

MORN: THE TV SERIES

SEASON ONE

"THE SOLDIER'S CURSE"

PILOT HOUR EPISODE

GENRE

FANTASY / SCI-FI

LOGLINE

With a crippled set of wings by his side, a young man survives centuries to discover his origin, as cities and empires rise and fall - battling to build a one true kingdom prophesied to break immortal curses left behind by an unknown evil force.

EXT. QUINN FARMS - FIELDS

An abnormally hot, dry day punishes the fields of Quinn Farms. Bugs chatter and hover as the scathing afternoon sun swelters and burns.

Far off in a rocky field, a young man, white clothes painted mauve and torn, grunts as he pushes a PLOW.

CASSEY (male, 17, thin, shaggy hair) wipes his brow between feverish exertions, clearing the mud from his eyes as best he can. In front of him, TWO HORSES, long passed their prime, buckle their knees as their hooves struggle to keep their footing.

CASSEY

You two should be ashamed of yourselves.

Cassey lowers the plow handles and makes his way towards the horses, where the plow blade lies wedged behind a rock. He attempts to lift the rather large obstruction with great effort before switching to pushing it out of the plow's path.

CASSEY (CONT'D)

(straining)

They call you... work horses... and yet... here I am... doing all the work...

(collapses beside rock)

No, we both know there are over twenty work horses on Quinn Farm... Twenty... I know cause I've shoveled their stables... at least till they kicked me out... and yet... out of all those horses, only good ol' Jasper and Petunia are available on the same day I am to clear the rockiest field in all of Quinns Farm.

The two horses shake away the flies, seemingly ignoring their angry companion. Frustrated, Cassey looks at the road leading out, away from Quinn Farms. His eyes full of longing.

CASSEY (CONT'D)

Well, thankfully I know your little secret. You are not work horses, of course. You both are actually, gods.

The horses turn to look at Cassey unexpectedly causing Cassey to eye them curiously.

(MORE)

CASSEY (CONT'D)

Oh, you didn't think I'd figure it out? Why else would they keep work horses that can't work? No, you must be ancient gods and now that I've found you, you've got to answer my prayer --

The horses turn to look down the hill opposite of the road, causing Cassey to follow their gaze to look at the extremely large FARMHOUSE at the center of all the fields.

FARMERS lounge on the covered porch while watching Cassey fight his useless battle in the distance.

CASSEY (CONT'D)

Get me out off this forsaken farm.

Cassey's heart drops at the sight of the last remaining farmers. They receive mead in stein-like vessels of relief from their back-breaking work as Cassey watches on, licking his own cracked lips.

CASSEY (CONT'D)

Oh look! Here come the rest of them. Dirty farmers.

(Slowly stands up and
squints while leaning
over the horses' backs)

I guess they had no rocks in their fields? How fortunate. Master Quinn will be so proud.

A sudden burst of laughter echoes from the farmhouse. Cassey narrows his eyes to see the farmers suddenly point in his direction. Cassey averts their gaze, his eyes now searching the horses' eyes; dead inside.

SUDDENLY, a raindrop falls upon Cassey's head. He looks up as another lands on his face. More fall, their cold touch pushing life back into Cassey as he closes his eyes; relief from the heat washing over him.

The FARMERS on the distant porch begin to notice the rain.

FARMER #1

First rain of the season... Should we call in the boy?

FLEDGER

What for? The House of Quinn has no room for quitters.

(Calling out)

Come on, Cassey.

(MORE)

FLEDGER (CONT'D)

You gonna regret being the last one
in when those plows get stuck!

The farmers laugh as they settle under the large covered porch. Their entertainment - their youngest member high up in the eastern field.

Right on cue, the water droplets intensify, but Cassey instead soaks in the moment - until:

SPLUTCHKK...

The plow sinks suddenly. Cassey opens panic-stricken eyes as he picks up the reins. The old horses turn back towards the soaked boy. Cassey narrows his eyes.

CASSEY

Now listen... here.

(Beat)

I am the farmer. If I am going to
keep your little secret, you gotta
work a little. Now... work!

Cassey snaps the reins just as a clap of thunder shakes the field.

One of the horses bucks hard, throwing Cassey to the ground - face first between the horses. He lifts his head, and spits mud out of his mouth.

A distant eruption of laughter rises from under the shelter of the House of Quinn.

Cassey's heart fills with rage. He slowly stands and readies the horses as mud slides off his determined face.

CASSEY (CONT'D)

Come on. Not again...

The reins YANK throwing Cassey harder into the dirt.

FLEDGER

(Calling out)

You breakin' the plow again, boy?
Maybe you'll finally toughen up if
ya gotta plow those fields without
the horses!

Cassey pulls himself up from the mud and tries to kick right where the plow broke ground.

His bare foot hits something quite hard hidden in the mud.

CASSEY

Ouch!

He falls on his duff and cradles his foot - until the glimmer of something reflective catches his eye.

The fog continues to intensify, shielding his movements from view.

CASSEY (CONT'D)

(To the horses)

Stay... Stay...

Cassey begins pulling dirt up with his hands until he breaks the reflective object free from the earth: Gravestones.

Shards of rock socketed with tarnished stones cause Cassey's face to contort in their reflection. The words scribbled across and carved within the rock make no sense...

He pulls hard to bring up one - when it comes with a chain; an ENORMOUS CHAIN link.

Larger letters of the unknown language stretch across the chain links. Cassey pulls them all out of the ground - realizing that it's an interconnected chain.

The big link slips in Cassey's hand, wet from the rain and mud, and falls up his arm, knocking into his shoulder.

Winching in pain, he lifts the chain link closer to his face.

One of the links bears a peculiar arrangement of letters, which causes Cassey to furrow his brow.

FLEDGER

Boy! Hey!! Whad'ya find?!

Cassey attempts desperately to wipe the mud off one of the massive links while shadowy figures emerge from the storm's mists revealing a group of farmers rushing to join him.

ACT I

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - MOUNTAIN SIDE - NIGHT

A COHORT of fully clad iron-armor wearing military men clang their boots in unison as they march through puddles and mud beneath pouring rain. Only shimmers of the moon between cloudy skies light their path as they make their way down a stony ravine.

In front of them lies a mountain. At the foot of the mountain lies a wall of rainwater pouring down a stony ledge.

AS THE SOLDIERS ARRIVE, the cohort comes to a halt at the raised hand of their front-leading captain.

The captain and another soldier walk up to the wall of water and pause before slowly walking through it.

The two armored men emerge on the other side with their dark silhouettes against the moonlit wall of water behind them.

The soldier lights a TORCH and both remove their helmets revealing themselves to be EDRIC, the Captain, and TRISTAN, his right-hand soldier; their eyes darting around, taking in the cave.

Their torches waver while illuminating the rocky stalactites and stalagmites.

Edric (40s, green eyes, short blonde hair with a neatly trimmed beard) snatches the torch from Tristan (30s, blue eyes, and slightly longer blonde hair) and kneels down to illuminate a large puddle of rainwater at their feet.

Edric submerges his glove, lifting out what appears to be the remains of a small, crudely-made wooden doll. He looks it over until spotting a sun with three stars etched in the middle. His gaze lifts towards the back of the cavern.

EDRIC

She's here. Ready the men.

TRISTAN

Yes, Captain.

Edric slowly rises, lifting his torch to reveal the puddle to be a massive paw print the size of the soldiers torso.

Tristan's eyes widen and tightens his hand against the hilt of his sword to stop a growing tremor.

EDRIC
Swords drawn.

He is pulled out of his trance as a pile of rope hits him in the chest. He catches the rope instinctively before looking up at Edric in shock.

EDRIC (CONT'D)
And pair up the soldiers.

TRISTAN
Uh... yes, Captain.

Tristan turns to the cavern entrance and waves towards the soldiers waiting outside.

Dark silhouettes begin to appear behind the moonlit wall of water as soldiers begin pouring into the cave.

MOMENTS LATER, Edric and Tristan appear walking deeper into the cave with a torch lit, swords drawn, and a rope extending around each other's waists. Silently, paired soldiers appear spread all around them advancing deeper into the cave.

SUDDENLY, a soldier cries out as his foot slips down a hole along the path. His rope quickly pulling against his partner yanking him down the hole behind him. A nearby soldier dives after the two soldiers slide into the emptiness below.

The falling soldier suddenly stops midair as his rope snaps tight above him. He glances down at his falling torch disappear below before closing his eyes to catch his breath as he swings helplessly above the darkness. A sudden tug jolts his eyes awake as more begin pulling him upward as he clings desperately to the rope.

Two hands eventually appear from behind the ledge as the soldier is pulled up by his rope by the group of soldiers.

The fallen soldier rolls onto the cavern floor while glancing at the many soldiers anchoring both his partner and their rope against a nearby stalactite.

The recovering soldier is suddenly pulled up by a glove revealed to be Edric. This causes all observing soldiers to straighten up. Edric offers an encouraging look and places a hand on the soldier's shoulder before returning to the front while Tristan glares at them as he trails behind.

Stifled cries...

SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)
Captain! CAPTAIN!

Edric and Tristan rush toward the cries of a soldier and arrive to discover TWO SOLDIERS pushing up against each other beneath the cavern wall with wide fear-stricken eyes.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)
It's... It's... I...

SOLDIER #2
Their...their eyes...

Edric snatches the torch from Tristan and holds it up to the trembling men to reveal one pointing with a trembling hand.

Edric turns and walks confidently in the same direction as the soldier was pointing, and raises the torch to reveal a pile of MUD, SKIN and CHAINS... a translucent-skinned pile of bodies covered in blood and feces while coiling beneath the torch light.

The soldiers gasp in SHOCK.

INT. DEEP CAVE - NIGHT

MOMENTS LATER, the other soldiers pool in, horrified at the sight of over a hundred bodies chained together against the rocky walls throughout the cavern. The creatures coil, moan, and hiss at the sight of the torches. Their nude slimy bodies pulsating and shifting amongst with unusually large chains binding their bloody waists. Their eyes massive and black.

In the center of the room, a YOUNG GIRL and her MOTHER are chained together.

A child's voice, same as before, now augmented by the shrill cave acoustics, causes the hair on the back of their necks to stand up.

The MALNOURISHED YOUNG GIRL rests against a large stone pillar and stands out being the only one with clothes crusted to her skin.

Murmurs...

Edric approaches the YOUNG GIRL, and manages to slide her free from her chain link around her waist; a chain link just like the one Cassey found. Her body so emaciated that her ribs and organs are visible.

EDRIC
Okay... careful now... Just grab
on, okay...

The girl turns in Edric's arms, reaching for her MOTHER next to her, who is clearly not responsive.

EDRIC (CONT'D)

Free these slaves. Free them all.

TRISTAN

Sir, we can't --

EDRIC

Do what I say and hurry.

(Cuts the rope between him
and Tristan)

The slaves' master is sure to be
close.

ACROSS THE CAVE, Tristan readies his sword with two hands as two soldiers, both holding torches in one hand while attempting to hold still one of the malnourished prisoners in their other hands as other slaves try to pull the slave free.

TRISTAN

Now... Be still...

But the moment the blade strikes the chain link, the sword cracks. Tristan mutters under his breath while a commotion picks up behind him.

He turns to quiet the troops, but notices a torch lying on the ground. He looks closer and notices blood pooling beside the torch before being enveloped in darkness.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Uh...

(Stumbles)

Captain!

SUDDENLY, the torches start to snuff out, one by one as the soldiers holding the torches are sucked into the darkness and their partners pulled wildly behind them by the very ropes once meant to save them.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

To arms! To arms!

Tristan snatches his torch back from one of the soldiers and races with his torch raised toward the middle of the cavern room. His attempts to rally the men are muffled by the echoing screams including those of the two soldiers behind him.

NEAR THE CENTER OF THE CAVE, Edric calmly lifts the girl away from the chain and pulls her close whispering in her ear.

EDRIC

It's alright... It's alright --

Screams fill the air as a VICIOUS SLAUGHTER begins; a tide of crimson gushing forth and running along the ground.

Tristan slips on blood and crashes onto the cavern floor, dropping his torch and sword. He feels something touch him and he turns to see a bloody, solitary arm beside him.

SUDDENLY, a dozen translucent, bony hands reach out from amongst the darkness and desperately pull at Tristan. He fights back, but is still dragged backward away from his own sword and torch which mysteriously goes out.

Tristan Struggles to unhook the latch at his chest before slipping out from under his breastplate. He crawls frantically away as his helmet and breastplate are pulled into the darkness.

Another hands appears from behind him and takes hold of him, while another hand covers his muffled scream. Edric appears from behind and Tristan relaxes.

TRISTAN

What... whats happening?

EDRIC

The master of the slaves. It's here.

TRISTAN

What?

EDRIC

Listen to me. We have to leave. We have to send word to the king! Lead the way!

With the girl wrapped in Edric's arms, the two rush towards the distant glow of light at the entrance as torches continue to extinguish around them.

SUDDENLY, Tristan finds himself running directly towards a sea of translucent skin and black eyes writhing in the darkness. He tries to stop, but only slides faster on the mud into a pile of chained slaves. Tristan screams as his body brushes by their muddy outstretched hands before Edric yanks him around and pulls him away to safety.

TRISTAN

(panting)

Thank you!

EDRIC
 (pulling Tristan back)
 Wait, listen.

Both men are suddenly aware of the deafening silence around them, except for the hissing and shifting movement from the slaves around them.

EDRIC (CONT'D)
 We are too late. Take her.

Edric places the girl into Tristans trembling arms.

TRISTAN
 No, no, no...

EDRIC
 Listen to me. You must get out...

TRISTAN
 But... But Captain..

EDRIC
 (Placing a hand on
 Tristans shoulder)
 Promise me you will tell the
 king... tell him, we found one of
 the lost villages... He will know.
 Now run!

Tristan attempts to argue until following Edric's shifting gaze towards a torch lying beside a struggling soldier. The last torch. Then in a moment... the last torch goes out with a muffled scream plummeting the entire cavern into darkness.

Tristan hesitates before feeling Edric push him toward the entrance. Tristan glances back as he runs only to trip on a stone and drop the girl. He tumbles before laying there defeated. Then he realizes the girl is gone - frantically he begins searching the floor around him.

A glimmer of light appears at the ground causing Tristan to look up as a torch ignites - revealing Edric standing in the middle of the cave.

EDRIC (CONT'D)
 (Calling back to Tristan)
 Don't loose hope...

Edric lifts his torch high drawing attention to all. His eyes are filled with pain as the cave reveals the remnants of his once great army now scattered in heaps of blood, flesh, and torn armor throughout the cave. The torches fire reflects off the growing anger in Edric's

eyes as he straightens his stance and draws his sword.

EDRIC (CONT'D)
God of Morn! God of Darkness!
(Beat)
Show yourself and grant me my wish.

SUDDENLY, Massive dragon-like eyes appear floating amongst the darkness at the edge of the torches light. Tristan gasps as he watches from afar.

EDRIC (CONT'D)
We mean no harm! Your secrets are yours to keep. My wish is to spare us our lives and we will never return.

Edric takes one last look back towards Tristan before fleeing deeper into the cave as his torch light fades with him.

Tristan watches as the creature's large eyes slowly turn towards him before feeling a cold hand lay softly upon his face.

He turns in horror only to see the girl's calm, giant black eyes staring into his own. He glances back to the massive eyes; they are gone.

With the malnourished child back in his arms, Tristan starts to race towards a speck of light in the distance.

MOMENTS LATER, Tristan's legs are tripped by yet another group of chained slaves. He tries to get away, but they take hold of the end of the cut rope once tied to Edric. They begin pulling him in. Out of desperation, he cries out to them to free him.

Tristan's screams swell to a blistering level, and then die...

HOLD ON BLACK.

SUPER: MORN

EXT. BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES - DAY

Water droplets flirt with the summer air and fly from their petal-laden beds to dance through the air...

Mountains, rivers, and villages cover the lush landscapes while transitioning to more dryer lands and plant life.

INT. OLD MAN ASHER'S QUARTERS - SAME

OLD MAN ASHER (Male, 60s, dark skinned, white beard, bald, stocky) sits in a rocking chair, gently moving back and forth. His smoking pipe lets wisps of grey ether waft through the air, his eyelids drooping - pushing further and further down as he slowly falls asleep.

But the moment he drifts...

Cassey kicks Old Man Asher's door open, grunting as he dumps fragments of a gravestone all over the plates and utensils set for supper.

Old Man Asher jolts awake, rocking his chair back, and falling out of the slumber chariot; his pipe falling and threatening to turn his beard ablaze.

CASSEY

Old Man Asher --

OLD MAN ASHER

You insolent bagger-hound! You nearly set my beard on fire!

CASSEY

Look!

Cassey tosses a fist-sized section of stone towards Old Man Asher, causing a loud crack and thud as it hits the floor.

OLD MAN ASHER

What in Morn's name...

Old Man Asher sees the symbols etched deeply into the stone, and his words fall short.

CASSEY

I found it in the field I was plowing.

(MORE)