

KING JOHN'S TREASURE

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FADE IN:

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 an 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 reins, 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, calmly.

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 forcethe 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 to 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 ought 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 villagers clash: excited, angry faces of the attackers contort, as their mouths emit blood-curdling 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 mothers 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 rascalion 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.

RODGER

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?

RODGER

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.

RODGER

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!

RODGER

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 poked 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 you 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 statue, 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 you 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 body-guard wont 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 BREAUITE (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 reins, 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 clammers 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 draw, 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 wont 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 thier 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 down fall 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 opens the litter curtain. John looks like death.

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
sate 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 bring 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.

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.

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 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 anger, 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.

A QUICK FLASH

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 fends 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 Breaute.

Faulkes de Breaute, 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

ROOF

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,

Volley 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 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 his 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 to

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,

RODGER'S

expression changes, he drops to his knees. Revealing

EDITH

standing behind him, with a dripping dagger in her hand.

RODGER

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.

EDGAR

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.

EDITH

Stolen property, typical.

EDGAR

I give up, what have I got to do
to get on your good side?

EDITH

Does Throckenholt, 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.

MARSHAL

Pray your worth a ransom,
Fitz-Walter.

Edgar and Edith look at dead bodies with disgust.

EDITH

A priest once told me that rich
or poor, God loves us all. This
makes you wonder why, doesn't it?

EDGAR

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 Throckenholt. 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, Grimbald 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.