

START →

BRITT (CONT'D)  
Roman. The Hall's yours.

Two colonists bring up the Cloud Elk's huge rack of antlers.

ROMAN  
Thank you, Britt. Thank you,  
members of the Plank, for your  
leadership.

(beat)  
I'm not gonna lie. I've dreamed of  
this moment. 'Course in my dreams,  
you-all were good looking. And I  
was sober!

(some LAUGHS)  
I've heard some say that our wild  
ways have run their course. That  
we should let up on ourselves.  
Raise us a goat. Plant a seed.

(beat)  
For over two hundred years, we have  
trained and hunted, shared and  
starved. Sacrificed life and limb.

A meaningful glance toward Aethys.

ROMAN (CONT'D)  
(proudly)  
We farm nothing. Grow nothing. We  
take as God gives. We close no  
animal in our pens, and we seek  
dominion over neither the seed, nor  
the atom - nor the stars.

(a beat)  
Our reward has been a deep and  
lasting content. While the Outside  
fell into unimaginable darkness.

A deep intake of breath from the crowd - the sign of assent.

ROMAN (CONT'D)  
And now comes spring. Our choosing  
time. When our young men make  
their petitions, and our women  
either welcome them into their  
lodges - or bar their doors.

Cocky BOOS from the young men, CHEERS from the women.

ROMAN (CONT'D)  
And I'm supposed to choose first.

TIGHT ON: Essyn. Unsure if she wants what's coming.

Roman sees it - and lets her off the hook. (For now.)

ROMAN (CONT'D)

But tonight, I'd like to honor a different pledge. You see, I grew up an orphan. With no family. And no future. Until someone noticed a starving refugee crouched in a bramble. Gave him his own dinner. And that night, invited him home.

(beat)

Aeth?

Surprised, but conscious of the hundreds of eyes on him, Aethys steps up to the Plank.

Roman nods to one of antler-holders. (This is all pre-arranged). With one hatchet-swing, the man SPLITS THE RACK in two. A GASP from the crowd at this break from tradition.

But Roman confidently hands half the antler-rack to Aethys.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

For family. For fellowship. For a spring full of meat!

(CHEERS)

For my friend. Who faced a galyntine twice - and lived. And who's never left my side.

Then Roman lifts his antlers HIGH above his head, and with all his might, sounds the victor's cry -

**FINISH** →

ROMAN (CONT'D)

The Cloud Elk!

CROWD

The Cloud Elk!

A huge STANDING OVATION, colonists stomping and ROARING 'til they're red in the face. It's the greatest toast they've heard in years. Roman's a born politician. Born to lead.

Britt clocks it. Not sure how he feels about it.

But Crawford's eyes brim with tears, with pride. The future of the colony looks safe.

As Aethys lifts his antlers to fit Roman's, and the two friends's eyes meet - for this moment, united as one -

CUT TO BLACK.