor, the bird watches inquisitively as the ring is returned to the nest.

Turning his back on the bird, Morgan moves to the photos. His fingers brush against the downturned frame. He looks back through the window, shaking his head.

Gathering his gear, a weathered backpack, hunting knife and hatchet, he descends to the forest floor. Despite the cold, he wears only light clothing, not feeling the chill.

Mo3 INT. MORGAN'S HUT - EVENING Mo3

(Cut Scene)

Morgan prepares the caught animals from the days hunt and stokes a fire. A pot bubbles above it. The magpie CAWS. Gathering up the offcuts he places them on the windowsill. The magpie snaps them up.

MORGAN
Did you think I'd forgotten?

Returning, he passes the photos. Again, he looks toward the settlement and shakes his head.

With a growl, he returns to his seat and drifts into a fitful sleep.

Mo4 INT. MORGAN'S HUT - MORNING Mo4

(Cut Scene)

Sunlight creeps into the room. Morgan wakes with a cry.

Lifting the pot from the ashes, he splashes some water into his sleep filled eyes before drinking what's left.

Repeating his daily routine, Morgan looks out toward the settlement. A thick plume of black smoke rises into the sky. A summons.

Collecting his things, Morgan heads toward the settlement.

Mo5 EXT. DARYA SETTLEMENT - MORNING Mo5

(Cut Scene)

The settlement's wall, a metallic monstrosity, contrasts with the woodland surrounding it. Cut back, nothing grows within 100 yards. Frost covers the dead ground.

Guards patrol the top of the wall, stopping as Morgan approaches. Heads turning to watch him, The Gatekeeper holds up a hand.

GATEKEEPER

Stop there.

Morgan continues forward. Weapons are raised.

GATEKEEPER (CONT'D)

(shouting)

I said stop!

Morgan halts. Atop the wall, MEREDITH appears. Serene and authoritative, she gestures and the guards return to their posts.

Morgan lifts a hand in greeting.

MEREDITH

Morgan.

MORGAN

Meredith.

MEREDITH

You're a welcome sight.

MORGAN

To you, perhaps.

He eyes the patrolling guards.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

What do you want?

MEREDITH

To the point, as ever. We need your assistance. Some of our supplies grow short.

MORGAN

You have soldiers, don't you?

MEREDITH

Hardly soldiers. Even if I did, few want to leave the safety of the walls these days. The Biters seem fiercer lately. It makes things harder.

MORGAN

The dead aren't known for their manners.

The gate opens. Two men step through. One carries a package, the other a gun. They edge forward and the package is thrown to Morgan. They retreat, weapons raised.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Can't always say the living are, either.

Meredith ignores him. Morgan inspects the package. It contains a bow and arrows.

MEREDITH

We repaired it for you. The arrows are a gift. There is also a list.

Morgan pockets the paper roughly. With greater care, he strings the bow.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

I trust you'll be more careful with it this time. We believe there is a cache of supplies to the north of here.

He looks up from the bow.

MORGAN

I don't go north. You know that.

MEREDITH

Then I will leave you to do what seems best.

Meredith turns to leave.

MORGAN

And Amelia? Is she there?

Meredith glances back at him.

MEREDITH

Happy hunting, Morgan.

She leaves. Morgan is left alone.

Mo6

EXT. SHOPPING PRECINCT - DAY

Mo6

(Cut Scene)

Morgan passes by flora covered buildings. Frozen grass pokes up through broken concrete.

Lost in thought, he is brought back to reality by the sound of footsteps, dull and shuffling. He strings an arrow and turns. From an old building, a Biter appears.

Its eyes milky and sightless, with flesh shrunken and decaying, it follows Morgan's movements. Long dead, it still wears the tattered ruins of clothes. A name badge is pinned to the shirt.

Morgan lowers the bow and approaches.

MORGAN
Just me, Andy. Only me.

In the darkness of the building, more Biters can be seen.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
You go back, now.

Morgan carries on, unphased.

Mo7

EXT. DARYA SETTLEMENT - DUSK

Mo7

(Cut Scene)

The sun sinks as Morgan returns. Placing a bag on the ground, he waits. The gates open. Two guards exit.

One keeps his gun trained on Morgan. The other collects the bagged items. Neither speak.

MORGAN
Where's Meredith?

There's no reply.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
I want to speak with her...with
Amelia.

Morgan takes a step forward, toward them.

The guards react explosively. The bag is hurled to the ground in the rush to draw weapons.

Guns leveled toward him, Morgan raises his hands and retreats.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Ok, ok. I just want to see...

GUARD
She's not here, freak.

He cocks the gun.

GUARD (CONT'D)
You shouldn't be either.

He gestures with his weapon. Morgan looks to the wall but finds no help. With a shrug he turns to leave.

Mo8 INT. MORGAN'S HUT - NIGHT Mo8

(Cut Scene)

Waking from a nightmare, Morgan jolts upright. The magpie CAWS loudly. Gunshots come from the Darya camp.

MORGAN
Amelia!

Grabbing his weapons he rushes into the darkness.

Mo9 EXT. DARYA SETTLEMENT - DAWN Mo9

(Cut Scene)

The fight over, the survivors clean up. The fallen bodies are burned.

Morgan watches. Despite his assistance the comradery is over, he is kept at a distance. He toys with his axe.

From the settlement, a clearly distraught Meredith appears. Flanked by guards, she approaches Morgan. She draws close. Her guards quiver, she waves them down.

MEREDITH
Last night, three of the tribe
left. We don't know why or how.
Guards went after them but only
succeeded in attracting Biters.

Another body is thrown into the flames.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
We want them brought back.

Morgan turns from the chaos surrounding him to the woodland. His features harden.

MORGAN

No.

MEREDITH

You're the only one who can.

MORGAN

They won't have lasted the night.

MEREDITH

Morgan, please.

Tears fall from her eyes.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

My daughter, Cordelia, is one of them.

She wipes away her tears. Morgan watches her, pityingly.

MORGAN

I'm sorry. Finding people isn't what I do.

MEREDITH

And so is yours. Amy is one of them.

Silence falls as Morgan digests this. His fingers drum against the hatchet.

MORGAN

Amelia? My Amelia?

With a cry of rage, he hurls the axe into the ground.

He bellows and turns toward Meredith but she steps back amongst her guard. Outnumbered and outgunned, he is powerless.

MEREDITH

I'm sorry.

MORGAN

Keep your apology.

MEREDITH

We...

MORGAN

Just tell me which way they went.

MEREDITH

North. They went north.

Morgan shakes his head. Pulling the axe from the ground, he leaves.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Bring them back Morgan, please.

Mo10 INT. MORGAN'S HUT - MORNING

Mo10

(Cut Scene)

Morgan hastily throws items into his pack. From the window the magpie CAWS.

MORGAN
After everything I've done...she
was meant to be safe.

Morgan looks over to the photos.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
I promise, I won't fail you.

Donning his pack, his hunt begins.