

EXT. EDGE OF THE VALE - NIGHT

A jagged line of broken stones marks the boundary between the living world and the haunted vale.

Wind howls—half whisper half wail—carrying fragments of lost voices.

KAELEN gaunt and cloaked stands before the threshold clutching a blood-stained token.

He stares at the ruins ahead. Toppled statues the ground littered with bones and old weapons.

The wind tugs at his cloak rattling the token in his hand.

Kaelen closes his eyes. Breathes in steadying himself.

He steps forward. The whispers intensify.

He passes a sign carved with faded runes: 'None may return.'

KAELEN

(soft to himself)

No one ever does.

He crosses the threshold swallowed by the vale's shadow.

The wind rises carrying a cacophony of whispers as he disappears into the darkness.

EXT. VALE RUINS - NIGHT

Ruined towers loom against a veiled moon. Shattered pillars cast long broken shadows.

Kaelen moves cautiously hand resting on the hilt of his sword.

His breath clouds in the cold air as he navigates the debris.

Wind snakes through the ruins carrying fragmented voices—some pleading some accusing.

KAELEN

(whisper)

I hear you.

A root shifts beneath his foot. He stumbles catching himself.

Looks down: a skeletal hand clutching a rusted blade protrudes from the earth.

A pair of spectral eyes blink open beneath a twisted tree root.

Kaelen freezes staring at the apparition.

The wind rises. The whispers converge into one accusing voice.

FLASH—Kaelen's memory: blood on his hands faces turned away in horror.

Kaelen gasps staggers back.

The ground cracks open revealing a narrow descending tunnel.

He hesitates then steps into the darkness below.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - NIGHT

Narrow damp passage lined with ancient carvings. Kaelen's torch flickers in the stale air.

He moves deeper footsteps echoing. Shadows twitch on the walls.

A figure materializes ahead: a YOUNGER VERSION OF KAELEN eyes hollow mouth smeared with blood.

YOUNGER KAELEN

You left them.

KAELEN

I had no choice.

The figure lunges. Kaelen slashes with his sword—phantom blood splashes.

The figure vanishes leaving only the blood-stained token in Kaelen's trembling hand.

A distant winged shriek echoes through the tunnel.

Kaelen presses onward wounded but determined.

EXT. ABANDONED CHAPEL - DAWN

A shattered altar stands amid overgrown weeds. Moonlight filters through broken stained glass.

Kaelen collapses tending a fresh wound. He unwraps a strip of cloth revealing the blood token.

He stares at it hands shaking haunted by memory.

Suddenly a shadow passes overhead. The wind rushes in.

The WINGED DEVOURER descends talons scraping stone.

Kaelen scrambles to his feet sword drawn.

The beast circles hissing wings battering the air.

Kaelen backs toward the altar eyes never leaving the beast.

KAELEN

(defiant)

I am not afraid.

The Devourer strikes. Kaelen fights—slashes dodges is thrown against a pillar.

His keepsake falls skittering under debris.

Kaelen lunges grabs it and rolls away as the Devourer smashes the altar.

He darts through a serpent-carved doorway slamming it behind him.

INT. SERPENT'S PASSAGE - DAY

Narrow twisting corridor. Scales glisten on the walls reflecting flickers of torchlight.

A serpentine shadow coils ahead its eyes shining with unnatural light.

THE SERPENT

(voice everywhere)

Turn back. Give me your pain.

Kaelen's grip tightens on his sword.

KAELEN

I can't.

The passage twists closing in. The walls ripple scales shifting beneath his fingertips.

Kaelen pushes onward the whispers now clear voices—taunting pleading echoing his regrets.

He disappears into the gloom the serpent's laughter following.

INT. HALL OF NAMES - NIGHT

A vast echoing chamber. Names drift like ash in the air spectral faces flickering in the gloom.

Kaelen enters footsteps muffled on dust-laden stones.

The KEEPER OF NAMES materializes cloaked in memory.

KEEPER OF NAMES

Speak it. Or be lost here forever.

KAELEN

I betrayed my kin. I broke my oath.

The curse fractures. The ash swirls revealing a path forward.

Kaelen moves toward the opening the Keeper's eyes following.

INT. HOLLOW THRONE - NIGHT

A ruined throne stands atop a dais dawn's first light barely touching the stone.

Kaelen approaches blood token in hand. Shadows swirl forming a mirror image—his shadow-self.

The shadow-self blocks his path eyes burning with accusation.

SHADOW KAELEN

You cannot change what you are.

KAELEN

No. But I can choose what I become.

He steps forward pressing the blood token to the throne.

The shadow-self dissolves into mist. The curse breaks a wave of calm passing through the vale.

Kaelen collapses exhausted. Dawn's light floods the chamber.

The shattered mask lies at his feet.

EXT. VALE - DAWN

Mist drifts across the ruined vale. New growth pushes through cracks in the earth.

Kaelen stands changed. The wind is quiet the hunger abated.

He looks back at the throne then toward the horizon.

A distant shadow stirs hinting at new threats yet to come.

The camera lingers on the vale—mist clearing sunlight catching on dew uneasy hope in the air.

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS - NIGHT

Kaelen wanders among the broken columns haunted by echoes of laughter and loss.

He kneels by a ruined crown brushing dust from its surface.

A ghostly figure appears beside him—his lost kin silent and watchful.

GHOSTLY KIN

Why did you leave us?

KAELEN

I could not save you. I was afraid.

The ghost fades leaving Kaelen alone with the crown.

He sets the crown atop a stone a silent offering.

EXT. ROOT-LADEN HOLLOW - NIGHT

Roots twist above a sunken clearing. The WATCHER BENEATH THE ROOTS stirs amber eyes opening.

Kaelen approaches sword drawn heart pounding.

WATCHER

You carry the weight of broken vows.

KAELEN

I seek to end it.

The Watcher's roots lash out. Kaelen dodges barely escaping the hollow.

INT. CHAMBER OF REFLECTIONS - NIGHT

Mirrored walls reflect Kaelen's many faces-warrior betrayer exile.

He reaches to touch his reflection. It recoils.

A voice whispers from behind the glass.

REFLECTION

Are you ready to forgive yourself?

KAELEN

I don't know.

The reflection shatters shards raining down like crystal rain.

INT. SERPENT'S LAIR - NIGHT

Coiled in the gloom the SERPENT waits scales glimmering in the torchlight.

SERPENT

Give me your guilt and I will set you free.

KAELEN

Freedom bought with forgetting is not freedom at all.

The Serpent recoils hissing. Kaelen's path forward opens.

INT. MAZE OF MEMORY - NIGHT

Stone corridors twist endlessly. Every turn reveals a memory-some joyful most painful.

Kaelen must choose: to remember or to forget.

KAELEN

I will carry it.

The maze walls dissolve the path unbarred.

INT. HALL OF NAMES - NIGHT

Kaelen stands before the KEEPER OF NAMES once more.

KEEPER OF NAMES

You have named your crime but will you accept its cost?

KAELEN

If I must.

The Keeper nods fading into mist.

INT. HOLLOW THRONE - DAWN

Kaelen kneels before the throne the blood-stained token in his palm.
He places the token on the throne whispering a final prayer.

KAELEN

Let my blood feed the land. Let the hunger end.

Light flares from the throne filling the chamber.

Kaelen collapses the curse broken at last.

FADE OUT.