

Paladins lore adaptation: The Thousand Hands

EXT.ZHIN'S FAMILY GARDEN - DAY

Its bright, the sun is out and a young Zhin (age five) is sitting amongst the flower beds laughing. Baro is standing on the porch his arms crossed around his chest, Zhins mother stands behind him apprehensive.

ZHIN'S MOTHER

I understand your busy, wise teacher.
I believe my son shows great
potential.

BARO

Indeed he does, he has big shoes to
fill in the magistrates parliament. I
would be honoured to take him under my
wing.

ZHIN'S MOTHER

That's wonderful news, he will do well
with such a teacher I'm sure. I will
take my leave then.

Zhin's mother bows her head at Baro and exits to the main road. Baro approaches Zhin.

BARO

Young master, stand.

Zhin stands up and looks at Baro curiously holding a flower. Baro takes the flower from Zhin and kneels down to be eye level with the boy. Baro puts his hand into his satchel and reveals a small dagger, passing it to Zhin.

BARO

Come inside and read your scrolls. We
have much to learn.

INT. THE STUDY ROOM - DAY

FADE IN

The room is small, with big open windows and red and orange cloth covering the wooden panels on the walls. Zhin age 7 is sitting at his wooden desk low to the floor he's studying intricate scrolls. Baro enters and sits opposite him on the table.

BARO

What have you learnt today, young
master?

ZHIN
That I'm really hungry Baro! Whats for lunch?

Baro laughs heartily and ruffles Zhins hair.

BARO
Shall we go and eat then, dear boy?

ZHIN
Finally! I thought you'd never ask.

Both Zhin and Baro stand. Baro places a hand on Zhins back as they exit the room.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

FADE IN

The bar is dark, one light over their small table creates a yellow sickly glow. Baro sits with his four friends drinking spirits and eating meat.

BARO
I'm at my wits end. How can that seat at parliament go empty for so long? The boy is seven! How can the magistrate assume power if their primary advisor is a child?

FRIEND 1
As always your right my wise friend. Alas, the king was very loyal to the boys late father. He will not give that seat to anyone else!

FRIEND 2
And we know who they would give it to!

FRIEND 1
Exactly, that boy is stealing power from you Baro.

FRIEND 3
Isn't it the boys first day with other nobles coming up?

BARO
Yes, the crystal ceremony. The King will be there to observe his progress.

FRIEND 4

Have him make a mistake! Then you can take the boys place.

BARO

Don't be foolish! As his teacher I will be reprimanded.

FRIEND 1

You can take the Kings ear and explain your disappointment in the boys rebellion!

They all take a drink and Baro looks on in the distance, contemplative.

INT. THE STUDY ROOM - DAY

Zhin is diligently writing in ink on the page, switching between scrolls as reference. Baro stands over him and places a hand on his shoulder.

BARO

Stand, boy.

Zhin stops what he's doing and stands facing Baro

BARO

You know the crystal ceremony is coming up. All eyes will be on your performance so I will run you through proceedings.

EXT. THE PALACE COURT - DAY

All the nobles are gathered around a large sky blue fountain. There are three crystal floating above them in varied sizes. One yellow, one purple and one orange. The large group have their heads bowed and one by one they go to the fountain and drink from the water. Zhin is stood toward the back, trying to sneak a look over the nobles shoulders. After the fourth noble drinks from the fountain, Baro knelt down to Zhin's level.

BARO

(Whispered)

I'm going to greet the King, don't forget what to do.

Baro leaves a nervous Zhin on his own. Slowly all eyes turn to Zhin and everyone steps out of the way. Zhin is stood face

to face with the fountain and takes a deep breath. He walks over tentatively, looking up at the crystals, he climbs up the fountain and goes to grasp the purple crystal. All nobles look in disgust and the guards rush over, pulling his small body off of the fountain and falling to the floor. Zhin looks up, distress in his eyes searching for Baro. Baro is whispering into the king's ear as the king looks down at Zhin from his platform. The guards stand behind Zhin awaiting orders. The king simply gestured to the guards with his hand and in a flash Zhin is being grabbed by four of them, dragging him away from the palace grounds.

EXT. NOBLES COURT - DAY

The guards are pulling at Zhin's arms as his feet drag, unable to keep up with their hurried footsteps.

ZHIN
(stressed)
What's going on? Unhand me! I am the
primary advisor.

The guards have no response pulling him along the road to his home.

EXT. ZHIN'S FAMILY GARDEN - DAY

Zhin's eyes well up and his cheeks flushed red, he is greeted by a larger group of guards with long torches in their hands. Throwing the flames at his home, Zhin's house quickly sets alight.

ZHIN
(Sobbing)
My home! Get off of it!

GUARD 1
(Emotionless)
The third king of the Magistrate has
so decreed, that you have been
banished from the King's court and
stripped of your title.

ZHIN
(hysterical)
You're wrong! Get off of it, water, we
need water!

Zhin runs to the house, now fully up in flames. One of the guards grabs his right arm in a violent grip. Zhin looks at him, a glint of hope in his eyes. The guard rips the noble

crest off of his robes and throws him down.

GUARD 2

Now you can run to your death.

The group of guards exit and Zhin sobs into the ground.

EXT. ZHIN'S FAMILY GARDEN - NIGHT

FADE IN

The flames have died down, all that's left of Zhin's home is its charred broken remains. Zhin sits in the same place as the earlier scene. Sobbing as his fists clench at the grass beneath him.

He lifts his head and looks at his home. Attempting to stand on his wobbly legs he stumbles towards it. The embers are still hot in places but, no longer able to cry, Zhin walks closer. He sees his small dagger in the rubble. He wipes away the charcoal and picks it up, burning his palm. He ripped the bottom of his robe and wrapped the dagger, clutching it tight to his chest. Resigned, Zhin walks away from the remains of his home and out of the gate.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. CAPITAL CITY MARKET - DAY

Zhin is running, his face dirty, panicked and rushing past people buying goods at the market. He's clutching a single apple as a vendor is chasing after him.

VENDOR

Thief! Dirty street rat come here!

Groups of people are staring down at Zhin in disgust as he is running past them. One man pokes out his leg and trips Zhin up. Zhin crashes to the ground, scuffing and scratching his elbows and knees. Still clutching the apple, Zhin is pulled up by his collar. The vendor snatching the apple back and pulling him into an alleyway.

EXT. CAPITAL MARKET ALLEY - DAY

The vendor throws him down and begins kicking Zhin in the chest.

VENDOR

Get out of here, scum.

The vendor walks away, leaving Zhin curled up in the confined alley. Zhin flinches as he hears some scuffling about near him. Suddenly a hand holding a shining red apple appears in front of his face from above. He looks up apprehensive and a young girl, hanging from her feet from a windowsill above is looking down at Zhin curiously. Zhin furiously snatches for the fruit. The young girl throws the apple up and catches it into her bag.

YOUNG GIRL

Your ring.

Zhin looks at her confused.

YOUNG GIRL

Yoo hoo? Gimme.

Zhin clutches his left hand, where a golden ring sits on his index finger.

ZHIN

Why should I?

YOUNG GIRL

Hmm, okay. I guess your not as hungry as you look.

The girl begins to move away.

ZHIN

No, no! Okay... 5 apples and I'll give you the ring.

YOUNG GIRL

Nope.

ZHIN

(confused)

No?

YOUNG GIRL

Your ring and maybe I'll give you an apple.

Zhin, hungry and losing passes over his ring to the girl.

YOUNG GIRL

Thanks!

She begins to head up the building and stops.

YOUNG GIRL
(Sighing)
Fine.

The young girl throws down an apple

YOUNG GIRL
Catch!

Zhin throws his whole body towards the apple and catches it.

ZHIN
Wait! What's your name?

YOUNG GIRL
None of your business.

She waves and heads over the rooftop. She pops over to look down quickly.

YOUNG GIRL
Hey newbie! Stealing is all about
footwork.

She smiles cheekily and throws an apple in the air and disappears.