

CHILDREN OF IRON

Episode #101: "Only The Beginning"

Written by

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TEASER

INT. IRON PASS MINING CHASM

CLINK. CLINK. CLINK.

Iron meets rock as a row of twenty or so dwarven men and women, suspended from above by twisted metal cables, slam their pickaxes into the rock face in front of them.

CLAN LEADER

And swing!

Their pickaxes meet the rock again, in perfect unison.

CLAN LEADER (cont'd)

And swing!

We slowly make our way down the line as, again, they mine the surface which they're dangling in front of.

CLAN LEADER (cont'd)

And swing!

The CLAN LEADER (40), a greying dwarven man with a long, well-groomed beard, is suspended in the middle of the row. He looks to either side: checking his miners' techniques for any flaws.

Seeing none, he nods to himself and takes a deep breath.

CLAN LEADER (cont'd)

Swing!

We continue past the clan leader, heading into the depths of the chasm once more.

Each dwarf is outfitted with a small cylinder around their chest with a luminous rock of some kind in it to give them vision in the darkness of the chasm.

At the end of the row, swinging when commanded, is NYSRI MINDØTTIR (19), a dwarven girl with fiery hair and a stout build.

CLAN LEADER (cont'd)

Swing!

Nysri swings, as does the dwarven man next to her.

When she connects, an ominous purple glow begins to shine through the crack she's made.

Moving closer to it, a low, dull, pulsating hum comes from whatever mysterious mineral lies beyond the surface layer of rock.

Nysri seems hypnotised by it and takes a deep breath before leaning in for an even closer look.

Her face is illuminated in a purple-pink glow. Her eyes are narrowed as she looks curiously at the glow's origin.

CLAN LEADER (O.S.)

Swing!

As the dwarf next to her, MIKAEL (50s) swings, Nysri stays staring at the rock face.

MIKAEL

(in an urging whisper)

Nysri, come on.

Nysri is pulled away from the hypnotic glow of the stone in the wall by his words and looks at him.

NYSRI

Have you ever seen anything like this before?

Mikael gives a quick glance then prepares to swing again. He shrugs and grunts.

NYSRI (cont'd)

Oh, come on, Mikael. Look a little longer than that.

MIKAEL

(focusing ahead)

Just leave it alone, Nys.

CLAN LEADER (O.S.)

Swing!

Nysri looks back at the gemstone, as Mikael swings again.

NYSRI

Why? What is it?

MIKAEL

(frustrated)

I don't know, Nys. Just mine around it.

Nysri sighs as she gets a useless answer. She adjusts her grip on her pickaxe and gets ready to swing again with everyone else.

CLAN LEADER (O.S.)

And swing!

Time seems to slow down as Nysri brings her pickaxe through the air and towards the rock face.

As the pick makes contact with the gemstone's surroundings, it glows and, in an instant, a thunderous boom erupts from it accompanied by a powerful explosion.

Nysri is launched back, her cable snapping slightly, and hits the wall behind: knocking her unconscious.

Mikael is launched back too, but narrowly misses the wall.

Swinging back towards Nysri he tries to reach for her.

MIKAEL

(focusing on Nysri)

Someone help!

Getting closer, Mikael's own cable begins to fray and snap.

He, however, is oblivious to it. He pushes on to try to save Nysri from falling.

He swings closer still, and gets within a finger's length of her, before his cable snaps completely in two.

With wide, horror-filled eyes, Mikael misses Nysri and plummets into the black abyss below.

CLAN LEADER

Spin them back! Spin them back now!

The clan leader watches on with a look of mixed worry and anger.

At the top of the chasm, eight dwarves rush and split themselves between two large machines. They heave and put all their might into winding back the cables.

Slowly, Nysri is raised up as dwarves at the top of the chasm reel her in. She lies still the entire way.

A streak of blood runs down from her forehead, and drips off into the darkness below.

A faint purple-pink glow dies in her left hand, as she holds her pickaxe loosely in her right.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER.

ACT ONE

INT. WHITEHALL PALACE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Long curtains are drawn over the windows, keeping the sunlight out. Only a thin sliver shines through, giving a dim light to the room.

ROYAL SUBJECTS
(chanting from
outside)
Morallin! Morallin! King! King!

On the throne, looking wary and afraid of the shadows that surround him, is MORALLIN (35), a pale man with well-defined features and flowing black hair. Upon his head is a golden crown which shimmers in the faint light.

OLIVER (V.O.)
(in Etoasi)
There was once a great kingdom. For many lifetimes, it stood mighty. The stronghold of the world.

Morallin puts his hand to his mouth, contemplating. He trembles, buzzing with anxious energy.

OLIVER (V.O.) (cont'd)
(in Etoasi)
Then along came Man. The bastard child of the elves. Powerless and disconnected from nature. In their rage, angered by the abomination that they were, they burnt the great kingdom to ashes, believing that its destruction would bring about peace in their troubled hearts.

Morallin takes a deep breath as he looks ahead. His expression changes from fear to determination, and his hand stops trembling as he clenches it into a fist.

OLIVER (V.O.) (cont'd)
(in Etoasi)
They had sought revenge on their parents and they had succeeded. Once their kingdom was but dirt and dust, the elves were exiled from their home and pushed to the shores of the Emerald Island. Man, meanwhile, built up kingdoms of their own: Mendalir and Dorilia.

EXT. PLAY STAGE - DAY

OLIVÆR THE KNOWING (32), a slim-faced man with slicked-back, dark hair and a pointed beard, stands on the stage.

Seated on the ground before him is a large crowd of elves or, as they're called natively, Etoasi: a collection of alien-like humanoids with ears, long and pointed; eyes large, with small pupils; hands that have only four, long, spindly digits; and who are outfitted in a flowing ethereal material, which shimmers shades of green in the speckled sunlight coming through the canopy of leaves above.

Behind Olivær, two Etoasi actors stage fight with wooden swords.

OLIVÆR
(in Etoasi)
How long, though, shall these
kingdoms stand? How long before these
children of iron, these war-makers,
repeat history? How long until nature
restores balance?

One of the actors 'stabs' the other. They both move to the ground, the victor guiding his victim down slowly, gracefully.

OLIVÆR (cont'd)
(in Etoasi)
Not long at all, I fear.

A silence falls. The audience watch, enthralled.

The victor of the play duel gently closes the other's eyes, before holding in place, with their head bowed, for applause.

And it soon comes. The audience watching erupts, some calling out with bird-like whistles and rhythmic ululations.

Olivær and the two actors, now back on their feet, bow graciously.

Olivær rises again, and beams a smile at his audience.

OLIVÆR (cont'd)
(in Etoasi)
Thank you all. Thank you all so much.

His eyes fall upon a specific elf. THE CHIEFTAIN, an taller elf with more aged features and a majestic headdress, acknowledges Olivær with a nod.

OLIVÆR (cont'd)
(in Etoasi)
Once more, you have welcomed me to
these lands of yours with open arms
and I am truly grateful for that.
Your willingness to have me here, to
hear my words, and to treat me as one
of your own is an act of kindness
which is not lost on me.

Olivær takes a deep breath, then bows again.

The whole audience, including the Chieftain, bows in return.

OLIVÆR (cont'd)
(in English)
Thank you.

INT. CHIEFTAIN'S LODGINGS - AFTERNOON

The Chieftain guides Olivær into his grand place of living.
In the centre is a large tree trunk, running from floor to
roof. All the furniture is wood-based, ornately carved, and
decorated with finely woven strands of shining grass; and
it's all just slightly over-sized for Olivær.

The Knowing looks around, smiling at the sight of the Etoasi
designs surrounding him.

OLIVÆR
(in Etoasi)
Are there plans for this evening?

The Chieftain moves gracefully, gliding almost, towards a
table. Once there, they pour wine for themselves and Olivær.

THE CHIEFTAIN
(in Etoasi)
A celebration, old friend. We wish to
show you our gratitude.

Olivær pulls himself away from the décor, giving the
Chieftain his full attention. He smiles, grateful and a
little embarrassed, at the towering elf.

OLIVÆR
(in Etoasi)
Welcoming me into these lands is
already a grand showcase of your
gratitude, Chieftain. A party is not
needed.

The Chieftain turns, two wooden chalices in hand. They extend one to Olivær.

THE CHIEFTAIN

(in Etoasi)

Needed? We need do nothing in this world, friend. It lives and breathes regardless of us and our actions. We want to celebrate you and your works.

(BEAT; in English)

Cheers.

OLIVÆR

(in English)

Cheers.

The Chieftain and Olivær tap their chalices together, then take large sips of their drinks, almost in unison.

INT. MCINTYRE FAMILY HOUSE - MORNING

Darkness. The whole house is covered in it, as light struggles to pierce through the dirt-covered windows.

In his bed, one of many in a tightly packed collection, lies TOMLIN MCINTYRE (15), a young lad with sweeping Brunette hair and a frail figure.

The door creaks open as Tomlin rolls onto his side, still asleep.

Giggles can be heard as two looming shadows move closer to the sleeping boy.

TOMLIN'S YOUNGER BROTHER (O.S.)

(in a whisper)

Shh! He'll hear us!

The giggles continue as two young children (under 10) creep towards the bed, and make their way around either side of it.

TOMLIN'S YOUNGER SISTER

(in a whisper)

One.

Tomlin rolls onto his back and snores.

TOMLIN'S YOUNGER BROTHER

Two.

His younger siblings smile at one another.

TOMLIN'S YOUNGER SISTER

Three!

Together, the children pounce at Tomlin--diving on him as he sleeps.

Tomlin opens his eyes groggily, as if he knew there was no real danger despite the racket. A smile grows on his tired face.

TOMLIN

Morning, you two.

The children giggle as they get off of him, and Tomlin sits up and stretches.

TOMLIN'S YOUNGER SISTER

Pa sent us to get you.

Tomlin nods as he yawns, his arms outstretched.

TOMLIN'S YOUNGER BROTHER

Needs your 'elp with some work in the shop.

TOMLIN

Right. Right, no worries then.

He climbs out of the low bed and ruffles his lengthy hair.

The children follow him as he navigates past them and out of the maze of beds into a main living area.

TOMLIN (cont'd)

Anything for breakfast?

TOMLIN'S YOUNGER BROTHER

There was. You slept through it all though.

Tomlin sighs, takes a deep breath, then shakes his head to wake himself up a little more before heading out the door.

EXT. MCINTYRE FAMILY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tomlin leaves the building, followed not long after by his younger siblings.

TOMLIN

Did Pa say what he needed help with?

TOMLIN'S YOUNGER SISTER

Nope. Just said to go wake you up and tell you he needed some 'elp.

TOMLIN

Right. Well, thank you, you two.
Maybe a bit more grace with the
waking up next time though, alright?

The children giggle some more before flanking him and rushing off ahead of him, into Aredston.

Tomlin slows, then stops, and watches them with a smile.

Suddenly, he feels a tickle in his throat and tries to clear it.

Unable to ease the feeling, he coughs. Lightly at first, then more violently. As he moves his hand away from his mouth, he look at it in silent horror.

His hand, trembling, has blood on it from his cough.

Again, Tomlin looks ahead, to his siblings who are but distant specks now. He closes his eyes, keeping tears from escaping, as his lips quiver.

With a deep breath, he stops shaking and opens his eyes again. He has to be strong.

Tomlin quickly wipes his eyes dry before setting off again, following his younger siblings.

INT. CARPENTRY WORKSHOP - DAY

Fidgeting with tools at his workbench, with his back to the door, is RULF MCINTYRE (late 40s), father of Tomlin and a well-built, scruffy gentleman.

The door slowly creaks open and Tomlin peeks his head inside before fully entering.

TOMLIN

Martin and Mary said you needed help,
Pa? E'rything alright?

Rulf turns with a smile on his bearded face and nods at his son.

RULF

Aye. S'alright. Just a job I've been
asked to do.

(MORE)

RULF (cont'd)
Could use a spare pair o' hands on
it--and, well, Martin's too young,
Will's busy with he's work at the
Mill, and Quinn... bless 'im, he's
got his missus to deal with now.

Rulf's gaze wanders off, leading him to stare into thin air,
as he lets out a soft chuckle, after he speaks of his eldest
child.

Tomlin smiles politely.

RULF (cont'd)
(looking back at
Tomlin)
So, that leaves you, lad. And
rightfully so, ay?

Rulf turns back to his workbench and moves some things,
looking for the letter commissioning him.

RULF (cont'd)
Nothing better for an apprentice to
do than learn on the job.
(BEAT)
Now where did I put that bleeding
thing? Could'a swore it was here
somewhere.

Tomlin joins his father at the busy workbench to help look
for whatever it is he's after.