

Context: I wrote this short cutscene for a Horizon project. This is less about gameplay and more about character, dialogue, and setting the stakes for an upcoming mission.

INT. SOLAI'S HUT IN MOTHER'S CROWN — DAY

SOLAI (40), a thin, leathery woman in NORA tribal livery, pulls into her modest dwelling another woman—a young Nora huntress with a bow, a knife, and tear-filled eyes. She is NAKOA (19).

NAKOA

Ugh! Ow! You're hurting me! Stop!

CUT TO: A profile: Solai plants her left hand over Nakoa's mouth and pins her hard against the hut's thick wooden center pole. Nakoa's eyes go wide with fear. Solai is furious.

SOLAI

Stupid girl, the mothers could've heard you. Sayin' you'll cross the border to kill Zaid. At best, you'll be exiled for crossin'.

CUT TO: Close up on Solai. Her eyes burn with a deep anger.

SOLAI

You think, 'Zaid killed my father. Must kill Zaid.' Five years gone, and your best plan is just cross over and kill him? Stupid girl!

She raises her right arm, making her sleeve fall. We see a long, hideous scar along the inside of her arm, from armpit to wrist.

SOLAI

Zaid took away my hunting arm, took my brother... your father. Reduced me to a scrap picker. Out there, alone in the wilds pickin' scrap, I got time to think.

CUT TO TIGHT SHOT: Solai lowers her hand from Nakoa's mouth. She leans in, faces inches apart. Solai looming, Nakoa trembling.

SOLAI

You want him dead, but he's safe on the Carja side of the border.

You hunt. How do you kill prey
that's deep in its den?

NAKOA
Hunt it on your terms?

SOLAI
(snapping)
How? Speak!

NAKOA
C... coax the animal out of its den.
Lure it. Trap it! Kill it!

Solai nods, a hint of a smile. She crosses over to her bed.

SOLAI
Can't kill him with a Nora weapon.
Carja'll figure it out. Raids'll
start again. Your fault.

She kicks up the bedding to reveal a hollow underneath. Nakoa
looks in. She (and we) see a CARJA hunting dagger and bow.

SOLAI
Make it look like it was them.
Carja kill each other daily. Ain't
no one'll think it was us Nora.

Solai opens a box and pulls out a thick strip of leather wrapped
around a polished animal tooth. She ties it around Nakoa's neck.

SOLAI
Your father's. From the first bear
he hunted. Scared him. Knew one
wrong move would get him killed.

Nakoa touches the tooth in awe.

SOLAI
Hold that fear tight, girl. Get
this wrong, you'll get you and the
Nora killed. So, still want Zaid?

Nakoa rubs the tooth between her fingers. She looks up, driven.

NAKOA
How do we lure him out?

SOLAI

Be here tomorrow. Sun-up. Time to
learn how to hunt people.

FADE OUT