

CULTIVATION WEBTOON
EPISODE 1: PILOT
SCRIPT BY: Katie Marcum

Panel 1: Mid shot of a woman running through the forest in the dead of night and the rain, clutching a bundle to her chest. She is looking over her shoulder with fear across her face, contorting her features as if she were about to cry. She's tan with dark hair and dark eyes, and her long hair is whipping around her and sticking to her face.

1. MOM: We have to get to the circle!

Panel 2: Wide shot showing her and the man is behind her, frantically flipping through a book with two books under one of his arms. He has light hair and blue eyes. He isn't looking behind him the way she is, but there is a strike of lightning across the sky, showing a massive, shadowy form chasing after them in the trees.

1. DAD: I know! I have the spell ready!

2. MOM: Then start casting! It's just over the leyline!

Panel 2.1: Mom and Dad's feet crossing over an invisible line, but a small spark of magic jumps up from where their feet hit the leyline.

Panel 3: Mom sets the bundle down as Dad stands over them with his eyes closed. He has one hand on the book as he starts to mumble. The dark form is getting closer. All around them, magical energy is starting to push through the ground.

1. DAD: Regna tenera anima mea...

2. MOM: Hurry! The gate isn't going to hold **him** back for much longer!

Panel 4: Mom steps back away from the bundle, turning and raising her hands like she's holding up the sky, magical energy rippling out of her hands. The magical lines around the bundle are well defined, forming alchemical runes in the dirt that glow with energy. There are lines of magical energy erupting from the ground, leading directly to the baby.

1. MOM: Hunc murem tenete et nos munite!

2. DAD: It's happening!

Panel 5: Dad stoops down to talk to the bundle, reaching to remove the blanket from the baby's face. Dad is smiling, and there are tears forming in his eyes. The runes are getting stronger and brighter, their shapes almost disappearing in the light.

1. DAD: Ari, you are the sum of us all. You'll rise to heights I could never even dream about. But... you have to start at the beginning. Start with the books.

Panel 5.1: Dad's head snaps to the side as Mom's scream comes through.

1. MOM (OFF): Aghhhh!

Panel 6: Close shot of the baby, tears forming and lip quivering. The light around it is blinding, removing everything but the baby from view. A final rune shines on the baby's forehead.

1. DAD: Go now, Aristotle! Back to Asiya!

Panel 7: Shot of the floor of a mundane forest, trees densely packed around and summer colors barely visible through the din of night.

1. MOM and DAD (NARRATION, echo-y): Ahhhhhh!

Panel 8: Same shot, but a baby has appeared! Baby Ari, swaddled in blankets, appears from nowhere on the ground, and he immediately starts crying into the darkness of night. There is a wicked burn of arcane runes onto the forest floor.

1. BABY ARI: Wahhhhhh!

Panel 9: The same spot in the forest, but it's fall. A rabbit is nibbling at some grass in the middle of the overgrown rune scars.

1. CAPTION: Asiya, 12 Years Later

Panel 10: The rabbit looks up as a voice comes from the trees.

1. ARI (NARRATION): Every day here is the same.

2. BULLIES: Don't even try to run!

Panel 11: Aristotle is a plain young boy. He has curly dark hair, dark eyes, and tanned skin. His clothes and shoes are too big for him- hand-me-downs- and make him look even scrawnier than he

naturally is. He has glasses that have clearly been broken in the past. He is running from the front doors of the orphanage, which looks like an imposing prison behind him, towards the forest. There is a hoard of bullies chasing after him.

1. ARI (NARRATION): Since I was a baby and got picked up by the orphanage.
2. BULLIES: Get back here, twerp!
3. BULLIES: I wasn't finished with you!
4. BULLIES: Come on, you wimp! Show us some magic!

Panel 12: Ari leaps into the air, reaching forward.

1. ARI (NARRATION): I open my mouth or step one toe out of line...

Panel 12.1: Ari's hands close around a low hanging branch.

Panel 13: Ari pulls himself up, the bullies right behind him. One of them is reaching for the same branch.

1. ARI (NARRATION): ...And suddenly I'm running for my life.
2. BULLIES: Come on, Aristotle! We just wanna see a show!
3. BULLIES: Yeah, get back down here for a little demonstration!

Panel 14: A bully catches onto the branch Ari is on, and he has to dive for another one as this one starts to snap.

1. ARI (NARRATION): They're unusually persistent today.

Panel 15-17: Ari climbs higher, grabbing another branch and pulling himself up. This happens over 3 panels length, the bullies' speech bubbles getting lower to show how high Ari has climbed the tree.

1. BULLIES (OFF): Hey, stop climbing!
2. BULLIES (OFF): Someone go after him!
3. BULLIES (OFF): Drag him back down!
4. BULLIES (OFF): No way, I'm not going any higher!
5. BULLIES (OFF): Fine, good luck getting back down, loser!

Panel 17: Ari is super high up in the tree, hanging onto the trunk for dear life and looking down.

1. ARI: Now would be a great time for that late-bloomer magic to kick in.

Panel 18: Close shot on Ari as he looks down, and the rune from before is flickering on his forehead, just like it did when he was a baby.