

THE JOB

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INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

In a dimly lit tavern, the air is heavy with smoke. Old wooden tables, marked by countless gatherings, fill the cramped space. The floorboards are weathered and worn, displaying deep cracks that create intricate patterns.

NOX (30s, faintly scarred and worn out) sits at a tucked-away table in the shadows, his black cloak draped beside him. He is making notes in a ledger. The tavern buzzes with laughter and shouts, building to a fever pitch when-

THUD. The tavern door swings open, revealing A CLOAKED FEMALE FIGURE in the pouring rain. She takes a confident step inside. The commotion only pauses for a moment until the patrons return to their activities. She makes her way through the crowd to Nox.

CLOAKED FEMALE
This seat taken?

Nox spares a glance at her.

NOX
You're late, Briar.

BRIAR (mid-20s, rebellious and discerning) takes the seat next to him. She flings her hood off.

BRIAR
I told you, there were complications.

NOX
I warned you there would be.

She signals to a barkeep for a drink.

BRIAR
I got it done, didn't I?

NOX
Getting it done isn't the same as doing it clean.

BRIAR
Clean is *boring*.

The two quiet as the barkeep drops two mugs at the table. Nox watches him go before returning his gaze to Briar.

NOX
Two is manageable. Three was foolish.

BRIAR
Please, that last one is still
breathing, isn't he?

She pops a honeyed nut into her mouth. Nox slides the bowl
away from her.

NOX
Enough.

Briar pauses before leaning back in her seat. Nox glances
over his shoulder.

NOX (CONT'D)
(hushed)
This is serious. They're watching
us.

BRIAR
When are they not?

She shifts in her seat, wincing. Nox moves closer to her.

NOX
You're hurt.

BRIAR
A bruise. A slip on the roof, it's
nothing.

NOX
Show me.

She sighs. She turns to lift the side of her shirt. A gash
across her lower abdomen trickles blood.

NOX (CONT'D)
Gods...you need a healer.

BRIAR
Like hell I do.

She lowers her shirt again.

NOX
There is a healer at the guild, not
far from here. They can help-

BRIAR
I don't want their help!

Briar maintains eye contact. Nox breaks it first; he notices
a black-cloaked figure on the opposite side of the tavern. He
returns to writing a note in his ledger.

NOX
Stop this childish nonsense. Go
back, clean up what you started,
and finish the job. Get that wound
cleaned up while you're at it.

She scoffs and takes a long swig of her drink.

BRIAR
I'm not going back.

A beat. Nox looks up.

NOX
What?

BRIAR
I said: I'm not going back. I'm
done.

NOX
So, that's it then? Give up your
life, become a deserter? Your debt
isn't even-

BRIAR
I know. Which is why I'm leaving.
Tonight.

She raises her hood, covering her face once again. She stands
from her seat. Nox's jaw tightens; a crack in his facade.

NOX
You have no idea what you're doing.

BRIAR
Maybe not. But I'm willing to take
the risk.

She walks towards the entrance. Nox's fist clenches before
slamming down onto the table.

NOX
Briar!

She steps into the rain and vanishes into the night.

CUT TO BLACK.