KING JOHN’S TREASURE

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Crashing waves depict the turmoil of the times. The receding tide, symbolizes the diminishing empire.

MAP: "THE ANGEVIN EMPIRE"
Color recedes from the Pyrenees, towards England.

ON SCREEN TEXT:
In the 10 years since the death of Henry II, the Angevin Empire slowly collapsed, as the French King Philip II, brutally expanded his territories.

EXT. CHÂTEAU GAILLARD — DAY
Siege machines throw fire balls over the walls.

English bowmen on the battlements, attempt to fend off the advancing French soldiers, by firing off arrows, which fall like rain, on the French shields, below.

French soldiers scale the walls on ladders, as English soldiers pour burning oil on them from the battlements.

LATER
GRIMBALD FOWLER (40ish) - unarmed, steps out of the castle door, waving a white flag.

EXT. TENT — DAY
French soldiers escort Grimbald into their H.Q. He stands in front of the officer’s table.

The FRENCH OFFICER looks him up and down, sniffs.

FRENCH OFFICER
A glass of wine?

GRIMBALD
This is no time for celebration.

FRENCH OFFICER
You seek to impress me?

GRIMBALD
No! Just to reason with you.
FRENCH OFFICER
What is it, you are offering?

GRIMBALD
We are well supplied, we can hold the castle, indefinitely. Many more of your men will die if you insist on continuing hostilities. We are willing to trade, and make deals, for our mutual benefit.

FRENCH OFFICER
Is that the extent of your offer?

GRIMBALD
It is a fair offer, King Philip does want to be fair, doesn’t he?

FRENCH OFFICER
For Philip ownership is a matter of principle. Richard, your king, is dead. We reject John as his successor. The Angevin lands are now French territory... Philip want’s you gone.

GRIMBALD
John will not give up his claim to his father’s land. He will fight.

FRENCH OFFICER
If that is the case, this meeting is over... Cease him... You are now a hostage to the kings will. Say, good-bye, to your freedom.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Grimbald sits alone, dejected, chained up, trapped in a dark dirty prison cell, nostalgically thinking of the day he left his home, his wife, and his son.

INSERT - DREAMY COUNTRY SCENE

Grimbald leaves, wife waves, their son, holds her hand.

EXT. THROCKENHOLT - DAY

A misty winter’s morning, in a village of poverty and squalor, on the desolate salt marshes of the East Anglia.
SUPER
"15 years later."

PIG STY
MATILDA FOWLER (40’s) – aged looks, a shabbily dressed peasant, pours apples into a trough.

NEAR BY
ALFRED (40’s) – a disabled fisherman, stands by his cart, with his plain looking daughter, Esme (20) – she rings a bell, as he hollers.

ALFRED
Fresh fish. Fresh fish.

PIG STY
Matilda struggles with a large boar. She pushes, and pulls, to no avail. The boar wants his apples.

MATILDA
Come on Hector, I’m afraid your time do be up.

Hector has finally had enough of being cajoled, he knocks Matilda over. Within an instant, she is submerged in bacon, as ten little piglets clamber for her nipples.

MATILDA
Alf! Alf! Help! Get these greedy little devils off me.

Alfred, and Esme hurry over. Esme assists Matilda by removing the piglets. Alfred looks on, laughing.

LATER
Pig aboard, they all lift the dropped tail board, securing the boar on the cart.

ALFRED
Mud suits you, Mattie, my dear. Very alluring.
(suggestively)
I’ve got a nice big eel for you, if you’re interested?

Matilda resists the innuendo, with tight lips.
MATILDA
And I can scrub my own back, thank you very much.

Esme turns her head, embarrassed.

ALFRED
Can I, at least, interest you in a lovely rainbow trout?

MATILDA
I don’t be after no rainbows, Alf. I be content, when I get Hector here to market... I can send my lummox of a son, Edgar, out to catch a rabbit, if you want to trade... If he ever get’s out of bed, that is.

ALFRED
Maybe we can come to some sort of arrangement.

Alfred winks at her. Matilda sashays back to her hut.

INT. HUT - CONTINUOUS

EDGAR (20ish) - an Anglo Saxon peasant, is flat out on a straw mattress, snoring. An empty beer jug lays next to him.

Matilda jolts open the door. She reaches for a bucket of water, and lugs it across the room. Slowly, she pours the ice cold liquid on Edgar’s head.

MATILDA
Come on Edgar, shake a leg, you lazy sot.

Spluttering, Edgar sits bolt upright. He wipes his face, and scrambles to his feet.

EDGAR
What the... You could have given me a bloody heart attack.

MATILDA
You’re a mother’s curse. Sleeping, and drinking. That’s all you do be bloody well good for. Now get dressed, and take Hector to market.

EDGAR
You crazy bitch.
MATILDA
Crazy am I... You want to see
crazy... I show you bloody crazy.

She grabs a rolling pin, clobbering him, as she speaks.

MATILDA CONT.
Don’t you... be calling me...
crazy.

He holds up his hands, trying to protect himself.

EDGAR
It’s no wonder dad ran off to the
crusades.

MATILDA
At least he had guts, he was a
better man than you’ll ever be.

EDGAR
And he probably ended up dead in
a ditch, for his trouble.

MATILDA
Get out, before I really lose my
temper.

EDGAR
I should quit this godforsaken
shit hole of a village, and see
the world.

MATILDA
Huh! You’d bloody starve. There’s
no free rides in this world.

He grabs his clothes, takes and apple, and scarpers out, slamming the door.

EXT. PIG STY - LATER

He backs Zeus, a harnessed gray Percheron, up to the cart, and fastens the straps, strokes him, and blows into his
nose.

EDGAR
Ready for a trip, Zeus, old son.

He bites into the apple, Zeus takes the apple out of
Edgar’s mouth, and eats it. Edgar jumps on the cart,
flicks the reigns, and off they go.
EXT. KINGS LYNN - DAY

An East Anglian, sea port, market town, where begging urchins, hookers, and traders, hustle for every coin.

Edgar drives in, on his cart, containing the boar.

EXT. REAR OF THE BUTCHERS SHOP - DAY

HAROLD (40) - a rotund butcher, in a bloody apron, sharpens his knife, as he stands by a live boar, hanging up by its back legs. Edgar approaches.

    EDGAR
    Hey Harold, be a gent, and front me some coin for this beast. We can settle up later.

Harold, slices the boars throat. Blood gushes out into the bucket. Disgusted by this procedure, Edgar, turns his head.

    HAROLD
    Got a weak stomach, bah? We gotta eat. Nature’s a cruel teacher.

Harold sidles over to the cart, and looks at the boar

    HAROLD CONT.
    Not a bad size.

Harold puts his hand in his pocket, pulls out some coins, and gives them to Edgar.

    EDGAR
    I wont get much pleasure with this.

He puts the coins in his string purse.

EXT. THE SQUARE - DAY

It’s festive: families have gathered for a hanging; hawkers, sell roast chickens, and mead, from barrels; pick pockets, work the crowd; stall holders, sell produce.

Flutists play, as ridiculous Morris dancers, dressed in dark pantaloons, with crossed braces, white shirts, straw hats, and bells on their legs, click sticks, and wave their handkerchiefs in the air.
AT THE SCAFFOLDING

The burly hangman ties a weighted bag to a hanging rope.

AT THE HORSE FAIR

EDITH (20’s) - a shabbily dressed, but attractive hostler, slave ring around her neck, inspects the teeth of a horse. She runs her seductive hand across the beautiful beast.

Scar faced soldier, GASTON (30’S) inspects the other horses on sale.

In the b.g. The VENDOR slaps another CUSTOMERS hand to clinch a deal.

OUTSIDE THE TAVERN

JENNY (20’s) - a prostitute poses by the tavern wall, brushing back her long black hair, and sucking on a straw.

ALAN STRONG (30’s) - a seasoned hood, stands next to Jenny eating an apple.

JIM (30) - a craggy fisherman, and his mates, sit at a table, drinking, and playing cards.

Edgar exits the tavern, drink in hand, spies Jenny. She gives him a seductive gesture. He reacts clumsily, and nudges Jim, spilling his mead.

JIM
You clumsy oaf.

EDGAR
Sorry mate.

Jim stands, and brushes himself down.

JIM
In from the sticks, are you?

EDGAR
Just for the day.

JIM
Well, keep your wits about you. We’re on shore leave. Join us, if you like.

EDGAR
Sure.

Edgar sits at the table, with the fishermen. Jim looks Edgar in the eye, puts his elbow on the table.
JIM
I’ll arm wrestle you, for the
price of a refill.

Dignity in question, Edgar puts his arm up.

Alan sidles over.

ALAN
Who’ll back the farm boy. I’ll
lay two to one on the fisherman.

DUSTY (30’s)– places a bet on the table.

DUSTY
I’ll take those odds.

ALAN
You sure about that Dusty, he’s
just a farm boy? Fishermen sweat
for their living.

The onlookers thinking it’s a sure thing, place their
bets.

DUSTY
This boys got muscles, it’s no
joy ride swinging an axe.

Alan takes all bets offered, stashing the money in his
hat.

ALAN
Let’s get this straight, before
we start. It’s one time only, no
best of three shit... Ready, take
the strain... Heave!

The onlookers shout encouragement, as the competition
begins. First, Jim gets the advantage, then, Edgar, powers
back.

Eyes locked, tension mounts, sweat begins to form on their
foreheads. Their arm shake.

It seems like a stalemate.

AT THE SCAFFOLDING

The burly hangman pulls the trap door handle. The trap
door swings open, making a loud "BANG", as it hits a
strut.
**AT THE HORSE FAIR**

Edith gets bumped to the ground, as her startled horse rears, shocked by the loud noise. It battles, and jumps the corral fence.

**ON THE SQUARE**

The bolting horse disperses the panic-stricken crowd. A child stands in harms way.

**WOMAN**

My girl! Someone save my girl.

**AT THE TAVERN**

Edger cuts loose from Jim, jumps to his feet, and runs. Alan scarpers with the money.

The fishermen chase Alan.

**ON THE SQUARE**

Edgar arms outstretched, shuffles left and right, blocking the rearing horse.

The anxious woman hustles away the frozen child, dragging her to safety.

As the horse’s front feet hit the ground, Edgar grabs the halter. Hanging on tight, the bolting horse drags him along the ground. He struggles to keep a tight grip.

Eventually, the horse is bought under control, it stops.

The crowd, cheer and clap.

**BACK AT THE HORSE FAIR**

Soldiers calm the other horses.

Edith brushes horse shit off her clothes. She climbs over the fence, intent on retrieving the horse.

**ON THE SQUARE**

Edgar leads the horse towards the horse fair, calmyly.

Edith comes forward, meets him, reaching for the halter.
EDGAR
Lose something?

EDITH
Only my dignity.

Edgar keeps hold of the halter.

EDGAR
There’s not much call for that ’round here.

EDITH
(looks him up and down)
Well you’re no knight in shining armor, yourself, are you?

EDGAR
Just a second, how do I know this is your horse?

EDITH
Do I look like a thief?

EDGAR
You could be. What do thieves look like? I mean, I could be nobility.
(bows)
Sir Edgar of Throckenholt, at the service of fair damsels, who are in distressed circumstances.

EDITH
It’s obvious what you are!

EDGAR
(letting go)
A thank you would be appreciated.

EDITH
You best see the Sheriff for thanks.
(points to neck ring)
I was bought, like the horse.

EDGAR
Nobodies going to saddle me.

EDITH
I’m so impressed.

EDGAR
Treats you well, does he? I mean, are you just his stable girl?
EDITH
I select his mares and rear their foals, not that it’s any of your business.

EDGAR
Sounds like you’re his prized possession.

ON THE SQUARE

A wooden litter carrying a strapped prisoner, makes it’s way to the scaffold, from a side street. The crowd jeer.

The noose hangs, ominously. A guard cuts the prisoner loose, from the litter, he escorts him up the scaffold steps. The crowd throw things: chicken bones, rocks, etc.

EDITH
I wonder what he’s done?

EDGAR
Who cares? Maybe, his family were starving, so he attacked a tax collector.

EDITH
Men are soulless swine.

EDGAR
Gives us a break will you.

EDITH
Why should I?

ON THE SCAFFOLD

The hangman puts the noose around the prisoners neck.

A MAGISTRATE nods to the hangman indicating, "go ahead".

Two men come to the hangman’s aid. They pull on the rope, hoisting the prisoner up in the air, feet kicking.

After a few seconds, they let him drop. The prisoner slams into the platform. The crowd "GROAN".

EDITH
Brutes. I could never kill anyone.

The prisoner stands over the trap door. The hangman grabs the handle. The crowd go silent.
ON THE SQUARE

EARL WILLIAM MARSHAL (60’s) - a knight, enters from a side street, on horseback, he cuts through the crowd.

MARSHAL
Free that man!

Approaching, he pulls on his reigns, halting his horse.
The magistrate comes towards him, fuming because of the interruption.

MAGISTRATE
What’s the meaning of this?

MARSHAL
I’m on the king’s business. This man, now, belongs to the king’s navy.

MAGISTRATE
This man is under sentence. You can’t do this.

MARSHAL
Feel free to take that point up with the king. Prince Louis is in London, as we speak. The rebels intend to crown him. Do you want to be ruled by France? King John is calling for all loyal men.

ON THE SCAFFOLD

Marshal climbs the platform, he cuts the noose.

ON THE SQUARE

Edith looks at Edgar, questioningly.

EDITH
I suppose you’ll want to go, and test your metal.

EDGAR
Not likely.

EDITH
Lost your courage, have you?

EDGAR
The sport of kings is no concern of mine.
ON THE SCAFFOLD

Marshal turns to the crowd, holding up his arms.

MARSHAL
You may think this war does not concern you, but it will find you, sooner or later, whether you want it to or not. A peaceful solution is out of the question. Join up now, fight for England.

ON THE SQUARE

Edith punches Edgar on the shoulder.

EDITH
See it does concern you.

EDGAR
I keep things light, I like to have a laugh. Are you up for fun and games?

EDITH
I’ve got serious work to do.

EDGAR
I’d love to work up a sweat with you.

EDITH
If you really want to work up a sweat, go for a run... Then, go jump in the lake.

Edith leaves Edgar, with egg on his face.

OUTSIDE THE PUB

Jim drains his tankard dry, fondles the empty glass.

Edgar sits opposite him. He puts his arm on the table, ready to resume the arm wrestle, stares.

JIM
You owe us. You’re bloody mates have run off with the stakes.

EDGAR
What! I’ve never seen them before.
JIM
Well! Maybe, you didn’t plan it. How did you make out with the skirt?

EDGAR
She’s a proud one. Expects some kind of knight in shining armor, to come and save her from her shackles. I told her straight. I’m no hero.

JIM
No kidding, you’re dog rough, and you smell like one, too.

EDGAR
And fishermen smell like pox-ridden cunnies.

Jim explodes!

He reaches over the table grabbing Edgar’s shirt. His fierce eyes, and bared teeth, give Edgar the fright of his life.

JIM
Ant... I’ll crush you,

EDGAR
Hold hard there matey, I was just joshing with you.

JIM
A jelly belly, eh!

Jim let’s go of Edgar’s shirt, and sits.

JIM CONT.
Get me a drink.

Edgar composes himself, and throws a coin on the table.

EDGAR
Get it yourself.

Tail between his legs, Edgar walks away.

As he passes, Jenny gives him the glimpse.

JENNY
If your throwing money around, farm boy, throw some my way.

He hesitates.
JENNY CONT.
What’s the matter, lost your vim?

EDGAR
I could make you beg for mercy.

JENNY
Ooh! Big talker. Prove it, and you can have a free-bee.

She gives the come on. He follows like a lamb.

INT. THE PUB, BEDROOM - DAY

Silhouetted by the window, Jenny emerges from behind a screen, wrapped up in veils.

As she dances, she moves towards Edgar. The veils fall: exposing her undulating belly, swinging thighs, and her perfectly formed quivering breasts.

Edgar watches, dazzled by her strip tease.

She removes his top, scratches his bare pecks, with her long nails, then she bites his nipples. She slowly works her way down with her tongue.

Kneeling, she begins to seductively undo his belt.

In blissful ignorance, he allows her to gradually lower his pants, from his hips, exposing shabby shorts. She continues to lower his pants, right down to his ankles.

Then, quick as a flash, she grabs his purse, and bolts out the door, leaving him stupefied.

The realization, it’s a rob, dawns, he pulls up his pants, and chases after her.

As he steps through the door, Alan clubs him, "THUD!"

Jenny, opens Edgar’s purse, tips out two coins. She gives one to Alan.

JENNY
Farm boys. Waste of bloody time.

FX. STARS EMERGE FROM A POINT OF LIGHT IN THE BLACKNESS

As his vision clears, Edgar realizes he is
AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS,

with a MARINE standing over him, bewildered, he rises to his feet.

MARINE
Stand fast matey, your now in the king’s navy.

The mariner escorts Edgar

DOWN STAIRS,

where the customers, and the press gang fight it out, fists fly, tables turn, and bottles smash on heads.

Alan, tries to climb out of a window, he’s caught.

EXT. THE DOCKS - DAY

A number of TEMPLAR KNIGHTS, with a distinctive red cross emblem on their robes, organize the sweat and strain of loading the ship.

The press gang push their way through the crowd, escorting the tied prisoners, along the dock side, up the gang plank.

ON THE SHIP,

the LIEUTENANT, cool, calm and commanding stands on deck, presiding.

LIEUTENANT
Line them up, and let’s have a look at them.

The Lieutenant, walks along the line, inspecting the gang. The mariners force the prisoners into a line.

EDGAR
(stepping forward)
This is a mistake.

The Lieutenant swats him on the face, with his cane.

LIEUTENANT
Get back in line, you dog. The first rule of the sea is: don’t speak unless you’re spoken to.

Alan pulls a concealed knife from his boot, he cuts his restraining ropes.
EDGAR
(holding his face)
But I have livestock to look after.

LIEUTENANT
(to his mate)
Lash this man to the barrel...

Alan passes the knife to Jim.

LIEUTENANT CONT.
Now then you scurvy bunch of low life’s. You’ve in the king’s service now... That means, you’ll do as you’re told, or I’ll have you hanging from the tallest yard arm in the English navy.

The MATE drags Edgar to the barrel, and lashes him to it.

Jim passes the knife to Dusty.

LIEUTENANT
(turns to the mate)
Strip off his shirt.

The mate strips off Edgar’s shirt, and stands waiting for they commencement order.

LIEUTENANT
Give him ten of the cats tail.
Commence the punishment.

The mate selects a whip, then as he slaps the cat across Edgar’s back, Alan gives the signal.

ALAN
Charge.

The prisoners attack the mariners: some grab wooden pegs, and use them as clubs, while the others wrestle in a free for all.

Alan and Dusty free Edgar from the barrel. He follows the ruffians over the side.

The mate grabs a bow and arrow, he tries the pick them off, as they swim for their lives.

Jim catches an arrow in the back, and sinks.
EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

The escapees sit round a fire, drying their clothes.

EDGAR
I suppose, I aught to say thanks, for not leaving me to rot.

ALAN
It were nothing. Your one of us, now... A deserter.

EDGAR
How do you survive?

PETE
Thieving, stupid.

EDGAR
My village, is hand to mouth.

ALAN
We attack the churches, and tax collectors.

EDGAR
You’ll get yourselves hanged.

PETE
Give him his socks, he’s got cold feet... You can’t suck on your mama’s tit forever.

ALAN
It’s us or them. The sheriff and the church want to pick on our bones. We’ll pick on theirs. Like it or not, you’re an outlaw, now.

EDGAR
And if I disagree with your hair brained schemes?

Pete plays with his blade, as he cuts a piece of apple, and eats it.

ALAN
You wouldn’t cut his throat, would we Pete?

PETE
(evil smile)
Of course not.
LATER

Clouds cross the moon, Edgar sneaks away quietly, as everybody sleeps.

IN THE DARK WOODS,

Crickets chirrup. Edgar struggles through the dense undergrowth, nerves on edge.

A loud screech shocks him. It’s just an owl.

EXT. BUTCHER’S SHOP – NIGHT

Edgar throws stones at the bedroom window.

    EDGAR
    Harold, wake up.

Harold opens his upstairs window. He rubs his eyes.

    HAROLD
    What do you want?

    EDGAR
    I’ve come to settle up.

    HAROLD
    I heard you’d got press ganged.

    EDGAR
    Nah! Must have been some one else.

EXT. THROCKENHOLT – DAY

Edgar dozes on his cart, as the horse brings him home.

INT. HUT – LATER

Matilda kneads bread, as Edgar makes his entrance.

    MATILDA
    Where the hell have you been?

    EDGAR
    I ran into a bit of trouble. I had a run in with the press gang. No need to upset yourself, I’m back, now.
MATILDA
Catch something for dinner.

EDGAR
I’ve been up all night.

MATILDA
Tough, if you want to eat, you’ve got to work.

Edgar grabs his bow and arrow, and slinks out the hut.

MATILDA CONT.
And don’t come back empty handed.

EXT. WOODS, THROCKENHOLT - DAY

Edgar creeps through the undergrowth, he sees a deer. He draws an arrow from his quiver, lines up and takes the strain on his bow string.

The deer lifts its head, and pricks up its ears. Edgar stands perfectly still, but the deer suddenly runs. He turns his head, wondering why the deer bolted.

EXT. THROCKENHOLT - DAY

The THUNDER OF HOOVES as horsemen charge across the field, towards the village. Behind the horsemen, foot soldiers jog.

EXT. BEHIND THE REAR WALL - DAY

HUGH BIGOD (30) - and his French soldiers, eager for blood, throw hooks, attached to ropes, over the wall. They tug them, to make sure they are secure, and begin to climb.

HUGH
Advance.

EXT. INSIDE THE REAR WALL - CONTINUOUS

The petrified villagers run amok screaming, they realize they are being attacked. Women grab their children, and try to find a place of safety. Men run for their weapons.

The attackers and villages clash: excited, angry faces of the attackers contort, as their mouths emit blood cuddling roars. Axes swing, and chop at the screaming victims.

HOOVES POUND as horses charge about, their riders swing their swords, cutting the horrified victims.
INT. HUT – DAY

Matilda looks out through a gap in the door. Horrified, she turns, reaches for a sword. She looks through the gap again, braces herself, steel-faced, she opens the door.

OUTSIDE,

she makes her way to a vantage point, behind a hay rig.

EXT. WOODS – DAY

Edgar smashes his way through the undergrowth, running full speed, towards the village.

EXT. THROCKENHOLT – DAY

The wholesale murder continues: screaming women and children run out of torched homes, some on fire. The soldiers round up the survivors.

EARL RODGER BIGOD (55) – a weathered old campaigner, tunic emblazoned with a red cross design, visor down, this black knight slowly enters the village, astride his black horse.

He lifts his visor, and looks down at the corpses.

He bangs on his shield, with his sword.

The soldiers herd the captured villagers towards Rodger, and force them onto their knees, with undue force.

RODGER
Hear this! You are messengers.
Your future is in my hands.
Spread the word. Tell your neighbors they must not withhold scutage, or service from me. No infraction will be tolerated.

Anger rising, Matilda runs out from behind the hay rig, screaming a war cry. She closes in on Rodger.

TWENTY FEET,

she is swinging her sword.

TEN FEET,

Hugh notices her.

FIVE FEET,

Matilda prepares to swipe.
CLOSE,

CRASH!!!

The sword hits armored Rodger on the shoulder. Simultaneously, Hugh takes Matilda’s feet from under her. Matilda lies spread eagled on the ground.

RODGER
On your knees woman.

Two foot soldiers lift her to her knees.

MATILDA
You animals.

RODGER
You Saxons need to learn, failure to comply, will be dealt with severely.

Hugh the executioner, stands by. A soldier plants a spike in the ground. Another pulls Matilda’s hair forward, to reveal her neck.

Rodger nods to Hugh. The horrified villagers, look away as Hugh prepares. He deals the killer blow, severing Matilda’s head. Her body slumps to the ground, in a pool of blood.

Hugh shows the crowd Matilda’s head, then rams it down on top of the spike.

Rodger waves his arm forwards, and points.

RODGER
Round up the horses and move out.

A soldier takes Edgar’s gray Percheron.

EXT. WOODS – DAY

Edgar finally reaches the outskirts, he peers through the trees, and looks towards the village.

IN THE DISTANCE

He sees Rodger’s red cross emblazoned shield. The attackers leave, with the stolen goods and horses.
EXT. THROCKENHOLT - DAY

Edgar approaches, cautiously. He walks through the carnage, checking on the distressed survivors.

Seeing his mother's head on a spike, he falls to his knees. He buries his head in his hands.

Recovering her necklace from the blood-soaked soil, he holds it close to his chest, looks up to the sky, full of anger, he rocks, as tears roll down his cheeks.

EXT. WOODS, WISBECH - DAY

All appears quiet as the tax collection entourage, move along a well-worn track.

Alan Strong inches along the bow of a tree. He gives a signal, as the entourage arrive.

Bandits spring their ambush: appearing from beneath leaf covered camouflage nets, from the trees, and bushes.

GASTON

Ambush.

The two sides fight: slicing, clubbing, and stabbing. Bloody bodies fall to the ground, injured or dead. Overwhelmed, Gaston waves his sword in the air.

GASTON CONT.

Retreat.

Soldiers flee in all directions. The bandits climb aboard the cart, and maneuver the chest off. Ecstatic, they fall on the spilt coin, like seagulls on a rubbish tip.

EXT. THE BANDITS CAMP, WOOD - DAY

A man turns a spit as a deer roasts. Men dip their mugs into a barrel of beer. Singing men drink.

Alan and Dusty play guess which hand, with the coins.

EXT. WISBECH - DAY

A dirty riverside street, by the estuary between the waters of the River Wyse, and the River Nene.

The bedraggled troops cross the marshlands, dead men piled up in the cart.
EXT. THE CASTLE - LATER

The procession enters the castle gate.

IN THE COURTYARD

As they dismount, the sheriff marches towards them.

RALF
Where’s my money?

GASTON
Bandits, sire. We were helpless.

RALF
You imbecile. Do I have to do everything myself?

He storms off.

EXT. THROCKENHOLT, THE RIVERBANK - DAY

Overwhelmed by grief, Edgar sits on a rock, holding his mothers necklace, eyes fixated, unaware of a beaver, as it swims through sparkling waters.

Alfred limps along the bank, Esme checks the eel baskets. They approach Edgar. Alfred puts a consoling hand on his shoulder.

ALFRED
Edgar old friend, are you planning to sit here forever.

Edgar looks at him with glazed eyes. He shows Alfred the necklace, kisses it.

EDGAR
This is all I have left of her.

ALFRED
These things have to be dealt with, Edgar. In my great-grand father’s day it was Viking raiders who came. You can’t just sit here. Life goes on. It’s now time for you to grow up and face the world, head on. There’s work to be done.

EDGAR
Leave me alone.
ALFRED
Why don’t you sit at my table. Esme, likes you. You could marry, and help me with my business.

EDGAR
I’m not that desperate.

ALFRED
Eh lad, that was uncalled for. You feel like taking it out on someone, don’t you?
(prods Edgar’s arm)
All right, take it out on me.

EDGAR
You’re a cripple.

ALFRED
I was game in my day. I could probably take you, with one arm.

Edgar rises to his feet, and clenches his fist.

They stand nose to nose, Edgar hesitates.

EDGAR
No, you’re past it, old man.

Alfred slaps his face.

ALFRED
Come on big mouth, I’m not too old to take on a whipper snapper like you.

EDGAR
If I start, I’m liable to kill you.

Alfred slaps him again.

ALFRED
I don’t think so, come at me. You pussy.

Edgar comes at him, head down.

They exchange blows, on the chin, in the belly.

They grab hold of each other and wrestle, arm locks, lifting, throwing.

Interlocked, they splash into
THE RIVER,

first, Edgar rises for breath, he goes back under. Then, Alfred comes up and takes a breath.

UNDER WATER,

they writhe about, bubbles coming from their mouths.

After trying to drown each other, it’s time to call it a day.

ABOVE WATER,

Alfred stands dripping wet, smiling at Edgar.

ALFRED
Had enough yet?

He starts for the bank.

EDGAR
Not quite.

Edgar attempts to smack Alfred on the back of his head, he ducks, spins round, and catches Edgar on the chin.

Edgar sinks below the water, stays under for what seems an age, then he jumps up, gasps for breath, and coughs up water.

EDGAR
You’re not bad for a battle - scarred vet.

He wipes his hair from his eyes.

ALFRED
So, are you ready to help rebuild the village, now?

MONTAGE - REBUILDING THE HUTS

-- Edgar cuts down trees with his axe.
-- He lugs timbers to the village.
-- He helps others erect the log hut.
-- He helps slap the mud and dung in the gaps.
-- He hugs people as he says, goodbye.
ALFRED
What are your plans, son?

EDGAR
I’ve got and find out who that bastard with the fancy shield is.

ALFRED
How are you going to do that?

EDGAR
I’ll ask around, see if anyone else has had a visit. Maybe, I’ll find my horse. Somebody’s got to know something.

ALFRED
(pats him on the shoulder)
Stay safe, son. You’re supposed to lean from your suffering.

He turns and walks away.

EXT. RIVERBANK, WISBECH – DAY

Edgar sits on the bank fishing, watching the people come and go, over the ferry.

Suddenly, he feels an unexpected slap on the shoulder.

ALAN
Your under arrest.

EDGAR
God, you gave a start.

ALAN
What are you doing here?

EDGAR
Every bodies got to be somewhere. And you?

ALAN
I’m flush at present, thought I’d spend my ill gotten gains in the tavern. Want to help?

EDGAR
I’m always willing to wet my lips with the angel’s tears. Lead the way, my fine friend.

They walk towards a rough and ready ale house.
EDGAR
If anybody knows how get into the castle, with out being seen, it will be a rapscallion like you.

ALAN
What the hell do you want in there. I’ve heard their jail’s full of venomous toads, and vermin that’ll gnaw you to death.

EDGAR
I’m looking for my horse.

Alan laughs in disbelief.

ALAN
You are in need of a drink, aren’t you?

EXT. THE RIVERBANK - NIGHT
The late evening summer sun glows red in the sky.
Edgar and Alan totter along a narrow trail, in an obvious state of inebriation.

ALAN
This is as narrow as the river get’s for miles.

EDGAR
Looks dangerous to me. How are you planning to get across?

ALAN
How about we find a log, sit on it and paddle across.

EXT. THE RIVERBANK - NIGHT
Edgar and Alan roll a log towards the river, unsteadily.

ALAN
You can’t expect me to go along with this half ass scheme, half cocked. You’re not just looking for your horse, are you? There is money in it, right?

EDGAR
Some ones going to pay. A knight with a red cross on his shield. If my horse is in the castle, so is he. Are you with me or not?
ALAN
If there is money in it, I’m in.

EDGAR
He’s got plenty of money. Let’s get this log in the water.

Edgar kicks the log, it rolls down the bank. He jumps in after it.

ALAN
Here goes nothing.

As they try to mount the log it rolls, and they fall off.

They wade back to the log, from opposite sides.

ALAN CONT.
Together... Jump.

They both struggle to mount the log.

ALAN CONT.
All set. I’ll paddle left you paddle right.

They set off across the river, paddling cautiously, counterbalancing with their opposite arms.

They are almost across when a tidal wave rolls in.

ALAN
It’s a surge, the tides changing.

The wave crashes into them, and they fall in.

They thrash at the water, desperately, pummeling their way across the treacherous current.

Finally, they reach the bank, and crawl out. They lay there exhausted.

EDGAR
I think the moon is laughing at us.

ALAN
Mooooo! Mister moon are you laughing. I can’t hear anything.

EDGAR
Perhaps you’ve got water in your ears.

ALAN
Or shit for brains.
EDGAR
So, how do we worm our way in, without being seen?

ALAN
These places always have a sewer pipe. We’ve just got to look.

LATER

Edgar battles with the bulrushes, as he tries to find a tunnel.

Alan comes across a tunnel in the bank, 7ft. in diameter.

ALAN
Edgar! Over here. This looks promising.

Edgar wades through the mud.

He sees raw stinking sewage floating out of a tunnel, into the river.

EDGAR
You expect me to wade through raw sewage.

ALAN
Do you want to get in there? Hold your nose.

Edgar stares at the hole. He nods to Alan.

EDGAR
Lead the way.

Alan enters the infernal aqueduct.

Edgar shakes his head, then tentatively follows.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM, CASTLE - DAY

A very comfortable homely scene.

The sheriff sits at the dinner table eating, and drinking. His dog lays by the blazing fire.

A SERVANT enters.

SERVANT
Earl Rodger Bigod wishes to see you, sire.
RALPH
I wonder why he is honoring my abode? Send him in.

Rodger enters, and marches towards Ralph.

RALPH
Welcome Earl Rodger, have a glass of wine with me.

Rodger sits. Ralph pours him a glass of wine.

RALPH CONT.
So tell me, Rodger, what brings you all the way from London, to see me?

HENRY
I bring you greetings from Baron Fitz-Walter, and a message.

RALPH
For me?

RODGER
He say’s, King John’s, broken his agreement and refused to ratify the "Magna Carta".

RALPH
What has this to do with me?

RODGER
The barons have declared war on the king. He’s asking the sheriff’s if he can count on their support.

RALPH
I gave my oaths of fealty to King John._

RODGER
We all gave an oath, to the king, on the condition he abided by "The Articles of the Barons".

RALPH
I could have you thrown in the brig.

RODGER
He claims he agreed under duress.

RALPH
I have no political ambitions.
RODER
The king’s will has become unreasonable. You are free to choose of course, but if you want to prosper, I suggest you fall into line with the barons.

RALPH
Why should I support their dammed war?

RODER
If you think of this in terms of finance, you can turn it to your advantage, but it will take decisive action, now.

RALPH
Go on.

RODER
The king is in Lynn, a mere 20 miles away. If he should meet with an accident, it will solve all our problems.

RALPH
You want to assassinate him? God’s wounds!

RODER
With John out of the way, the Barons will make a deal with King Philip of France, his son Louis will sit on the English throne. But first, it is imperative we attend to John, and all his supporters.

Ralph shakes his head, downs a full glass of wine.

RALPH
That’s one hell of an ask?

INT. SEWAGE PIPE

Edgar and Alan wade knee deep in rat infested sewage, making their way towards a faint beam of moonlight, emanating from a drainage grate.

Alan stands under the grate, and looks up.

ALAN
Stand here, and put your hands on your knees.
Alan crawls onto Edgar’s back, then reaches up to push the grate.

**EXT. THE CASTLE COURTYARD – CONTINUOUS**

The moonlight illuminates fingers, as they poke through the grid of the manhole cover, in the center of yard.

The grate rises, and Alan looks out.

**AT THE STABLE WALL**

he sees, a soldier peeing.

**INT. SEWER – CONTINUOUS**

Alan climbs back down.

    ALAN
    There’s a guard.

    EDGER
    We’re never getting out this hell hole.

    ALAN
    Stop whining, for God’s sake, you’re beginning to annoy me. The stable’s not far. We’ll just wait a while, till the coast is clear.

**INT. STABLE – NIGHT**

In the corner, Edith lays on a bed of straw, asleep.

**OUTSIDE**

The soldier adjust himself, and moves on.

**EXT. COURTYARD – NIGHT**

Alan takes a peek: seeing the coast is now clear, he pushes the lid aside, then crawls out.

He reaches down to help Edgar up.

They push the lid back, and set off, quiet as shadows, across the open ground.
INT. STABLE – NIGHT

Horses are lined up on one side, armor and emblazoned shields are stored on the other.

Edgar and Alan sneak in.

EDGAR
I’m looking for a gray Percheron.

The horses become restless, as they walk amongst them.

ALAN
Perhaps there’s a coral somewhere else.

A SNORT alerts Edith from her sleep. Creeping to a vantage point, she grabs a hammer, from the blacksmith’s tool rack. She spies on Edgar and Alan.

Edgar rifles through the shields. He finds one, with the red cross gules. He lifts it up.

EDGAR
This is the bastard’s shield. My horse must be close by.

Edith stealthily, ambles towards Edgar. Pokes him.

EDGAR
You twat!

EDITH
Thieving, now, are you? Put that shield back where you found it, you stinker, or I’ll lay you out.

Alan looks at Edith, salaciously.

ALAN
Wow! I’ve never seen no female blacksmith in action before.

EDITH
Spare me the, you’re looking hot, routine.

ALAN
I’m saying nothing while you hold the hammer. Nice set of muscles and you have there.

Alan moves in, intent on squeezing her exposed arm muscles.

She holds up the hammer. Alan backs off.
EDITH
What do you be wanting with a shield, anyway?

EDGAR
I don’t want it, I just want to know about the knight who owns it?

Alan slowly maneuvers himself behind Edith.

EDITH
And why should I tell you anything?

Alan grabs Edith, pinning her arms to her side. She drops the hammer.

ALAN
You can have your horse, I’ll have this little filly.

EDGAR
Leave her be Alan, she’s a friend.

ALAN
I can be amiable.

EDGAR
I said, leave her be.

ALAN
Oh, I get it, you want it all for yourself, eh? I just want a little taste.

EDGAR
Let her go?

ALAN
One of us is losing it.

Alan releases his grip, Edith pulls away.

EDITH
Stay away from me, you oaf, or you’ll regret it. And that’s a promise.

ALAN
Fair enough... she’s all yours.

EDGAR
Have you seen my horse, a gray Percheron. It was stolen, by the knight who owns that shield.
ALAN
I know her type, ornery, you’ll get nothing from her.

EDITH
Don’t like us salty bitches, eh! Prefer the meek and timid type, do you?

ALAN
I take them however they come.

Alan makes a rude gesture. Edith kicks him in the crutch.

Alan curls up, falls to the floor groaning. Rolling in agony, he happens upon a discarded parchment laying in the compost. Edgar assists Alan to his feet.

ALAN
She’s a spawn of the devil.

EDGAR
You asked for it.

EDITH
Why don’t you boys leg it back to whatever rock you crawled out from under, before the guards catch on to you.

Alan looks at the message.

ALAN
"Verifier Wisbech à la disposition de la rebellion".

He screws it up, and discards it.

EDGAR
Come on let’s get.

Alan steals a sword from the wall.

ALAN CONT.
Just a souvenir.

Edith throws her hammer at Alan, as he scarpers.

EDITH
Punk.

Edgar taps his forehead, as he heads out.

EDGAR
Au revoir a bientôt!
FADE TO:

A gold coin spins against a dark purple background. It settles on the enthroned image of the divine King John.

ON SCREEN TEXT

By 1215 King John had spent a fortune trying to hold on to his lost lands. His fiscal policies required vassals to make contributions, in all humility, and loyal devotion.

INT. KING JOHN’S BEDROOM, LYNN – DAY

Shards of sunlight come through the window, as John wakes. He gently pulls back the cover, revealing a naked girl, sleeping. He strokes her back, but gets no response.

John rips the covers off her, smacks her on the bottom.

JOHN
Wakey wakey, you’re not being paid to sleep.

The girl wakes with a start, and yelps.

JOHN CONT.
Massage my stomach, it pains me.

She massages John’s stomach, he belches.

JOHN CONT.
It must be something I ate or a belly full of bath water.

There’s a knock on the door.

JOHN CONT.
Come.

Marshal enters.

MARSHAL
Good morning, Your Majesty.

JOHN
And it was a very good night, too, Marshal.

John slaps the girls behind.

JOHN CONT.
There’s a gift for you on the table. Leave us.

She scuttles out of the bed, picks up her money, and leaves by a side door.
JOHN CONT.
What is it, that’s so important, that you disturb my privacy?

MARSHAL
A messenger has arrived from Wisbech, inviting you to a joust, Your Majesty.

JOHN
A joust! I haven’t time for fripperies, I have a war to win.

MARSHAL
Your commanders can organize things for you.

JOHN
I don’t know if I can trust them.

MARSHAL
A joust would give you a little pleasant relaxation, Your Majesty. The Templar’s still need time to finish loading the ship, for Grimsby.

JOHN
That should be finished by now.

MARSHAL
And I still need to find a guide to escort the troops over the wash. They can go on ahead, you can meet up with them in Swineshead, in a couple of days.

JOHN
Oh, all right... We’ll take a cart to Wisbech, I’ll collect their tribute, while I’m there. Just you and a small contingent of bodyguards. Arrange it.

EXT. STREET, WISBECH - DAY

King John, his knights, and their squires parade through street. SPECTATORS cheer and wave.

The knights have decorated emblems on their clothes, and shields; boars head, crossed swords, Dragon, Rampaging Lion etc.

During the parade we see the smiling faces of John and Marsha, as they accept the cheers, and adoration of the crowd.
Ralph stands on a platform welcoming them.

INT. BEDROOM, WISBECH CASTLE - DAY

Ralph shows King John an ornate bedroom.

RALPH
This is my room, Majesty, the finest in the castle.

John looks at the ornaments.

JOHN
If this is your best room, I suppose it will have to do. I can slum it for a couple of nights... Make sure the table is to my liking. Find my chef he will advise you... And I'll require a choice of women. Bring me half a dozen... clean ones. I don't want any poxed up whores... and a barrel, I shall want to bathe... Tacky, tacky, I'm used to better.

RALPH
You obviously have better taste than my wife, Your Majesty.

John tests the bed.

JOHN
Is your wife comely?

RALPH
(flustered)
She is away at present.

JOHN
I shall be expecting your contribution, for the war effort, in the morning.

RALPH
Alas your highness, the tax collectors were robbed by bandits, and my coffers a low.

JOHN
I want my money.

RALPH
If you can give me a little time. Earl Rodger Bigod is here for the jousting tomorrow, your Majesty, he wishes to speak with you about the situation with the barons.
JOHN
I have no interest in negotiating with that treacherous rabble of back-stabbers. They will do as they are told... You will pay your share by tomorrow night, or I shall give tenure of the castle to someone else, who can.

Ralph slopes out, with his tail between his legs.

INT. THE BLACKSMITH’S – DAY

Edith pumps the bellows and shuffles the poker. Using tongs, pulls a red hot lump of metal from the forge. She takes it to the steel block, and hammers it into shape.

Convivial Edgar enters, whistling in a festive mood.

EDGAR
Sorry if we upset you, the other night. Us men have no idea how women feel about things.

EDITH
No matter.

EDGAR
That Alan’s a bit of a lad, but he is friendly enough.

EDITH
There are other words to describe him that are more apt.

EDGAR
I guess you missed the parade?

EDITH
All these extra horses in town means more work for me.

EDGAR
That’s because your so cheap... cheap labor, I mean.

EDITH
I see you’ve changed your clothes, stinker.

EDGAR
I’ll take that as a compliment.

EDITH
Still sniffing around are you?
EDGAR
Sort of... I’ve been thinking.

EDITH
Don’t strain yourself.

EDGAR
If you were to do the king a service, he may grant you your freedom.

EDITH
And pigs might sprout wings.

EDGAR
Perhaps the Marshal can put a good word in for you.

EDITH
He has no interest in the likes of me.

EDGAR
Use your charm, I assume you do have some hidden away, somewhere.

INT. THE HALL, WISBECH CASTLE – DAY

Ralph’s disheveled, and unruly, soldiers march in.

GASTON
Halt... Right turn.

They form a line, facing the front.

The Marshal walks along the line. One soldier’s spear is at an angle to the rest. He straightens it.

MARSHAL
You look as like you don’t give a damn. Smarten yourselves up, or I’ll have you collecting crap, from the latrines.

Marshal takes up a position in front of them. He looks at all of them, they stand to attention.

MARSHAL CONT.
Remember, we are at war. Be on your guard, at all times, or you’ll answer for it. Stand them at ease, Gaston.

GASTON
Stand at... ease.

The soldiers relax. Marshal walks along the line.
MARSHAL
I suspect Prince Louis’ supporters are in the area. It’s possible some of them will be in the crowd, so keep your eyes open for suspicious activities. Your duty is to protect the throne, King John is the throne... One word of warning he has a short fuse, if he catches you skiving, you’ll be straight down to the dungeons, and chained to a wall. I’ve seen him have a man’s tongue for speaking out of turn... You’ll have my men to back you up, just do your job, and all will be well. Carry on.

GASTON
Attention, left turn, quick march.

EXT. HALL - DAY
Edgar and Edith walk across the bailey, towards the hall.

EDITH
I don’t know why I listen to you.

EDGAR
You’ve got to have a bit of faith, sometimes.

They meet Marshal, as he exits the door.

EDGAR
Can I speak with you, sire?

MARSHAL
Make it quick.

EDGAR
This is Edith, the hostler, and blacksmith. She would deem it an honor to look after the King’s horses.

MARSHAL
Take my advise, young lady, stay well away from King John. He has a real bent for the stirrup. Any stirrup. He especially likes the young ones, like you.
EDITH
Sorry to bother you, sire.
(punches Edgar’s arm)
Do him a service. What sought of person do you think I am?

Edith spins round, and walks away.

EDGAR
Apologies sire, no disrespect intended. I told the lady, the king may consider freeing her from the sheriff’s neck iron, if she did him a service. She is excellent with horses. Is there nothing you can do?

MARSHAL
I don’t like to disappoint, but you’ll have to negotiate with the sheriff yourself. I venture it will not be cheap.

EDGAR
(raises his eyebrow)
But I have no means.

EXT. TOURNAMENT ARENA, SWORD FIGHTING RING – DAY

Swords clash as two men fight: their swords make sparks fly, as they scrape the armor.

Edgar watches, he turns, and pushes his way through the crowd, towards the rostrum, where a JUDGE sits.

JUDGE
What’s the big idea? This is for officials only.

EDGAR
How much does the winner get?

JUDGE
More money than the likes of you will see in a year.

EDGAR
I can beat any knight, or noble who is willing to face me.

JUDGE
Is that so? I think I’d like to see you taken down a peg or two. I shall endeavor to locate a suitable candidate for a fracas.

The judge whispers to his aid, who then leaves.
The judge stands on the front of the rostrum.

JUDGE
Now, for your further entertainment, ladies and gentlemen, a special bout. We have a Saxon verses a Norman. Representing the Saxon’s, a young man who says he can take on any two Normans, at once.

(crowd cheer)
And for the Norman’s, a gentleman of enormous stature, Sir Clement of Yaxley, with his friend Percival.

Two dwarfs SIR CLEMENT OF YAXLEY, and PERCIVAL, in full armor, run into the ring, brandishing wooden swords.

The crowd laugh, as they chase Edgar round the ring.

Edgar looks like a weakling, he is prodded with the wooden swords.

JUDGE
Hey Saxon, here’s your sword

The judge throws Edgar a wooden sword.

Edgar bends down to pick it up, he gets prodded in the posterior.

He grabs the sword, parries the blows.

He knocks the sword out of Clement’s hand.

Clement, astonished, looks to the crowd, hands in the air.

Percival lays on the ground, behind Edgar.

Clement runs forwards, with his head down, butts Edgar in the stomach.

In a clown like slapstick action: Edgar backs up as Clement advances.

Finally, he stumbles backwards, splitting his trousers.

The dwarfs stand over him, each with a foot on his chest, sword’s raised high, victorious.

The dwarf’s do laps of honor, waving their arms at the cheering crowd.

Edgar politely, exaggerates his surrender, and humiliation, mooching out the ring, head bowed, beaten.
WOMAN IN CROWD
Hey Saxon, I can see your knickers.

EXT. TOURNAMENT ARENA - DAY

TUMBLERS entertain. A MAN has a bird of prey sitting on his arm. The crowd eat, drink, and applaud.

A HAWKER walks in front of the peasants.

HAWKER
Cat meat, brandy wine.

Drummers, and buglers sound a fanfare.

APPLAUSE: as all the contestants, in full jousting gear, enter on horseback. Squires run alongside, carrying spare lances.

Marshal, Rodger, and the knights circle the jousting barrier.

They line up in front of the stand, lower their lances, in honor of the king.

ON THE STAND

John holds his stomach, as he acknowledges the salute.

RALPH
I’m told you are unwell, Your Majesty. I hope it does not spoil your enjoyment.

JOHN
I trust the out house has a clean sponge.

The ANNOUNCER reads front a scroll.

ANNOUNCER
My lords, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great honor to present to you the challengers, for the joust championship... Here ye, hear ye, knights of the field. All those who remain in the saddle, go through to the final.
ON THE FIELD

The knights file out.

INT. RODGER BIGOD’S TENT – DAY

Rodger eats a chicken leg, and drinks a glass of wine. Ralph slips in, checking he is not being observed.

RODGER
Ah! Sheriff, have you come to a decision.

RALPH
I have. He’ll ruin me. He wants the bees, and the honey. I shall cut his throat, the moment you kill Marshal. How will you do it?

Rodger produces a sugar coronal.

RODGER
I have a special lance, with a blackened sugar coronal hiding the spike. As soon as I strike the sugar will shatter, and the spike will pierce his armor.

He squeezes the coronal, and it crumbles.

MONTAGE -- VARIOUS KNIGHTS JOUSTING

-- The starter lowers his flag.
-- Horses run.
-- Knights clash.
-- The crowd cheer.
-- Various Knight’s fall, during jousts.
-- Score flags spring up.

EXT. THE ARENA – DAY

Gaston approaches a TALL SOLDIER, who stands at the end of the stand.

GASTON
I want a quiet word.

Tall soldier follows Gaston to a quiet place.
EXT. THE BLACKSMITH TENT - DAY

Standing close to the tall soldier, Gaston whispers.

GASTON
You have always been loyal to the sheriff. Can I rely on your continued support and discretion?

TALL SOLDIER
My lips are sealed.

INSIDE

Edith overhears the discussion: she lets go of the horse hoof, she’s working on, and goes closer to the tent wall.

OUTSIDE

GASTON
Get the men ready for trouble. When Sir Rodger’s spiked lance strikes the Marshal, the king will get what’s coming to him. If all goes to plan Marshal will be dead, when the spike hits him, if not, finish him off. His bodyguard won't know what’s happening. They will be easy to dispatch.

EXT. THE ARENA - DAY

Edith pushes her way through the crowd. She locates Edgar, who stands watching the jousting.

EDITH
I’ve just over heard two of the sheriff’s soldiers planning a kill, as Marshal jousts with the knight with the red cross shield.

EDGAR
This is a chance for you to win the king’s favor, and free yourself from the sheriff’s neck iron. Tell the Marshal exactly what you’ve overheard. I’ll try and muster some help.
EXT. BEHIND THE STAND – DAY

Alan the bandit, throws three playing cards down on table, looks up at his MARK, who is staring at them, intently.

    ALAN
    So, where is the lady. Are you going to put your money where your mouth is.

The mark freezes: Dusty puts five coins down on the table. JUDITH, another buxom bandit chum, pushes in, and throws five more coins down on the table.

The mark decides, to go with the flow, he puts his money down, on the left one, as well.

    ALAN CONT.
    Are you three conspiring against me?

Alan flips over the right hand card. It’s a five. He flips over the left hand card. It’s a seven.

    ALAN CONT.
    I’m sorry people, but you lose.

He collects up the money. The mark grabs his hand.

    MARK
    Just a minute lets see the other.

    ALAN
    Don’t you trust me.

He flips the queen over. The mark feeling cheated, looks Alan in the eye.

    MARK
    You fixed it, somehow.

    ALAN
    Come on, don’t be a sore loser.

Dusty and Pete, who stand behind Alan, step forward.

The mark sees he’s outnumbered, and turns away. He spits in the dust, as he goes. The bandits chuckle together.

Edgar pushes his way through the crowd.

    EDGAR
    Yo, Alan.

The bandits close ranks.
ALAN
Back off Edgar’s a friend.

EDGAR
I’ve had it with being polite and
decent, it gets you nowhere, in
this God forsaken world. Rodger’s
about to kill the Marshal, in a
joust. Can you get the boys
together, and cause a
distraction? Save the day, and
there could be a reward in it.

ALAN
It’s about time you came to your
senses, lad. Chaos is our game.

EXT. TOURNAMENT ARENA – DAY

Sir Rodger Bigod, red cross, and Sir William Marshal, a
rampaging lion, ride onto the field, they take up their
position, at each end of the barrier, facing each other.

The ANNOUNCER reads from a scroll.

ANNOUNCER
My Lords, ladies and gentlemen,
it is my honor to present to you
the two finalist, for the title
of match champion, in a match of
three lances. One point is
awarded for breaking a lance from
waist to neck, two points for
breaking a lance on the head, and
three points for bearing a rider
to the ground.

Drummers, and buglers sound fanfare.

The squire lifts off Sir Rodger helmet. Rodger looks down
the field.

The squire lifts Sir William Marshal’s helmet. He looks
back at Rodger.

The helmet’s are replaced. The squires pass the lances.

The starter, standing in the middle, raises his flag.

The tall soldier stands ready to finish off Marshal.

Sir Rodger spurs his horse, it kicks up his front legs,
and charges. As the two knights charge towards each other,
HOOVES POUND the ground. The horses SNORT, as they run.

Marshal’s lance crashes into Rodger’s shield, and it
splinters. Rodger’s lance fails to connect.
The scorer pulls a lever. One flag shoots out.

FAULKES DE BREAUTE (40’s) - the mercenary captain, approaches Marshal.

FAULKES
He has a weakness, sire. He drops his head at the last second to protect his eyes.

MARSHAL
I think I have his measure, Faulkes.

Edith waves to Marshal, and runs up to him.

EDITH
I have just overheard a plan to kill you, and attack the king. The sheriff and Bigod’s men are set to strike, as a spike hits.

MARSHAL
A spike by God! Warn the king, Faulkes, he must not be in the stand for the final joust.

FAULKES
Immediately, sire.

Faulkes hurries off.

EDITH
Surely, you do not intend to take on the joust against a spike.

MARSHAL
Of course, this is my trade. The added danger excites me... I advise you, my lady, to take leave of the sheriff, his time will be short.

Marshal readies himself for the joust. Edith retreats.

The two contestants take up their positions at opposing ends of the barrier.

Marshal’s helmet is replaced. Rodger’s helmet is replaced.

EXT. IN THE STAND - DAY

Faulkes whispers to the king. The king turns to Ralph.
JOHN
I need a sponge.

He gets up, and leaves.

RALPH
Gaston, follow them.

Ralph waves to his men, pointing to the disappearing king.

MONTAGE -- THE STAMPEDE IN THE ARENA

-- The starter begins to raise his flag, he turns as he hears the NOISE OF HOOVES. Startled he throws down the flag and runs.

-- Edgar, and the shouting bandits, force horses to stampede over the field. Hooves kick up dust.

-- Rodger pulls his reigns, to calm his horse.

-- Some of the horses try to jump into the stands. The crowd panic, and fall back from the fence edge.

-- Marshal throws down his lance, dismounts, and removes his armor.

IN THE STAND,

Ralph, tense with anticipation, waves to his soldiers.

RALPH
Stop the king, he’s getting away.
One thousand crowns to the man who strikes the final blow.

The soldiers pursue the king.

BEHIND THE STAND,

John jumps on a horse, spurs it, and races away.

FAULKES
Make for Swineshead, sire. We will guard your rear.

Faulkes, and his bodyguards form a defensive barrier.

JOHN
Get my treasure cart moving.

Ralf’s foot soldiers slam into the king’s bodyguards, no quarter given.

The bodyguards drive back the soldiers.
Faulkes is relentless: swinging his broadsword with both hands, each time he swings a head flies, or an arm.

The ground runs red with blood.

BACK IN THE ARENA,

Edgar, Alan, Dusty and Pete, stand amid the chaos of the running crowd, and the panicking horses. They look pleased with themselves.

DUSTY
You wanted chaos, chaos is what you’ve got.

EDGAR
Good job lads.

ALAN
Come on, let’s get the treasure.

EDGAR
No, wait! The reward?

BEHIND THE STAND

Edith weaves her way through the chaos. She takes refuge in the treasure cart.

The bandits come running from the arena, and pile into Ralf’s soldiers.

As the soldiers turn their attention to the bandits, the bodyguard make for their horses, and follow the king.

RALPH
God’s wounds, those damned bandits will ruined everything, kill them all.

EDITH

looks out the back of the cart, and sees the approaching bandits. Fearing for her life, she throws tapestries about searching for anything handy to protect herself with.

She opens the chest, sees the coins. She grabs with both hands, throws some out over the tail board.
THE BANDITS

can’t believe their luck, they scramble in the dirt, fighting amongst themselves, to get a share.

FAULKES

climbs onto the front seat of the cart, picks up the reigns, and whips the horses on the rear. The cart begins to pull away.

RALPH,
on horseback, fumes with anger, as his plan stalls.

Defenseless peasants who are getting mixed up in the battle, make a run for it, the armed stand their ground.

RALF
Kill them all.

BACK IN THE ARENA

Seeing Rodger, Edgar pulls out his sword, and makes his way through the butting horses.

10 YARDS AWAY,
his face contorts, as he feels his vengeance is near.

5 YARDS AWAY,
he lifts his sword.

AT CLOSE QUARTERS,

Rodger turns, and sees Edgar’s sword swinging towards him, he leans to the side. The blow bounces off his armored shoulder. He drops his lance, clenches his metal glove, and brings it down, on Edgar’s head.

Edgar now in danger of being trampled, rolls between the horses legs, he crawls to his feet, shakes his head to regain his senses, and wanders around aimlessly.

A panicking horse collides, Edgar crumbles, unconscious.

Rodger spurs his horse and rides off.
EDGAR’S PERCHERON
comes to the rescue, reviving Edgar with a sniff, and a
lick to the face.

Edgar climbs to his feet. Zeus kneels, Edgar crawls on his
back. The wonder horse walks Edgar to safety.

EXT. FIELDS – DAY

Weighed down by his armor, Rodger bounds across the flat
countryside, on his black horse, beneath the glowing
purple sky.

He turns parallel to the river, and gallops on, searching
for a place to cross.

Nervous birds vacate their places, and make for the open
air, as he passes.

BEHIND HIM,
a determined Edgar, gallops in hot pursuit. He closes the
gap.

NOW SIDE BY SIDE,

Rodger spins his horse, and swings his sword.

Edgar ducks, and slashes ruthlessly with a short sword,
but it has no effect on Rodger’s armor.

Rodger fights back with equal brutality, but he isn’t
quick enough to land a blow. He aims for the horse.

The horse stops, and Edgar sails over its head, he crashes
onto the muddy ground.

Rodger, eyes burning with a zealous fire, comes towards
him.

Edgar rises, and fights for his life. He’s at a terrible
disadvantage, is he doomed?

Rodger tries another run, but Edgar roles out of the way,
falling in the river.

Rodger turns, and makes off.
THE CROSSING

Rodger decides to take a chance, he splashes into the deep rushing water, his horse sinks momentarily, because of the weight of Rodger’s armor, but he surfaces, and struggles across to the far bank.

Rodger hangs on for his life, as his half drowned horse scrambles up the bank.

Edgar arrives on his horse, and looks at the rushing water. He tries it tentatively, but decides, at that depth, it’s not worth the risk.

    EDGAR
    You can run Bigod, but don’t think this is over, yet. We have a score to settle.

Rodger gives a cheeky wave, as he gallops off.

Edgar sucks at his teeth, he shakes his head, as he watches, Rodger disappear into the distance.

EXT. RIVER BANK – DAY

The bandits mingle with the peasants, running for the jetty, to escape the chaos.

Ralph and his soldiers pursue them.

    JUDITH
    Wait for me.

Alan clambers on the long wooden barge. He does not like the look of this one bit.

    ALAN
    Hurry men... Loose the ropes, they’re almost on us... There is no time to wait for everyone...
    Pull, your life depends on it.

They pull on the ropes, that tow the barge, and it moves away from the bank.

Judith runs as fast as she can, jumps, drops short, and submerges in the water.

    DUSTY
    Judith, give us your hand.

Judith reaches. Dusty and Pete grab her, and pulls her out of the water.
JUDITH
That was a close one.

She looks back to see the soldiers, stabbing, and slashing, at the stragglers.

JUDITH
Oh! My God.

Ralph gallops into sight.

RALPH
Don’t let that vile scum get away. Bowmen, loose your arrows.

Bowmen slide out their arrows, aim and fire.

ON THE BARGE

A volley of arrows rain down. A number suffer piercings, others choose to jump into the water, for it’s dubious safety. Non swimmers get swept away, other hang on to the side of the barge.

The passengers pull on the rope.

ALAN
Stick with it lads... Pull. Harder... Harder.

Among the dead bodies laying on the barge, Judith attends to Pete’s bloody bruises.

JUDITH
This is cold blooded murder.
(shouts at Ralph)
We are unarmed. Have mercy on us.

ON THE BANK

Ralph looks on in anger, waving his arms, as he shouts orders.

RALPH
Don’t let them escape. Kill them.
Use your spears. They’re animals, the scum of the earth. Bowmen...
Load... Fire.

The bowmen loose another volley.
ON THE BARGE

Judith gets an arrow in the chest, she crumbles, and falls in the water. Pete tries to hold her, until he gets one in the shoulder, no more strength, he lets her go. She slides under the water.

   ALAN
   Pull... Pull... Pull.

The barge picks up speed. The arrows begin to fall short.

ON THE BANK,

soldiers finish off the injured stragglers, one by one, as they lay on the ground, groaning.

THE BARGE

reaches the far bank, docks, and the survivors limp off. They pull up the drenched swimmers, who hang onto the sides of the barge.

Alan stands helpless on the bank, and looks at the bodies of the dead, floating away.

EXT. UP RIVER - DAY

Edgar sits on Zeus, assessing the current. He pats his neck.

   EDGAR
   Are you ready for a swim, Zeus.
   You can do it... You just need confidence. Ready... Go.

Tentatively, he maneuvers Zeus into the current. He swims, calm, and steady, down stream. They make it to the far bank, and Zeus clambers out.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Bandits mill about. A cauldron hangs over a small fire. Clothes hang on twigs drying. Dusty tends to Pete’s shoulder, Alan watches.

   ALAN
   I’ve got some spirit, if you want to pour it on his wound.

   PETE
   Don’t waste it on the damn wound, give me a drink.
Pete grabs the cup, and takes a swig, as Dusty cuts off the arrow flight, Pete winces.

Edgar enters the camp, ties Zeus to a tree, approaches.

DUSTY
This is all his bloody fault.

EDGAR
Horse shit. I never shot you. You should have legged it instead of going for the treasure cart. How much did you get, anyway?

ALAN
Not enough. We wouldn’t even have that, if that blacksmith girl of yours hadn’t thrown it to us.

Edgar looks puzzled.

DUSTY
She was in the treasure cart.

ALAN
Hiding I guess.

EDGAR
I doubt there was much treasure in it. The Templar’s are planning to take the bulk across The Wash at low tide.

The bandits grin, one thought in their minds.

ALAN
Here Pete drink the rest of the spirit, it will help you sleep.

As Pete necks it, Alan picks up a rock, gauges it’s weight, and gives it to Dusty.

ALAN
Let’s get you comfortable.

Alan leans Pete against a tree, then stands at his back.

Dusty swings the rock hitting the blunt shaft. As the arrow comes out Pete’s back, Alan grabs it, and gives it a final yank.

Dusty pulls the hot iron out of the fire, and runs it through the hole. Pete screams as his flesh sizzles.

PETE
You bastards.
INT. CHAMBER, WISBECH CASTLE - NIGHT

Rodger and Ralph sit at a table drinking from goblets. Servants enter with a sumptuous meal, and serve.

RALPH
Damn those bandits, when I’ve rounded them up, I’ll drawer, and quarter the lot of them.

RODGER
Don’t concern yourself with them.

RALPH
Don’t concern myself with them! They’re subverting the whole feudal system. It’s anarchy. Give me fifty men, I’ll harrow the countryside... I’ll turn over every blade of grass... I’ll have them begging for death... I’ll cut out their damned souls.

RODGER
John is the prize. I can give you fifty men but you must go after John. Some say, he’s a weak foolish king, not me. He’s greedy, yes! He has his vices, yes! But foolish, he is not. Alive, he is still capable of rallying a sizable force.

RALPH
Leave John to me. I’ll set out at dawn. I must finish the job now it’s in progress.

RODGER
I must go to France to report, and facilitate Louis’ succession. Don’t fail me.

RALPH
He’s as good as dead.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The early morning mist hangs over the ground, as the bandits rouse themselves. Edgar approaches Alan, as he draws in the dirt.

EDGAR
Now what are you up to?
ALAN
I’m trying to figure out the best place to attack the Templars.

EDGAR
They’re crusade veterans. Are you’re men good fighters, or just stupidly brave.

ALAN
They may not know the writings but when it comes to survival, we’re clever enough. We have to be. The nobles may find it easy to steal our goods, but when it comes to our lives, we can kill them, too... Murder is just a matter of how much sin a man can live with. If we’re going to hell for our skulduggery, we’re sure to meet plenty of nobles there. I think of death like autumn leaves. We all must fall off the tree, sometime.

EDGAR
The first time I killed an animal, I was worried for my mortal soul. Now, I just think about dying well.

ALAN
Well, I want to die wealthy.

EDGAR
Are you sure you’re not a Norman?

They laugh at the irony.

ALAN
The only thing Norman that interests me is their treasure chests.

Thud, an arrow hits a tree. Alan takes the message wrapped around the shaft.

ALAN CONT.
It appears the sheriff has similar thoughts. He’s making for the sea shore, with Rodger’s Frenchmen. There may be rich pickings. Are you with us?

Edgar nods.
EXT. THE WASH – DAY

The tide is out, but the channels are still full of water. Sea birds peck at the exposed mud for worms.

John, his bodyguards, and the baggage cart, are stalled on the estuary bank. They look at the precarious landscape.

Marshal gallops up to them.

MARSHAL
Good morning, Your Majesty.

JOHN
Where the hell have you been, Marshal. Your place is with me. I’m stricken with the ague, and look, I’m stuck here in the middle of nowhere, waiting on mother nature.

MARSHAL
I was assessing things. It seems Bigod is now firmly with Prince Louis, and the sheriff is his new recruit. He’s on his way here with fifty Frenchmen, as we speak. He’ll be on you within the hour, sire. We must cross the estuaries as soon as possible.

JOHN
We have no guide? Does this look safe to you?

MARSHAL
I’m not familiar with these waters.

JOHN
What are we to do?

MARSHAL
Find a suitable place to cross, and save yourself, leave your baggage.

JOHN
Choose your best men Faulkes, you’ll all come with me. Marshal stay here, and save my belongings.

Faulkes jumps off the cart, walks to the rear, and unties his horse. Edith sticks out her head
EDITH
Your not leaving me here are you? What kind of man are you to leave a defenseless woman?

FAULKES
Pray, maybe God will help you. I just follow orders.

JOHN
Faulkes, ride ahead, and test the ground.

Faulkes jumps on his horse, and rides before John.

Marshal looks behind.

IN THE DISTANCE
the sheriff and the Frenchmen are galloping towards him.

THE ESTUARY
Marshal guides his horse closer to the cart.

MARSHAL
(to Edith)
It seems like we have company. Do you want to cross with us, or take your chances with the sheriff?

EDITH
I’ve never been given a choice before.

MARSHAL
Now you have one, what’s it to be?

EDITH
I think... I’ll stay with you.

MARSHAL
Your first choice is probably going to be a wrong choice. May I inquire as to what swayed you?

EDITH
A woman must be allowed to keep her secrets.

Her smile is light. As it dawns on him, he smiles.
MARSHAL
And I thought, I was past my prime. Alas, I can not perform miracles, let us hope you do not, soon, regret your decision.

He turns, and waves to his men.

MARSHAL CONT.
Let’s get moving.

A SERGEANT jumps on the cart’s driving seat, and the group begin their precarious journey.

THE SOUTH BANK
Ralph races after the cart, the Frenchmen follow. Irrational with hate, he turns to Gaston, as he gallops.

RALPH
We’ve got them. There’s no way he can make it across before we catch him.

GASTON
It’s treacherous ground, sire.

RALPH
I have their scent in my nostrils. If it’s firm enough for them, it’s firm enough for us.

The water and mud splashes smudge their faces. Some of the horses falter in the deep bog, as they flirt with disaster.

THE ESTUARY
The cart wheels sink deeper, and deeper into the mud.

MARSHAL
Push on the wheels. There is firm ground ahead. Heave men...

The men grunt, as they aid the horses in their task.

ON THE SOUTH BANK
Ralph races on, ahead of his men. He closes the gap.
THE SEA

The sea birds hop into the air, as the water begins to surge in land. It funnels it’s way into the channels, and floods over the banks, onto the sea grass.

THE ESTUARY

Marshal shakes his head, as the task of moving the cart becomes impossible. He smacks his horse, and it moves off.

MARSHAL
The tide is turning. It’s hopeless. We’ll have to leave it.

The men try to walk to the north bank. Marshal discards his heavy clothes, spread eagles himself on the mud, and crawls.

ON THE CART

Edith crawls forward to the driver, she puts her hand on the sergeant’s shoulder.

EDITH
Don’t leave me here, for pity’s sake.

The sergeant shakes his head, as he looks her in the eye.

SERGEANT
Confess you sins, girl. I fear there is no way out of this hell hole. I can give you my knife, if you won’t to die quickly.

He let’s go of the reigns, climbs down from his seat. He salutes, turns, and begins to walk across the black peat bog.

She anxiously watches the sergeant, inwardly eggs him on.

The sergeant’s strength finally gives out. He waves goodbye, as the bog sucks him down.

SERGEANT
I shall keep a place warm on the other side, in case you need it.

He submerges, as the water rushes in.

Edith turns away, head in hands. She makes the sign of the cross on her chest.
ON THE NORTH BANK,

Marshal looks back, helplessly, towards the cart, and his struggling men, as the water rushes in.

ON THE SOUTH BANK,

John’s mud covered bodyguard try to wade back to safety, but Ralph, and his Frenchmen are waiting for them. Ralph draws his sword, then steams in. His men follow his lead, slicing and stabbing, until the bodyguards are all dead.

It gradually dawns on Ralph that he is also in trouble. Soon, the Frenchmen are all struggling against the surging tide.

The bandits arrive, and watch them struggle.

RALPH
Get me out of here.

ALAN
Why should we help you.

RALPH
I’m your sheriff, your lord and master, it’s your duty.

ALAN
I don’t remember ever giving my allegiance to you.

RALPH
Show me mercy for God’s sake.

ALAN
Like you showed us at the ferry. What was it you called us... animals... vile scum. I’ll show you as much mercy as you showed us. Kill him.

Dusty pulls an arrow out of his quiver, strings it, takes the strain. He looses the string, and the arrow thuds into Ralph’s eye.

DUSTY
That was for Judith.

The group of bandits leave. Edgar, Alan, and Dusty stay.
LATER

The rising water is deep enough to swim in now. Cautiously, they keep to firm ground, as they make their way towards the cart. Edith waves.

EDITH

Quick do something.

Throwing caution to the wind, Edgar enters the water, and swims forwards. Dusty, and Alan follow. They crawl

ON THE CART

Edith pulls Edgar aboard.

EDGAR

You sure get yourself in a some fine messes, don’t you?

EDITH

It was such a nice day, I thought I’d take a trip to the sea side.

ALAN

Where’s that chest.

Edith points. Alan opens it. He let’s the coins run through his fingers. He puts John’s crown on his head.

ALAN

I think it suits me.

DUSTY

How the hell are we supposed to get it to the bank.

EDITH

(to Edgar)

I thought you’d come for me, not the money.

Edgar looks at her crestfallen expression.

EDGAR

You prayed for Moses, and got me. Tough break. Without money, what are we?

She tightens her lips in a forced smile.

ALAN

We’ll need to float it.

Edith moves a tapestry, revealing wine, and beer barrels.
EDITH
How about these?

Alan rips wood from the side of the cart.

ALAN
Great, we’ll empty them out and tie them to some planks.

DUSTY
Is there any rope?

EDGAR
We can rip up the tapestries.

Alan, and Dusty roll the barrel to the back of the cart, and pull out the corks, spilling the contents.

ALAN
What a waste.

Edgar and Edith rip the tapestries into strips.

LATER

Edgar ties the final knot, securing the plank to the three barrels.

They all lower the raft into the water.

ALAN
That’s as good as it gets.

Alan, Dusty and Edgar grab the trunk, and drag it to the rear of the cart.

EDGAR
The moment of truth.

They lower the chest on the raft. It tilts precariously. Dusty jumps on the raft, and he centers the chest. The raft rocks.

Everyone jumps in the water. Each supporting a corner.

They kick their legs, and fight their way through the undulating waves, pushing the raft up stream.

A WHIRLPOOL

forms, where the river and sea meet. The current begins to draw them into the eddy.
EDGAR
Save yourselves.

Edith lets go of the raft, she starts to doggy paddle, ineffectively, towards the bank.

Edgar undoes a strip of tapestry, and swims to her.

ALAN
All the more for us, Dusty.

Edgar ties the tapestry strip to Edith’s neck ring, and loops it over his head.

He beats at the water for all he’s worth, and they gradually make head way.

Alan and Dusty thrash at the water, but they are drawn closer towards the center of the whirlpool.

THE NORTH BANK

Edgar and Edith crawl onto the boggy bank.

EDGAR
Don’t stand up, you’ll sink.

They look back in sadness to see Alan and Dusty sinking into the vortex.

EDITH
Damn fools. Why didn’t they save themselves?

EDGAR
Money sends people crazy. They could have been set up for life, but you can’t fight nature.

EXT. SWINESHEAD MONASTERY – DAY

Standing on a hill surrounded by the salt marsh is the relatively new building that shows off the richness and power of the church.

BROTHER TIMON (60) – bald patch on his crown, wearing a cassock, bows as he greets King John, and his bodyguards.

BROTHER TIMON
Welcome to our humble abode, Your Majesty.

JOHN
Not to humble, I gather. I will require lodging, and provision for my men. You will supply me.
BROTHER TIMON
The church is exempt from tax,
Your Majesty. Our means are
meager, you will leave us
deficient.

JOHN
This is not a negotiation. My
will is the law. Faulkes, strip
the monastery, my need is the
greater.

EXT. THE MARSHES - DAY

Brother Timon searches in reeds.

He moves slowly and stealthily, then quick as a flash, he
dives to the ground, gloved hands cupped.

BROTHER TIMON
Got you this time, you little
devil. Alas the tree has a
rotting leaf. It will be up to
you to cast out the imperfection.

He picks up a toad, puts it in a cage, turns for home.

EXT. THE ESTUARY - DAY

Together, Edgar, and Edith crawl to firmer ground, arms,
and legs outstretched like spiders.

EDGAR
Mud suits you.

Edith throws mud at Edgar. He returns the favor.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Stew cooks in a pot. On the table food is laid out. Wine,
eels, peaches, porridge etc.

Brother Timon places the cage on the table, opens the
door, pulls out the toad, puts it in a bucket.

Taking a broach from his cassock, he tortures the toad
with the pin, until it ouses with venomous fluid.

BROTHER TIMON CONT.
Sorry about this, my beauty but
you have God’s work to do.

He picks up the toad, wipes it on the inside of a bowl, so
the poison adheres to the sides, then returns the toad to
the cage.
BROTHER TIMON CONT.
Your job is done, little one, our beloved king will rob us no more.

He pours peaches into the bowl. He loads the tray, picks it up, and walks out.

EXT. SALT MARSH - DAY
Edgar, and Edith trudge on over the flat fen.
In the distance, see a figure. Marshal is waving to them.

    EDITH
Look is that the Marshal.

They approach Marshal.

    MARSHAL
The fates keep throwing us together.

    EDGAR
Hell of a place to get lost.

    MARSHAL
I’m heading for Swinshead.

    EDITH
Take us with you? We wont get in the way.

    MARSHAL
Did you buy her from the sheriff?

    EDGAR
As far as far as I’m concerned, he lost his rights when he became a traitor. He’s dead now, anyway, so that settles it.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY
King John lays in bed groaning, holding his stomach.

Brother Timon passes the tray.

    BROTHER TIMON
Your Majesty... How is your fever... I’ve bought you some Honey Meade, they say bees pollen contains the secret of life. I advise you, try and partake of a light meal. If you can not stomach the eels, try the apples,
BROTHER TIMON
and peaches. I can recommend them.

John sits up, and looks at the tray.

Brother Timon adjust the curtains, and the bedding, looking out the corner of his eye.

BROTHER TIMON
Have you no appetite, Your Majesty?

JOHN
Perhaps I shall feel more inclined later.

BROTHER TIMON
Rest yea, your Majesty. Sleep well, tonight.

Brother Timon leaves.

John plays with the food, pushing it around the dish, but does not eat it.

Marshal enters.

MARSHAL
How fares thee, sire.

JOHN
(shouts)
Majesty!... I feel terrible. I’ve have the hot and cold sweats. Where is my money?

MARSHAL
Alas, the cart sank in the Wash.

JOHN
Sank! And there’s no word from the Temple knights?

MARSHAL
No word, Majesty. I suspect they failed to find a guide, and have reposed in King’s Lynn.

JOHN
What am I to do Marshal? The French want me dead, the baron’s are deserting me, and now you tell me, you do not know where my money is... How bad can things get?

Suspicious, John toys with his food.
JOHN CONT.
Do you trust these monks?

MARSHAL
I have no reason to doubt their sincerity, Majesty.

JOHN
You didn’t doubt your son. He deserted, and sided with Louis and those treacherous barons.

This is a stab in Marshal’s heart.

MARSHAL
He believed you were not of God’s will.

John waves away the suggestion.

JOHN
God would not have made me king if that were true. Have you any idea what I have to do to protect my territories. Kingship is an onerous responsibility.

He beckons Marshal close.

JOHN CONT.
I want to do the right thing, but that requires loyal support. All I get is treachery, and money grabbing. These monks, they are no help with all their high minded morality. They judge me to empower themselves. They must be made to understand my word is the law.

John looks at the eels.

JOHN CONT.
Eels, for God’s sake, they serve me with eels, for a bad stomach... Here taste one.

Marshal eats an eel, pulls a face.

MARSHAL
I’ve never been a fan of eel, Majesty.

JOHN
And what say you for apples?
MARSHAL
Apples? Some say they were culpable in the matter of the downfall of man. They lifted the veil from our eyes, and allowed us see ourselves naked, as the sinners we are. I suggest the peaches are a safer option. My advice is, stay blind to your faults.

JOHN
We must do what we must do, in order to survive.

MARSHAL
It is an inevitable fact, Majesty, we shall all be judged wanting... Shall I taste the peaches for you.

John is now convinced that they are good.

JOHN
Would you have me starve.

He gobbles them down. Holds his stomach and groans.

JOHN
Get me to Newark, I must see my doctor. A foul curse on this inhospitable fen.

MARSHAL
We shall be ready at first light, Majesty.

JOHN
I fear I’ll be up and down all night. See my pots are at hand.

EXT. MONASTERY – DAY
As the sun rises, John stumbles, groaning, out of the door, and crawls to his litter.

Marshal leads the entourage as they move out of the gates.

EXT. ROAD TO NEWARK – LATER

MARSHAL
It wont be long now, Majesty.
JOHN
Tell them to go gently, Marshal, for god’s sake. I’m suffering the fate of the damned, in here.

Edith, and Edgar walk along side the king’s litter, with Zeus.

EDGAR
Will you be going back to Wisbech?

EDITH
Now the Sheriff is dead, I suppose I’m a vagrant. My future is... ambiguous. Wisbech is just a bad memory.

EDGAR
You’ll have to make a decision.

EDITH
Choice is something I’ve never had dealings with before. It feels very strange.

EDGAR
What is important to you?

EDITH
I guess, I’ll just stick with the horses. (she pats Zeus) You know where you are with a horse.

INT. BED CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, NEWARK CASTLE - NIGHT

Lightning, a clap of thunder, rain beats against the window.

King John indicates he has something to whisper, as he lays prostrate on the bed. The DOCTOR leans over.

DOCTOR
He says his time is come. He wants to make a Will.

CLERGY make signs. Marshal gets writing implements. They all crowd around the bed, to listen.

JOHN
Collect my taxes, and promise you’ll provide support for my sons.
MARSHAL
Rest assured, Majesty, I shall call on all faithful Englishmen, to send that upstart Louis, back to, from whence he came.

JOHN
Don’t let him have my crown... Smite him, and make distributions to the poor for the salvation of my soul. I have a great deal of death to answer for... Come closer.

MARSHAL
I’m here, Your Majesty.

JOHN
No more leaches, and don’t let the doctor overcharge you.

John falls back on his pillow.

HIS NIGHTMARE
In the fuzziness of his dream, John looks at the horrid faces of devils, reaching up from a hell hole, trying to get hold of him, to drag him down.

The closed mouths and eyes, of ghostly faces, open. They screech in devilish tones, forked tongues flicker.

He wants to run, but he can’t get his body to respond. Hands drag him down. His body sinks through the bed.

IN THE BEDROOM
The last breath leaves his body. The doctor pulls the sheet over his head.

INT. BLACKSMITH STABLE – DAY
The haze from the damp hay fills the air, as the sun beams penetrate through the open door.

Edgar enters looking uncertain, and approaches Edith who is feeding a foal.

EDGAR
The king died in the night.

EDITH
How will that effect things?
EDGAR
I’m not sure.

EDITH
What are your plans?

EDGAR
I’ve still got to find that swine Bigod.

Edgar rubs his sword handle obsessively.

EDGAR CONT.
If he thinks he can become earl of the shire by cutting off my mother’s head he is very much mistaken. There’s no rest for me while he lives... If I follow Marshal, I’m guessing our path’s will cross.

EDITH
You’re full of hate. I’m frightened for you.

EDGAR
Truth be told. I frighten myself, too.

EDITH
I recall you saying, you didn’t want anything to do with the war.

EDGAR
Circumstances have changed. I’ve changed. There’s no going back, now... What are your plans?

EDITH
I guess I’ll have to find a new master, one who needs their horses taking care of.

Edgar picks up a hammer.

EDGAR
Come over here.

EDITH
What for?

EDGAR
What’s the matter don’t you trust me.

Edith walks over with a look of suspicion in her eyes.
EDGAR CONT.
Is that why you’re such a hard ass?

Edgar looks her in the eyes.

EDGAR CONT.
If you trust me, put your head down on the awl.

She hesitates.

EDGAR CONT.
You don’t, do you?

EDITH
I hardly know you.

EDGAR
I’m sick of you games, just do it.

He forces Edith’s head lays on the awl.

EDGAR CONT.
Don’t move. Let’s hope my eye is good. I’d hate to make a mess of your pretty neck.

He brings down the hammer on a chisel smashing the neck iron lock.

Edith stands upright, pulls open the neck iron, throws it as far as she can, out the door.

EDITH
Good riddance.
(rubs her neck)
So, this is what freedom feels like. I’ve worn that monster since I was five years old... Why do you keep helping me?

EDGAR
Can’t you guess?

EDITH
Have I something you want?

EDGAR
Let’s say you have aroused... my curiosity.

EDITH
And what can it be, I wonder, that I might reveal, that can satiate your curiosity?
Looking directly at her.

    EDGAR
    Tell me... How come you still have all your teeth?

She thumps him on the arm.

Zeus ambles into the yard.

    EDITH
    You must have animal magnetism.

    EDGAR
    He loves me.

    EDITH
    How do you know, what love is?

    EDGAR
    Some trust kings, some God. I think commitment matters. I’m committed to getting even for the murder of my mother. I can’t love while I have this hate locked inside me. I still have hope, though, but the future carries no guarantees.

**EXT. NEWARK CASTLE, COURTYARD - DAY**

Edith checks the horse’ shoes.

Marshal supervises, as the deceased body of King John is loaded onto a cart.

Edgar checks the girth on his horse.

    EDGAR
    Are you sure you don’t want to come with us?

    EDITH
    Are you sure you don’t want to stay here? None of this is your responsibility.

    EDGAR
    I’m not going to split hairs, duty, patriotism, destiny, call it what you like, I just know, I’ve got to go. You are now free to choose.
EDITH
Are you sure nothing I can say,
will change your mind?

EDGAR
Today, I must be, who I am. The
future will take care of
its-self.

EDITH
Don’t do anything stupid.

He mounts his horse, pats it.

Edith stands in the stable door way, watching, as they go. Her eyes fill with tears, she turns her head as Edgar rides off, along side Marshal.

EDGAR
What happened to the Templars?

Marshal shrugs, tightens his lips, and shakes his head.

INT. LOUIS’ PALACE, LONDON – DAY

PRINCE LOUIS (28) - in his regal countenance sits at the head of the table, set out for a meal, with

ROBERT FITZ-WALTER (60) - a man of ambition.

A servant brings in his specially prepared plate.

LOUIS
Ah! Tres bien, appetizing, I hope this meets with my expectations.

Robert looks at the snails, apprehensively.

FITZ-WALTER
I feel guilty about disturbing the presentation.

LOUIS
I never feel guilty about anything.

Rodger Bigod enters.

FITZ-WALTER
What kept you Bigod, we’ve been clicking our heels, here, waiting for you to brings us the good news. How many troops are coming?
RODGER
Alas, none, sire.

Louis stands, and thumps the table.

LOUIS
None... Doesn’t my father realize time is of the essence. England is in disarray, it’s our for the taking.

Louis paces. Rodger brushes his top lip with his finger.

RODGER
May I speak plainly, sire.

FITZ-WALTER
Spit it out man.

RODGER
The king says, you were foolish to by-pass Dover.

LOUIS
They are under siege. What more does he want.

RODGER
He says, you haven’t won your crown, yet. You have a few castles but to call yourself king, you will need the countryside, too.

Louis points to the map of England, on the wall.

LOUIS
I have London, I have Winchester, Rochester, Canterbury, he’s an imbecile.

RODGER
He thinks, to prove your worthiness, you should take the whole country yourself, sire. Only then will he send reinforcements to help you safeguard it.

LOUIS
So I’m not worthy am I, I’ll show him just how worthy I am... It will be my pleasure to subdue this nation of mongrels. England shall belong to France, whether those honorable nobles like it or not.
Louis screws up the English flag, and throws it to the ground.

LOUIS CONT.
Damn those loyalist scum, I’ll make them suffer... Call my knights, make preparations, I’ll have Hertford and Berkhamsted next, then after Christmas we shall march on Dover. I’ll show my father who is worthy.

FITZ-WALTER
Hertford shall be mine shortly, sire.

LOUIS
You’ll get what’s yours when the war is over. Until then, you’ll do as you are ordered or I’ll give custody of all the castles to Frenchmen.

Louis exits in a huff.

RODGER
The prince has a hot temper.

FITZ-WALTER
I fear the climate may turn out to be chilly this Christmas.

INT. CHAMBER, GLOUCESTER - DAY

The English nobles sit in council mumbling amongst themselves.

FAULKES
It appears Gentlemen the French seek the total destruction of the English royal succession.

EARL OF CHESTER
Yes, John’s death, has left us with a real problem on our hands.

FAULKES
If we are to ensure a royalist victory, we must move quickly.

CHESTER
But winter is not conducive to warmongering.
FAULKES
What are the barons feelings now?

BISHOP PETER
They tell me at nine years of age
Henry is too young to succeed.
They say, he is no match for the
French. They think it is unwise
to crown him as it will only
antagonize an already shaky
situation, and I believe they
will support Louis if he will
negotiate a reasonable
settlement.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Marshal hurries along in his fighting gear.

THE CHAMBER

Marshal bursts through the door and storms to the head of
a table, which spans the length of the room.

He bangs on it, to attract the noble’s attention.

MARSHAL
Gentlemen, there will be no more
talk of negotiation. Those
French, are a lily liveried
bunch, if we don’t meat out
revenge on them, now, then so
too, are we.

FAULKES
Will you lead the army, sire?

The nobles acknowledge with vocal encouragement.

MARSHAL
I’m sure you could do the job
better than I, Faulkes. I fear, I
am too long in the tooth for
another series of campaigns.

PETER
But think of the rewards, sire.
Surely you can not pass up such
an opportunity.

CHESTER
This is not a time to concern
ourselves with spoils.
MARSHAL
John was a hard working general but he had no social conscience. He was petty, spiteful and cruel. In my view, we should elect a leader and re-issue Magna Carta, with certain amendments. We can all vote on changes in the law. Let’s face facts, gentlemen, we must take this chance to do right by the whole country.

CHESTER
Are you saying, why have a king, at all?

MARSHAL
What I’m saying is, in future a king must not be allowed to confiscate, and parcel out, land to his vassals on a whim. We must abolish rule by "The King’s Will", once and for all. We need a parliament.

PETER
But Henry is unblemished by the sins of his father, he must rule. It is God’s will.

MARSHAL
Let’s leave God out of this. It would be insane to let a nine year old child make decisions that effect the whole country. Henry is too young for politics.

CHESTER
But with no king you will divide the nation. Divided we shall surely fall.

The nobles voice agreement.

MARSHAL
Louis will eat Henry for breakfast. He will put our crown on his own head.

CHESTER
If you were Regent, sire. Even putting things at there worst, only great honor can come from it.
PETER
Yes, Henry has clean hands. With you as king’s regent, Marshal, I am sure the rebel barons will flock to our cause.

MARSHAL
But I am low born. I have killed for pay. The nobles will never accept me. And what of the pope.

PETER
The Lord requires us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. Do this and redeem yourself, be an honest broker. A man of God.

They all start to bang on the table chanting "Marshal".

Marshal realizes his time has come. He holds up his hands to quieten them.

MARSHAL
By God’s sword this advise goes straight to the heart of the matter. I shall do it, for honor’s sake.

The council cheer in agreement, and bang on the table.

INT. GLOUCESTER CASTLE - DAY

The bishop of Winchester holds a band of gold, made from a necklace. William stands, proudly, next to him. A small audience of loyal barons bare witness.

The crown is placed on young Henry’s head.

WILLIAM LONGSWORD, earl of Salisbury and WILLIAM, marshal’s son, burst through the door.

The guards surround them, swords at the ready.

Marshal turns to look and can’t believe his eyes.

He marches down the aisle towards them full of anger.

He is taken aback, as they kneel before him.

WILLIAM
Please forgive us father, we we’re wrong to go against the crown. We were foolish to think Louis would see us as being equal to his French nobles.
Marshal motions them to rise.

**MARSHAL**
Welcome back, my son.

He hugs his son, warmly.

**MARSHAL CONT.**
His Majesty, assures me that he will give amnesty to all those who return and he will let bygones be bygones.

**WILLIAM**
Louis promised us everything but gave us nothing. Now John is dead, we have no reason to side with him and the rebel barons. We have not returned alone.

**MARSHAL**
What news of Louis.

**WILLIAM**
His rule has turned into a conquest. He plans to take all our castles and chatelaines.

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**ON SCREEN TEXT:**

Dover garrison repeatedly disrupted Louis’s communication. It forced him to go back to France himself to raise reinforcements.

Slowly, most rebel barons switched back to King Henry’s side.

In the spring of 1217 Louis returned with 120 Knights, and mounted a second siege on Dover.

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**EXT. LINCOLN - DAY**

A Cathedral city where life is nasty, brutal and short.

Edith arrives at the city gate with a string of horses.

**EDITH**
I’m here for the horse fair. Where is the corral.

**GUARD**
Go towards the castle you can’t miss it.
Edith leads the horses past small children, who are at play in the dirty streets. Small businesses trade. Butchers chop up horses, to sell their flesh. Cats and dogs hang from hooks.

**EXT. TENT – DAY**

Marshal, deep in thought, looks at the landscape on a map. Faulkes enters.

**FAULKES**

News, sire. It seems Fitz-Walter has split his forces some joined Prince Louis in Dover, the others have marched to Lincoln.

**MARSHAL**

Bad tactics indeed. It is time for us to take the offensive.

**EDGAR**

But you have no army, sire.

**MARSHAL**

Send word to the loyal barons, strip the garrisons and have them rendezvous at Newark, we shall all march on Lincoln together.

**EXT. LINCOLN – DAY**

Frenchmen push their siege machinery to within firing range of the castle, troops converge in the Trent valley, and on the highway.

Rodger rides up to the eastern gate, white flag in hand, with a troop of soldiers behind him.

**RODGER**

I wish to speak with the castellan.

**DAME NICOLA DE LA HAYE (60’s)** stands on the top of the wall.

**NICOLA**

State your business.

**RODGER**

Hand over the keys of the city, in the name of King Louis.

**NICOLA**

We have no business to discuss with invaders.
RODGER
You can spare your people, now,
but tomorrow they will suffer. Do
you wish us to use the catapults.

Nicola consults with her advisers.

NICOLA
The cathedral must be spared.

RODGER
Then give me the keys to the
city.

NICOLA
You may enter the gates but the
castle will not surrender.

ON SCREEN TEXT:
The French siege machinery bombarded the castle walls
throughout the spring, but the castle held out.
Meanwhile, the loyalist gathered for the counter attack.

EXT. NORTH FIELD - DAY
Edgar rides next to Marshal, with King Henry’s army, ready
to do his duty to the crown.

LATER
The PAPAL LEGATE, stands in front of the kneeling royalist
troops, he holds up his cross.

PAPAL LEGATE
I absolve you with full remission
and pardon for all sins committed
since birth, and this day, so
that you all may be free to
receive salvation on Judgment
Day.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CITY WALL - DAY
THOMAS, COMTE DU PERCHE (60) - mounted, Commander of the
French troops - inverted chevrons on his shield.
Robert Fitz-Walter - fess gules between two chevrons,
and Rodger Bigod - red crossed gules are with him.
Behind them are six hundred French knights, and at least a
thousand foot soldiers.
Sir Simon de Poissy returns to the lines, with his reconnaissance party.

FITZ-WALTER
Do we have the power to mount an offensive, to prevent them from reaching the gates?

DE POISSY
I think not, Sir Robert.

PERCHE
I think our best course is to continue with the bombardment of the castle. Take it, and it will give us the edge.

Fitz-Walter gives a hand signal, they retreat.

EXT. OPEN GROUND - DAY

Marshal turns to his men as he see the retreat.

MARSHAL
My lords, my friends, look, those who mustered with a view to attacking you have already shown their true colors and retreated behind their walls.

The men all cheer and shout war cries.

MARSHAL CONT.
There is honor and glory to be won here, today. We have the chance to free our land from the invaders. The rebels and their French friends will come to a sticky end as they descend into hell this day, for they have been excommunicated, and for that reason are all the more trapped.

He points towards the french.

MARSHAL CONT.
There you see men who have started a war on God’s Holy Church. God has surrendered them into our hands. Truly it is their time. Let us prepare for the attack... Bring forward the mangonels.
EDGAR
Bring forward the mangonels...
Push men, that’s the way to work up an appetite.

Anticipation builds with views of powerful siege engines, and weaponry.

Foot soldiers march forward, Knights on horseback overtake them.

MARSHAL
Winchester, take your crossbowmen and place yourselves straight way to the right of the French...
Bowmen, spread yourselves out in a long line.

Winchester waves his men to the right.

A YOUNG NORMAN KNIGHT rides up to Marshal.

KNIGHT
We Normans, should be given the privilege of dealing the first blows in every battle fought. Make sure that you don’t fall down on this, sire.

The earl of Chester, vents his angry, on the knight.

CHESTER
Get back to your lines, you dog. I attack first or I withdraw with all my men.

MARSHAL
Gentlemen, gentlemen this is not the time to argue, we shall attack together. We shall encircle the city.

Marshal observes, as the mangonels are wound up, and loaded.

MARSHAL CONT.
Edgar, how’s your courage?

EDGAR
Throw down the gauntlet, sire and I shall pick it up.

MARSHAL
I need information. Circle the wall and scout the lie of the land?
EDGAR
I am on the case, sire. I shall leave no stone unturned.

Edgar spurs his horse, and rides forward, towards the castle wall.

MARSHAL
Fire a ranging shot.

The catapult rope is released, and the projectile soars through the air. It fall short.

MARSHAL
Move the machines forward.

Soldiers crowd around the machines, and push.

EXT. POSTERN GATE – DAY

SIR GEOFFREY DE SERLANT positions his men behind the walls. Concealed, they lie in wait.

Edgar rides up to the apparent unguarded gate, cautiously.

Geoffrey rides out to meet Edgar, arms outstretched.

DE SERLANT
Hey ho there, friend... The south is unguarded. The frenchies believe the river protects them. It’s large enough for an army to advance through. Follow me, I’ll show you.

EDGAR
Lead on, sire.

Edgar rides with De Serlant, towards the postern door entrance.

DE SERLANT
You see, it is as I say. Call your army forward.

Edgar looks around, suspiciously.

EDGAR
It is as you say, sire. I shall inform the marshal.
of a soldier peering from behind the rampart.

From the corner of his eye, Edgar sees the shadow of the
man. He rides forward, to inspect closer.

DE SERLANT
What is it, do you doubt me,
sire.

EDGAR
I have no doubt about your
intention...
(he draws his sword)
You will come with me, to my
lines, to report.

As they ride back towards his lines, a French archer
shoots from the ramparts.

The arrow whistles passed Edgar’s ear.

The men, who have laid in wait, spring out of their
hideaways, and assail him, screaming out fearsome war
cries.

Edgar receives a nasty blow that scars his face.

He slashes at them ruthlessly with his short sword. It’s a
brutal exchange.

He fend them off, slicing and stabbing with great skill
and speed.

Edgar spurs his horse making a fast get away.

De Serlant and the survivors scurry back into the city,
leaving three dead bodies laying in a pool of blood.

ON OPEN GROUND,

Edgar races toward the English lines, over the lush grass.

EXT. AT THE MANGONELS – DAY

The soldiers load fire pots onto the siege engines, and
stand ready holding the pull ropes.

Edgar gallops up to Marshal.

MARSHAL
A misadventure. First blood to
the French. Wipe you face.

Marshal passes Edgar a rag. Edgar pats his wounded face.
EDGAR
I’m afraid to report the south is blocked, sire. It’s just a scratch.

Marshal drops his hand, signaling the release of the catapults.

Fire pots arc dramatically through the air.

A moment later, archers fire a murderous barrage of flaming arrows, that streak through the sky.

EXT. THE CITY WALLS - DAY

Fire pots shatter, pitch splashes everywhere.

Seconds later, the bolts, and flaming arrows, slice down, and ignite the pitch, flames explode. It’s hellish.

BACK AT THE MANGOELS

MARSHAL
Move forward, De Breauté.

Faulkes de Breauté, with all the 300 crossbowmen, moves forwards, towards the north gate. Edgar joins them.

FAULKES
Charge.

EXT. NORTH GATE - DAY

The crossbowmen fight man to man with the french soldiers, to force an entrance, sword fighting, throats cut, heads parted etc. Horror in victim’s eyes.

FAULKES
Position yourselves on the roof tops.

Edgar and his men run towards a building.

They charge their way into the doorway.

ON THE STAIRCASE,

they fight their way up the narrow stone steps to the
through the door, and climb out.

Edgar looks down and sees below, protecting the

**NORTH GATE**

Rodger Bigod, dressed in his armor, with the red crossed gules emblem on his shield. He commands a formation of Frenchmen.

The flaming arrows, and exploding fire pots, create a ferocious inferno everywhere around them.

The Frenchmen raise their shields, to encased themselves in a protective wall.

**ON THE ROOF,**

the bowmen load their crossbows, and take aim.

**EDGAR**

Pick your targets well, men.

They discharge their deadly weapons.

**BELOW,**

Volleyes of bolts rain death, damage, and confusion on the french.

The bolts bounce off the shields, but the horses and riders are exposed, and receive hits.

**NORTH GATE**

RODGER BIGOD stands firm, as his men fall about him.

**FAULKES DE BREAUTE**

boldly bursts forth, with his followers, into the midst of the enemy.

**RODGER**

swings his sword, lunging, skewering, and puncturing his opponents. The fighting is extraordinarily vicious.
ON THE ROOF,

Edgar notices Faulkes being surrounded by a number of Frenchmen. He is lured deep into their lines. The trap is sprung.

Edgar turns to his men.

**EDGAR**

They have de Breaute. Follow me.

Edgar leads the rescue fighting his way

DOWN THE STAIRS,

and out of the building to the yard below,

BY THE NORTH GATE,

forcing their way through, with a triangle formation of bodies.

They pummel the Frenchmen, in a bloody encounter, freeing Faulkes.

Edgar spies Rodger, and tries to move towards him.

**EDGAR**

Seize that man with the red crossed gules.

Frenchmen block the way, and fend off the push.

EXT. CATHEDRAL TOWER – DAY

Edith is perched on the window sill, looking down at the fighting men, below.

EXT. THE WEST GATE – DAY

The French are compressed from the north and west, now, as Marshal’s men approach from the side.

Both sides fight fiercely, men are maimed, trampled, and beaten.

Sparks fly, and SOUNDS bursts forth, from the blows of swords against helmeted heads.

The ground runs red with blood.
PERCHE
Take no prisoners.

Count of Perche performs to great effect, and he inflicts great damage, forcing Marshal’s men back.

PERCHE
No surrender to the English traitors.

MARSHAL
Hold your ground men.

The royalists rally, and begin to get the upper hand.

They push back the French, who break discipline, and begin to run down to the lanes, which connect the upper, and lower city.

EXT. STEEP LANES - DAY

The French retreat south, and fall back onto each other.

EDGAR
relentlessly swings his broadsword with both hands, each time he swings, he inflicts damage.

MARSHAL’S
men charge, driving the French on, killing as they go.

CHESTER’S
men attack from the east, and cover the rebels flank.

PERCHE
sees his French defenders being pushed back, to the south gate.

PERCHE
Stand fast men, there is no surrender.

MARSHAL
takes a risk, and tries to capture Perche.
RODGER

steps forward, and swings his sword. He deals three consecutive blows on Marshal’s helmet.

Marshal sinks to his knees.

EDGAR

rushes forwards to attack Rodger, but is himself attacked by Perche.

PERCHE

delivers a cruel straight thrust of the sword point, but Edgar manages to evade the connection.

EDGAR

recovers his pose and lunges, his sword stabs Perche in the eye, piercing his brain.

Edgar helps Marshal to his feet.

MARSHAL

My heads buzzing like a hive of bees. At my age I should be more cautious.

RODGER

sees his commander fall, he flees.

EDGAR

 spies Rodger steeling away, but he is engaged protecting Marshal.

EXT. SOUTH ARCH, FLAIL GATE – DAY

The French flight is stalled by the falling flail. The soldiers dismount to open it. Once passed the flail falls again.

A cow enters the southern arch, and the gate comes down trapping it, causing a bottleneck.

Though anxious to get out, the Frenchmen cannot move either forward or backward.

No one can now pass through.
DE POISSY
Kill that damned cow.

The Frenchmen stab the cow, then attack the gate.

MARSHAL,
and his men surround the trapped Frenchmen.

    MARSHAL
    Drop your weapons, and save yourselves.

SIR SIMON DE POISSY
flees through the gap, followed by a few of his men.

The remainder surrender to Marshal, and his men. They throw down their weapons.

A small contingent of bloodthirsty royalist soldiers pursue the escaping Frenchmen.

THE CASTLE
gates open, and the inhabitants come out to greet the conquering heroes.

Some of the victorious royalist soldiers take advantage of the chaos, and begin looting, others chase the women.

    WOMAN
    I’m English.

    SOLDIER
    Side with the Frenchies would you?

    WOMAN
    No I did not.

The woman senses the debauched intentions of the English soldier, and makes for the riverside.

EXT. RIVER WITHAM – DAY

The craziness intensifies, and the woman take to small boats, with their children, and household property.

The boats are overloaded.

The women panic not knowing how to manage the boats, they capsize.
Some women throw themselves into the river, and drown, rather than be caught, and face sexual violation.

Some unlucky women are caught, stripped and raped.

One vicious soldier cuts off a woman’s breast as a souvenir.

**EXT. CATHEDRAL – DAY**

Edith looks down at the turmoil.

ULRIC (16) stands next to her.

**EDITH**

We must protect the young children.

**EXT. TOWN – DAY**

Victorious English troops enter shops, and look for booty.

**EDGAR**

runs back through the city, eyes aware, looking here, and there for his nemesis.

**EXT. CATHEDRAL – DAY**

Edgar spots Rodger entering the cathedral.

**INT. CATHEDRAL – DAY**

Royalist looters brake open the chests, with axes, and hammers, and find gold, and silver.

**IN A STOREROOM,**

Soldier’s enter, and grab clothes of all colors, woman’s ornaments, gold rings, goblets, and jewels.

They smash whatever they can’t carry.

**AT THE ALTER,**

THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN tries to recover a cross from a thief.
BISHOP
Have respect for the Holy Church, please.

As he clasp the cross to his bosom, he gets speared from behind.

RODGER
stabs the spear chucker.

RODGER
You should be ashamed of yourself killing a man of the cloth.

Rodger strips the bishop of his robe, and puts it on. He makes his way to

THE VESTRY,

opens the door, and peers inside. The children scream. Edith and Ulric stand between the children, and Rodger.

EDITH
You are no priest.

RODGER
How very observant of you. You’ll all make a excellent shield. Where is the escape route.

EDITH
Leave the children alone and I’ll show you.

Rodger grabs Edith by the arm, and drags her away.

RODGER
Show me.

EDITH
It’s in the crypt.

They walk towards the door to the crypt.

AT THE MAIN DOOR,

swathed in back light, Edgar stands in the frame.

He moves through the area, searching for clues to Rodgers location. Opening various doors. As he opens the door
THE VESTRY,

Ulric steps forward holding a sword.

Edgar flicks it out of his hands. The children scream.

    EDGAR
    Calm down, I’m looking for someone.

INT. CRYPT – DAY

Edith leads Rodger to a pile of skulls leaning by a wall.

    EDITH
    It’s behind those.

Rodger rips away the skulls, exposing a bricked up doorway. He hammers the bricks with his sword handle.

Ulric emerges from behind, out of the darkness.

    ULRIC
    Stop! Don’t loose the stone. The monks diverted the river, you’ll flood the crypt.

    RODGER
    Is this some sort of trick?

    ULRIC
    If you don’t want to drown, use the front door.

Rodger thinks for a beat.

    RODGER
    Come on then. Both of you.

They segue out of the crypt, and make their way to the front.

EXT. CATHEDRAL STEPS – DAY

Rodger stands on the steps observing the scene, shielded by Ulric and Edith.

Edgar appears from behind.

    EDGAR
    I’ve been looking forward to this moment for a long time, Bigod.
RODGER  
Keep your distance.

Rodger holds a knife at Edith’s throat.

EDGAR  
This is between the two of us.  
It’s time to answered for your crimes.

RODGER  
Do I know you?

EDGAR  
You cut off my mother’s head,  
now, I’m going to cut off yours.

RODGER  
One step closer and I promise you, she dies.

Edith stamps on Rodgers foot. He is distracted. She ducks down, and runs to safety, followed by Ulric.

EDGAR  
poses with his sword.  

They circle each other.

RODGER  
lunges, Edgar side steps. Rodger stabs at Edgar’s face, with a dagger. Edgar blocks it.  

Their faces are inches apart.

EDGAR  
You reek of garlic.

EDGAR   
steps back for elbow room. He takes a minor hit, and crumbles.

RODGER  
comes in for the kill.

RODGER  
Don’t waste your breath begging.
EDGAR
rolls and stabs, wounding Rodger.

They are now both on the floor.

They both rally, and recommence the fight.

EDGAR
cuts Rodger’s arm, then his leg, then he stabs him in the side.

RODGER
backs down the steps, fending off more thrusts. He falls backwards, dropping his sword.

EDGAR
hesitates, and gives him time.

RODGER
Only a fool gives away an advantage.

EDGAR
Do you choose death?

RODGER
grabs his sword, and gets back to his feet.

RODGER
Yes, your death.

Rodger swings furiously, putting all his energy into the attack.

EDGAR
stabs wildly, losing his footing, he stumbles.

RODGER
stands over him, ready for the kill.

RODGER
Cut off my head, would you?
EDGAR

braces himself, ready for death. Suddenly,

RODDER’S

eexpression changes, he drops to his knees. Revealing

EDITH

standing behind him, with a dripping dagger in her hand.

RODDER

slowly, Crawls down the cathedral steps, on to

THE ROAD,

hearing a THUNDEROUS NOISE, he looks up.
Terror fills Rodgers eyes, panicking horses trample him.

ON THE STEPS,

Edith puts her hand on Edgar’s shoulder.
Edgar looks up at her, with his wounded puppy eyes.

EDGAR

I wanted him to beg.

EDITH

Do you think your mother will
rest in peace, now?

EDGAR

Maybe.

He wipes away a tear.

Feeling the closure, he breathes deeply, then shakes off
his momentary depression.

EDGAR

What the hell are you doing here, anyway?

EDITH

I was trading horses, then every
thing went crazy.
I’ve got something you might like.

(rummages through pocket)
Put out your left hand.

She puts out her hand.

He places a ring, on her finger. She looks at it.

Stolen property, typical.

I give up, what have I got to do
to get on your good side?

Does Throcken Holt, need a blacksmith?

EXT. THE MAIN COURTYARD – DAY

Lincoln is in ruins. Dead bodies are piled up in a heap.

The victorious royalists round up the wounded enemy.
Three hundred knights, and foot soldiers sit, nursing
their wounds, as their captures watch over them.

Their swords are thrown on to a huge pile of weapons.

Other soldiers sought through the booty, and load up the
carts, with silver vessels, and various kinds of furniture
and utensils.

Fitz-Walter, his rebels, and the French prisoners are lead
off in chains.

Pray your worth a ransom,
Fitz-Walter.

Edgar and Edith look at dead bodies with disgust.

A priest once told me that rich
or poor, God loves us all. This
makes you wonder why, doesn’t it?

I guess the world goes out of
balance, sometimes.

Marshal approaches and pins a badge on Edgar’s chest.
MARSHAL
I can put a good word in for you with the king, if you want to be a knight. We still have a war to win.

EDGAR
I think, I’ve had my fill of killing.

MARSHAL
Never the less, the honor is yours... And you’ve got the woman too... Lucky fellow.

EDITH
Sir Edgar of Throckenhill. Who’d have thought it?

ON SCREEN TEXT:
Before he died, William Marshal made a treaty with Louis. Louis agreed, he had never been a legitimate king of England, and he would never attack again... The peace and stability came at the price of 10,000 marks. Robert Fitz-Walter went to fight in the crusade. Amnesty agreed, prisoners were exchanged.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY
The bearded and disheveled, Grimbold Fowler, steps out of his incarceration.

EXT. TEMPLAR CHURCH, LONDON - DAY
Round design based on the Church of the Holy Sepulchral.

INT. TEMPLAR CHURCH, LONDON - DAY
The nave is 55 feet in diameter, and is surrounded by free-standing, dark Purbeck Marble columns. The walls are painted walls, and grotesque heads abound. Edgar and Edith, stand by Marshals tomb, which lies under one of the nine marble effigies of medieval knights.
EDGAR
You have to wonder, why the Marshal is buried here? I have a suspicion, he’s guarding King John’s treasure.

EDITH
You mean, the temple knights stole it?

EDGAR
Nobodies saying what happened. Did they really lose it all in the Wash? John’s entourage was large, it spread out for over three miles, it was a city on wheels. They can’t all have perished.

EDITH
But, Marsh was one of the few, who remained loyal to the king.

EDGAR
He was a knight and the knights oppose rule by divine right. Marshal’s took the secret to his grave. I guess that makes him the biggest deceiver of them all. That’s politics for you! It’s a murky game. You have to be careful who you choose to be loyal too.

EXT. THROCKENHOLT – DAY

Ulric and Esme attend to the fish business, with Alfred.

Edith and Edgar teach their young son to ride a horse.

Grimbald limps into the village.

EDITH
Who’s that old fellow, waving.

Grimbald approach, slowly.

GRIMBALD
Is that you, Edgar? Don’t you recognize me? You have your mother’s eyes... Perhaps, I could do with a shave.

He touches the necklace hanging around Edgar’s neck.
GRIMBALD
I remember buying this, it was a wedding gift. Is she...?

The realizations dawns on Edgar, he shakes his head.

EDGAR
This is my wife Edith, and my son, we named him Grimbald, after you.

They approach the grave.

EDGAR CONT.
It’s been four years, now.

GRIMBALD
I should never have left. Loyalty is a mugs game.

Grimbald hugs them both.

GRIMBALD
It’s great to be home. (Breaths deeply) Freedom sure smells good.

FADE OUT:

THE END.