

INTRO

INT. Cuttlefish Estate - Mail slot

The doorbell rings. A mysterious box is passed among servant to servant until finally, it arrives a hand covered in jewelry.

Ibon Kuul, old and skinny with a wild mustache that splits into four parts. His hair is matted and gray, and is tied into four braids behind him.

Ibon takes the box and breathes heavily. The servants scurry out of the room and slide the door panels closed. A few curious faces watch from outside.

We see a close-up of their faces as they react in horror as Ibon yells.

The camera cuts back to the box, which Ibon carries to the servant. His hand is wrapped in a bloody bandage -- it is clear he is missing a finger.

The box is passed from servant to servant, until finally it arrives in the hands of our protagonist, Issha.

Issha Kuul, mid twenties, long scar climbing up her left cheek. Her hair wraps around her face like a stem to a petal.

Issha looks at the box disdainfully. The servants scuttle away, sitting outside the room.

Two servants enter the room and place a pair of swords at Issha's feet.

INT. Cuttlefish Estate - Hallway facing courtyard - Daytime

Ibon and Issha look out at a young man, getting shoved onto the ground. A trainer furiously tosses wooden weapons across the courtyard and grabs the young man by the shirt.

IBON

You will participate in the colosseum.

ISSHA

And... my brother?

IBON

He is not ready. You will go in his place.

(pause)

You do not need to win. Actually,
it may be better if you die.

ISSHA
(turning to face him)
When?

IBON
You leave tomorrow. Pack your
things.

We close in on Issha's face as dramatic music rises. We
transition to --

MONTAGE OF THE EIGHT CLANS:

Miriam of the **swordfish** practices her bladework. Other students surround her in a ring, and clap once she finishes. Elder Gossard steps forward and hands his own sword to Miriam, and her school sisters decorate her with flowers. The other elders watch proudly.

The **worms** bring forth their hands in a circle, and cut their hands. We see their blood fill an engraving. Stones begin to shift into place. A mother weeps as her child, **Teschien**, kisses her hand, then turns to the altar. He raises a blade to his neck.

Kiula of the **hammerheads** shadowboxes in a circle. His friends shadowbox with him, hyping him up. They slap his back as he turns, with the lights dimming around him. He raises a hammer and flexes, while others cheer him on.

A bloody **Heio** kneels in front of the **Jellyfish** council. We cut behind him, revealing many dressed in similar garb laying reeling on the ground. The council steps forward and draws a symbol on his beaten body.

Lok' San leans forward, sitting on a bed, pulling himself off the embrace of a woman. Female servants step forward and hand him a bident and a shield with the **crab** symbol. They caress him as he rises to his full height.

Nykadi has a lamp hanging off her shoulder. She pushes through brush and mud, and stands in front of her older sister on the road. She draws her sword. Her sister draws her own.

Pyat screams in pain as the **Orca** burn a symbol onto his hand. His arm is tied to a device that prevents him from moving. He bites down on a piece of wood as the burn mark solidifies, and begins to glow. His eyes glow too.

Fade to black.