ARTHUR AND LANCELOT
"THE BEGINNING"

BOOK ONE OF THE TRILOGY

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June 7th, 2011

"There is never a more violent or bloody tearing of the fabric of the universe then when a new idea is birthed into this world..."

- THOMAS JEFFERSON, REVOLUTIONARY

EXT. DARK OCEAN - NIGHT

Rain. Lightning. Thunder. Black waves heave and crash. We ROCKET forward, rising off the water, and UP to REVEAL high white cliffs on a rocky coastline.

Beyond the cliffs. An old majestic STONE CITY, a CASTLE at its center. A FLAG bearing the WHITE AND RED CREST OF CAMELOT waves above its highest tower. Beyond that, a BATTLEFIELD...

Where a brutal war rages.

One army in BLACK ARMOR, INVADERS from the Northlands. They are a bigger and stronger race than ordinary men. The BLACK FLAG OF VOLKOR waving above them.

The other army in SILVER ARMOR. The MEN of Camelot, digging deep but losing ground.

The INVADERS swarm around ONE MAN, disarm him, and throw a NOOSE of heavy rope around his neck. On the other end of the rope is a 25 foot pole.

THREE INVADERS plant the pole's base in the earth. In one quick movement the man is taken off his feet, SNAPPED up into the air.

As he struggles wildly, we RISE above the battle to see - DOZENS OF MEN at a time being HUNG, lifted kicking into the air. And hundreds more hung from poles across the horizon.

This is more than just war. This is a display of ruthless cruelty meant to break the will of all those who see it.

One knight, **KIERIN PENDRAGON**, bearing the CREST OF CAMELOT, cuts down four invaders in mere seconds. His SWORD a blur as he turns to meet his next enemy - *CRACK*... a massive DOUBLE-HEADED BATTLE AXE chops through his chest plate.

Kierin falls to his knees. Standing above him is young **KING VORTIGAN**, 25, ruler of the Northern Hordes. He is a massive hulk of muscle, covered in black tribal markings.

He wears his FATHER'S SKULL over his head as a HELMET. Through the hollow eye sockets, Vortigan's own eyes burn with hatred and darkness.

Hanging around Vortigan's neck -- the BLUE HEADS of Kierin's TWO BROTHERS, strung together by their long hair.

VORTIGAN
Before the sun rises, yours will swing round my neck, tied to your father's.

In one quick move, Vortigan CHOPS off Kierin's head. Lifting it high, he bellows a WAR CRY across the battlefield.

INT. CASTLE - CAMELOT

A YOUNG KNIGHT, **GALAHAD**, rides swiftly through the gates. Leaps from his horse and races through the doors.

INT. UTHER'S CHAMBER

UTHER PENDRAGON, 50, stares down at the battle below. His weathered fingers nervously work at the hilt of the GREAT SWORD around his waist. He hears a KNOCK but does not turn.

He glances over to the corner. In the shadows stands a powerful man in deep navy robes - **MERLIN.** A cold fateful look on his face, he stares back at Uther.

Another KNOCK. Finally, calling out...

UTHER
Enter.

Galahad walks in. Stands there awestruck in the presence of his King - heartbroken over the news he's about to deliver.

GALAHAD
Your highness...

Uther turns to look at him, already knowing...

UTHER
My son.

Galahad looks away, can only nod. Uther leans weakly on the window sill, eyes wet, his face twisting with anger.

UTHER
Damn you, Merlin! You told me I would rule for a thousand years! You told me one of my sons would carry this kingdom on, and a dynasty was to be born!
(MORE)

UTHER (CONT'D)
IT WAS YOUR PROPHECY! YOU SAW IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES! DID YOU NOT?!

Merlin turns.

MERLIN
Please leave us young Galahad.

Galahad hurriedly exits.

Merlin steps from the shadows. Full of radiant energy, with a weathered face and hawkish eyes. Right now, he too is angry.

MERLIN
I told you that if you made the right choices you would rule for a thousand years.

UTHER
I chased down my enemies to all corners of the earth to destroy them. I built walls to keep them out. I made allegiances to keep others from aligning. I spent my whole life killing and conquering to keep this legacy alive. What more would you have me do?!

Merlin looks stoically out the window.

MERLIN
All kingdoms must someday fall.

Uther lurches forward, grabs Merlin roughly by the collar.

UTHER
A thousand years. You *promised me*.

MERLIN
Though I may see the future, I can not change it. I can not make your choices for you. You know this. Today, with your own eyes, you can see the sum of the choices you have made. This is the future you have created.

Uther loosens his grip. Steps away from Merlin.

MERLIN
Do not think this is what I had hoped for you Uther. I hoped for you all of what is possible.

UTHER
(lips quivering)
What happened?

MERLIN
Choices built on anger. Choices built on fear.
(beat)
It's what most men succumb to. Do not feel alone.

UTHER
(glaring)
You owe me old man. I lost all three sons on that battlefield. I can not let Vortigan take this kingdom. YOU MUST DO SOMETHING. For the sake of mankind. This is the last city standing. We can not fall, Merlin.

Merlin levels a look at him.

UTHER
For everything we've been through in this lifetime. Do something...

Merlin glances out, the battle raging below. Wheels turning.

MERLIN
There is a way. But it is not without it's perils. And not without great sacrifice.

UTHER
Anything. Tell me.

MERLIN
You can still bear one more son. A son who may one day have the chance to carry your crest, and raise the name Pendragon to fly above this Kingdom again. An heir to your throne.

Uther's eyes narrow.

MERLIN
But I must warn you. You will not live to see his face.

Uther looks out the window. The black army is at the gates of the city. Battering rams pound away at the walls themselves.

UTHER
This is all you have for me?

MERLIN
It is not for you, Uther. It is for your Kingdom. The choice is, of course, yours.

Uther nods.

UTHER
Do it.

Merlin closes his eyes and begins an INCANTATION. Hands moving slowly in the air. TRANSLUCENT TENDRILS stretching from them across the room, wrapping around Uther.

Uther ROCKED with pain, falls to his knees, gasping for breath. His facial bones CRACK and re-configure. His eye sockets deepen. His skull widens. Smoke wisps from his pores, his skin pulled taut. He CRIES OUT at the top of his lungs.

MERLIN (V.O.)
I shall change your likeness to that of your enemy. You shall look and sound exactly like Vortigan...

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

A FOG descends. Quickly enveloping the men as they fight on.

MERLIN (V.O.)
I will hide your cover with Dragon's Breathe... and with this you shall ride out unheeded...

EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT

UTHER, clad in SILVER ARMOR, BURSTS OUT a secret tunnel into the woods along the side of the battlefield.

EXT. VORTIGAN'S ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Uther reaches the enemy encampment, his ARMOR now BLACK.

MERLIN (V.O.)
You shall ride in as their King. Find his wife, Igrayne, and there you will plant your seed.

Striding past GUARDS unquestioned, Uther enters Vortigan's elaborate tents. Finds **IGRAYNE**. Beautiful with long blonde hair. She is with her small six year old child, **MORGANA**, fair skinned but dark-eyed and wise beyond her years.

Uther removes his helmet - he's the splitting image of Vortigan.

Morgana's eyes fall to his sword, something is not right.

Uther ignores the girl, grabs Igrayne and drags her into their chambers. Closes the curtains. Throws her on the bed.

MERLIN (V.O.)
You will hide your future son in the only safe place left in this kingdom, inside Vortigan's very own wife.

EXT. GATES OF CAMELOT - CONTINUOUS

A battering ram SLAMS into the gates. Each thrust harder than the last, over and over, until it finally BURSTS OPEN.

INT. VORTIGAN'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

As Uther finishes. Climbs off Igrayne. Gives one last look, and strides out.

Passing young Morgana at the doorway. She has seen it all.

MERLIN (V.O.)
You must leave quickly though, before the spell wears off.

EXT. CAMELOT - NIGHT

Uther, still looking like Vortigan, rides in. Sees his world being torn apart. Vortigan's army are killing everyone, and burning everything in sight.

Uther reaches the CHURCH at the city's center. A GREAT STONE sits in front of it. Suddenly, the pain ROCKS him again. Struggling to catch his breath, he dismounts his horse. Falls to his knees. His ARMOR turns back to SILVER.

As he stands, he finds DOZENS OF INVADERS surrounding him.

MERLIN (V.O.)
No matter what happens, do not let Excalibur fall into their hands.
(MORE)

MERLIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Otherwise, there is no other way your son will ever be able to reclaim the throne that is his own.

Uther draws his sword. For the first time we see it - **EXCALIBUR.** It GLOWS along it's edge a brilliant silver.

The INVADERS RUSH him. He fights. Excalibur CUTS through two men at a time. A high pitched sound VIBRATES off the blade each time it slices through the air.

An ARROW pierces Uther's ribs. Then two more - in the stomach and chest. He falls to his knees.

Eyes flashing, Uther stumbles forward to the great stone in front of the church. He raises Excalibur up above his head...

The Invaders part. Vortigan is there. Time slows as Uther sees the heads of his sons hanging around Vortigan's neck.

IN SLOW MOTION - Vortigan pulls the skull of his father off his head, and for the first time we see his face. Covered in disturbing thick battle SCARS and black tribal TATTOOS.

Uther looks the young conquerer in the eye. Vortigan SMILES. His teeth are black, rotted, and sharpened like a shark's.

Uther glances UP at the tower high above him, to the window where Merlin still stands. With all he's got he YELLS OUT...

UTHER
KEEP YOUR BLOODY PROMISE, OLD MAN!
THIS KINGDOM SHALL RISE AGAIN!

With an EXPLOSION of SPARKS, Uther drives the sword deep into the stone, where it stops, buried half way down the blade.

Nothing left, Uther leans his sweaty, pained face upon the great sword's hilt. The sounds of battle fade to the background. Then all is quiet.

Vortigan's shadow falls over him. His meaty hand lands gently upon Uther's head. Blood-caked fingers run through Uther's hair. His vice-like grip tightens. The sound of hair TEARING.

Vortigan's dirty, scarred face lowers down inches from Uther's. His hot putrid breath blowing on the King's face.

Then, a single whisper before the end...

VORTIGAN
ALL... <u>MINE</u>.

INT. TOWER - CONTINUOUS

In the tower above, Merlin averts his eyes as Vortigan beheads Uther. A high-pitched JEERING fills the air below.

FADE TO BLACK -

Title card:

AND THE DARK AGES BEGIN

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP ON IGRAYNE'S PAINED FACE

As she gives a final PUSH to birth her new SON.

The CRYING BABY is quickly wrapped in BLANKETS by a MID-WIFE. Vortigan's advisor, **HAMUND**, checks the sex. Then rushes off.

The MID-WIFE suddenly ducks through a back door where a HAND-MAID passes her a second blanket, SWITCHING IT with the baby.

INT. VORTIGAN'S CHAMBERS

Hamund bursts in.

HAMUND
King Vortigan. I am happy to tell you, you now have an heir to your throne.

Vortigan smiles, his eyes aglow.

INT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

The hand-maid RUSHES through passageways, the baby in her arms. Twisting and turning down to the bowels of the castle.

INT. ANTE-ROOM

Igrayne, half-lucid, is being cleaned up by her servants. Vortigan strides in with Hamund, straight to the BABY BASKET. He OPENS the BLANKET and is greeted with a "BAAAAA."

His eyes go red.

VORTIGAN
What is the meaning of this?!

Hamund stammers. Igrayne, confused, runs to the basket, looks inside - a baby lamb. She SCREAMS.

IGRAYNE
Where is my mid-wife?!

The room goes into a panic. People RUSHING everywhere.

VORTIGAN
Send out everyone! Find that child!
BRING ME MY SON!

INT. WATERWAYS - NIGHT

A sewer leads to subterranean canals. At the end of one tunnel, in a small boat, is Merlin. He takes the baby.

MERLIN
You have done a great service.

She looks up, pain and anger behind the tears in her eyes.

HAND-MAID
I am happy to make the sacrifice.
Anything to stop this... atrocity.

Merlin nods solemnly. Then PUSHES OFF and is gone.

INT. CASTLE

Massive gates SLAM shut all around the castle. Vortigan's SOLDIERS flood the place looking for the child.

HELL HOUNDS, violet eyes glowing, saliva flying from their massive snapping jaws, sniff the BABY BLANKET, locking into his scent. They rabidly EXPLODE from their cages when released. Leading a squadron of soldiers down in the TUNNELS.

They find the mid-wife, SELF-HUNG from a rafter.

Further away, the body of the hand-maid. A small empty VIAL rolls out of her hand. She too is gone.

EXT. TRIBUTARY

Three hundred yards from the castle, Merlin slips out of the boat, the baby under his arm. The Hell Hounds BURST out the tunnel, racing towards Merlin, FANGS bared. They LEAP at him-

MERLIN
(casting a spell)
Shadows come...

And just like that, he's wrapped in darkness. The creatures CRASH into the dirt. Jump up, looking for him. But he's gone.

INT. VORTIGAN'S CHAMBERS - LATER

Igrayne weeps. Morgana tries to console her. Vortigan glares.

VORTIGAN
(to Morgana)
You're sure? You are *absolutely sure*?!!!

Morgana nods softly.

MORGANA
It was not you.

Vortigan throws a table CRASHING across the room.

VORTIGAN (CONT'D)
Morgana step away from your mother.

Morgana, confused and terrified, slowly steps away. Vortigan walks to Igrayne.

IGRAYNE
How was I to know?

VORTIGAN
Quiet Igrayne. There is nothing to say.

MORGANA
Father?

Vortigan looks to Morgana. Morgana shakes her head... 'no'.

VORTIGAN
Your mother bore me three. You were my first. And though inferior, I kept you. The next was born dead. And now, *this*.
(furious, shaking)
Your mother *plays games with me!*
(then, calmly)
Say good-bye to your mother, Morgana.

Igrayne falls to her knees. Morgana shakes uncontrollably.

MORGANA
(trembling)
But fath-

Vortigan SNAPS Morgana off her feet. Glaring into her small face. Her tiny legs dangling in the air.

VORTIGAN
Do not snivel like a little girl!
You will stand by me with strength,
like the son you were meant to be,
or I will send you to walk in
darkness with your insolent mother!
Understand me?!

Morgana stares into her father's eyes. Buries her fear. Her shaking stops. Survival kicks in. And a single slow nod.

Vortigan puts her down. She does not look at her mother. She does not take her eyes off this powerful man before her.

MORGANA
(evenly)
Goodbye mother.

And then Morgana turns and walks out. Never looking back.

As the door closes, Igrayne crumbles to the floor at Vortigan's feet. He simply draws his sword.

EXT. FOREST - DAYS LATER - NIGHT

Merlin, hands the baby over to **ECTOR**, a young, chivalrous, ex-knight of Uther's, with open honest eyes.

MERLIN
No one can know, not even your wife.

ECTOR
I understand.

MERLIN
You will say he is the orphaned son of your brother.

Merlin turns to go.

ECTOR
When will you return for him?

MERLIN
I don't know. When the time is right, what needs to happen will.

ECTOR
Does he have a name?

MERLIN
Arthur. His name is Arthur.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE TOWN OF DERRY - DAY

Lush and green hills. An idyllic postcard landscape until -- a SQUADRON OF VORTIGAN'S SOLDIERS ride past on horses.

TITLE CARD -

10 YEARS LATER

CUT TO:

INK, stenciled on parchment with a QUILL PEN.

We are in a dirty, dilapidated WAREHOUSE. A sweatshop. Starving men, row by row, hand-printing the same PAGE.

ARTHUR, now a small, brown-haired boy, dressed in ragged clothes, hands stained with INK, stuffs a SATCHEL with PAGES.

EXT. STREET - MIDDLE OF TOWN - DAY

A page is HAMMERED to a POST:

NAMES HAVE BEEN PULLED IN THE LOTTERY.

THE GAMES BEGIN IN A FORTNIGHT.

IF YOUR NAME IS DRAWN, YOU ARE DUE TO FIGHT.

Arthur, up on the ladder with his hammer, finishes.

This town is poor and in shambles.

SOLDIERS are everywhere. Kicking those in their way. Taking whatever they want, from anyone they want. Pissing in the streets. People keep their heads down, avoiding eye-contact.

A young **TOMBOY GIRL** Arthur's age walks by. Long red wavy hair, stuffed into an old hat. Hard to see her face. She wears tattered clothing. No dress. Tough from top to bottom.

Spotting her, Arthur scrambles down the ladder. Pulls a small piece of PARCHMENT from his pocket. Takes a deep breath for courage, then starts to follow her from a distance. Unaware of Arthur, the girl ducks into an--

ALLEY.

A DRUNK MAN, bottle in hand, steps from the shadows stopping her. She tries to push past. He grabs her arm. Reaches into her pants as...

Arthur enters the alley. But before he can do a thing --

The girl PUNCHES the man in the BALLS, dropping him to one knee. Takes his bottle and CRACKS it across his temple. The man collapses out cold.

The girl briskly searches the man's pockets. Finds a muddy, half-eaten apple.

TOM BOY
Why do you follow me, boy?

She looks up. We finally see her... she's beautiful, with a SCAR along the side of one eye, and a bruise on one cheek.

ARTHUR
I wasn't-

TOM BOY
You followed me other day as well.

Arthur just stares. His innocence not lost on the girl.

TOM BOY
What did you see?

Arthur nervously rubs his folded scrap of PARCHMENT.

ARTHUR
I saw the boys. They beat you up and took your food.

She looks down, quiet for a moment. Takes a few bites off the apple and throws Arthur the rest.

He catches it. Gazes at it as she completes her search.

She finishes, looks up. He's gone. The scrap of parchment on the ground where he once stood. She curiously opens it.

It's the boy's roughly ink-drawn PICTURE of a FLOWER. Thumb-prints are the petals. She takes it in, and her face softens.

EXT. RUN-DOWN STREET - LATER

Arthur rounds the corner, approaching home, when he sees...

SOLDIERS surround his neighbor's home. In the doorway, **HOEL**, their neighbor, and the LEAD SOLDIER, **HELLDOR**, a glaring ruthless man, argue.

HOEL'S son, **GAEL**, is trying to hold back his mother, **NOELLE**, who is hysterical.

NOELLE
(screaming)
You're a bunch of animals! We only eat once a day, if that!

Arthur's father, **ECTOR**, his mother, **CLAIRE**, and his older brother, **KAY**, peek out from their house next door.

NOELLE
How do you expect the boy to fight! He can hardly even stand up in the fields!

Hoel looks at Gael, who then drags Noelle inside.

HELLDOR
Last time. You take him to The Games, or I take him in shackles. I could care less which one.

Hoel looks over at Ector.

ECTOR
Arthur, Kay, inside.

Arthur, Kay's hand on his shoulder, moves in. Ector looks at Hoel. Then looks away, and he too steps inside.

Claire stands there, torn. Hoel and she share a moment.

ECTOR (O.S.)
(sternly, from inside)
Claire, get in here. Right now.

She turns her face away. Steps inside.

Hoel turns to Helldor.

HOEL
We'll be right on our way.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOME - DUSK

Arthur stares out the window and watches as Hoel and Gael pack up their cart. Noelle SOBS as she says good-bye. Can't stop kissing her son's face.

Finally, Gael breaks away, before his courage quickly flees.

They roll away down the street. The soldiers escorting them.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOME - LATE AT NIGHT

Arthur is awoken with a start. It is dark out. Commotion next door. The sound of BOISTEROUS MEN and the WHINNY of horses.

Arthur runs to the window... Ector, Claire and Kay right behind him.

Helldor, his smarmy lieutenant, **OLAF**, and the soldiers, drunk and looking for trouble POUND on Noelle's door.

HELLDOR
Open the door!

NOELLE
What do you want?!

Olaf, grinning, rushes by the window Arthur stares out. Finds Noelle's side window, climbs in.

Moments later, a SCREAM from Noelle.

Olaf opens the front door. The soldiers flood into the house.

ECTOR
Arthur, go to the kitchen.

Arthur is frozen with fright. The sound of CLOTHING BEING RIPPED. Noelle's CRIES are now muffled. The soldiers CHEER on the nightmare next door.

CLAIRE
How can no one do anything?!

She runs to the front window. Across the street a frightened woman also looks out her window. Upon being seen, the woman quickly closes the shutters.

ECTOR
Kay, take your brother to the kitchen.

Kay, overwhelmed, can not move.

CLAIRE
Does no one care?!

ECTOR
(whispering)
Keep your voice down, Claire!

Claire opens the front door. Ector leaps across the room and PULLS HER BACK IN.

ECTOR
Are you out of your mind?

CLAIRE
There is a line... someone must make a stand and stop this.

She glares at him. His eyes narrow as he pulls her close.

ECTOR
I don't care if you are disgusted with me. We will do no such thing.

A FRENZIED HOWL comes from the pack of soldiers next door having their way.

ECTOR
Invite <u>that</u> into our home? I shall spare our sons the horror of what will come next if I listen to you. And who will raise the children when they are done?
(beat)
<u>Or worse</u>.

Then, as suddenly as they arrived, Helldor and the soldiers exit the house. Olaf still buckling his belt.

The night is silent again except for...

Noelle's soft weeping next door.

A single stoic tear rolls down Claire's face.

<u>THE SUN RISES OVER THE TOWN - SOME DAYS LATER</u>

Out of the woods comes Hoel's cart. On it is only HOEL. Gael's seat is empty.

At his house, the door swings open. Noelle stands there, her left eye black. The rest of her still bruised and beaten. Seeing Hoel alone, she begins to sob. Hoel shakes as well. His anger so consuming, he can longer stop himself.

EXT. MARKETPLACE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN - DAY

Arthur whittles a stick. Claire haggles with a SHOPKEEPER.

HOEL (O.S.)
I call for the Minister of Justice!

Everyone stops what they are doing. HOEL, on a BOX in the center of the square, beseeches to the crowd.

HOEL
I call for the Royals! Every last one of the Nobles eating off Vortigan's table. How can they allow this to go on? I call for someone to explain how we can live like this? They take everything from us. In return for what?! Protection?! They tell us this is for our own protection! From whom?

Helldor, Olaf and the SOLDIERS enter the courtyard.

HELLDOR
Enough of this. Stand down.

HOEL
(ignoring him)
Let them kill us all! Let them plow their own fields. Let them milk their own cows.

HELLDOR
Last time I am telling you.

HOEL
(looks right at Helldor)
Let them rape their own women. And kill their own children.

Olaf LAUGHS. Smiling at this poor man.

A soldier reaches over to pull Hoel down.

HOEL
You will have no more from me, you monsters.

Hoel JAMS a DAGGER into the soldier's throat. The soldier drops dead. Olaf THROWS Hoel to the ground. STOMPS on Hoel's face with his massive boot.

OLAF
Bloody rodent!

He's going to kill this man.

Arthur's jaw hangs open in shock.

But what happens next will forever change him.

Claire is suddenly in the middle of the skirmish.

CLAIRE
Leave him! Leave him!

She gets between Olaf and Hoel, pushing them apart. Olaf stumbles back, eyes flaring.

CLAIRE
You know what he has been through. His son. His wife.

Hoel dives for Olaf. Claire forces him back, cups his face.

CLAIRE
(to Hoel)
You will find another way! Please, you will go on... you will find a way.

But Hoel does not want to. He pulls the dagger out of the dead soldier next to him, and LUNGES FOR OLAF...

Only to be run through by the Helldor's sword.

Claire gets up slowly. Turns to go, but Olaf blocks her way.

CLAIRE
Please move aside-

OLAF
Take off your dress.

Helldor pulls out a FLAIL, and with a SNAP lashes Claire across her face, leaving THICK RED WELTS.

The crowd GASPS. Claire stares at the ground. Olaf reaches for her, starts ripping her dress. She swats his hand away.

OLAF
Get it off!

Claire looks over at Arthur.

He steps toward her. She very slightly shakes her head 'no'.

A calm resolve comes over her. She gives him the faintest smile. Confident. Assuring.

Ector appears, pushing through the crowd, horror on his face.

ECTOR
(to himself)
Claire?!

CLAIRE
(to the crowd)
There is no price we can ever afford in exchange for our dignity.

Claire suddenly pulls a sword from the sheath of the soldier next to her and THRUSTS IT THROUGH another.

In a flash, Helldor STABS her through the chest.

ARTHUR
NO!!!

Ector, tears in his eyes, scoops Arthur into his arms and RUNS from the marketplace.

The life goes from Claire's eyes as she CRUMPLES to the dirt. Olaf viciously kicks her body. Helldor looks at the crowd.

HELLDOR
Anyone else have anything to say?

They quickly disperse.

HELLDOR
That's what I thought.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOME

Ector rapidly packs everything they can carry. Kay stands numb in the corner. Arthur comes from the back room, Ector's SWORD in hand and headed for the front door.

ECTOR
Stop!

Ector grabs him. Arthur tries to shake loose. Ector PUNCHES HIM in the mouth. Arthur stops cold in his tracks.

ECTOR
You will prove nothing. You will die. And then I will have to mourn the both of you.
(beat)
Promise me you will never strike out with your emotions. Promise me.

Arthur starts to CRY. Ector pulls him close, tears in his own eyes, holds him. Arthur drops the sword. Embraces his father.

ECTOR
Be strong. We must move quickly. There will be time for grieving later. Now, we must leave...

CUT TO:

ECTOR AND KAY THROW CLAIRE'S TARP WRAPPED BODY ONTO A CART.

A SNAP of the reigns and the HORSES lurch forward. Ector, Kay and Arthur, wrapped in a dirty blanket, sit atop the cart.

Arthur is haunted by the empty stares from the people they pass. He sees the TOMBOY GIRL. She gives him a small wave as he pulls away. He returns it, looks down.

MONTAGE -

Days and nights go by. It rains. They roll deep into the woods. Across open fields. Into uncharted lands.

No one speaks.

And then, in the middle of a BEAUTIFUL FOREST, Ector stops the cart. The boys look up. Ector climbs down. He closes his eyes and listens. His eyes water up.

ECTOR
A man has nothing in this world but what he builds from his own two hands.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

ANOTHER PART OF THE KINGDOM... 5 YEARS LATER

INT. CHURCH KITCHEN

Hidden in a shadowed alcove in the back, **LANCELOT**, 15, blonde hair and sparkling blue eyes, makes out with a hot young brunette girl, **SARAH**. The two grope each other.

SARAH
(breathless)
Lancelot...

LANCELOT
Relax... open your legs-

A couple PRIESTS, enter. Lancelot pulls Sarah beneath the countertop. Hand covering her mouth. The priests put down a BASKET OF FOOD and a few bottles of WINE, then exit.

Lancelot starts kissing her neck. She's nervous.

SARAH
We're going to get caught...

LANCELOT
I hope so.

She stands. He reaches for her hand, but she rushes out the door. He grabs the basket of food and wine and chases her.

EXT. BACK DOOR STEPS - DAY

Lancelot, stuffing food into his mouth, runs down the steps.

LANCELOT
Sarah!

She keeps walking around a corner.

A servant boy, **ISAAC**, 10, sweeps the bottom step. He's thin and gaunt, clearly under-fed. Lancelot runs by, then stops.

LANCELOT
Hey kid, eat up.

Lancelot hands the boy the food, keeps the wine. The boy's eyes light up. He dives into the food, grateful.

AROUND THE CORNER IN THE COURTYARD

Lancelot catches up to Sarah.

SARAH
Lancelot. My father would-

BOY
Would what?

A dozen boys round the corner. One leads the rest -

SARAH
Tomas!

TOMAS
(to Lancelot)
You messed Makeli up pretty bad in fencing class.

LANCELOT
He should choose his words more wisely when he doesn't have the skills to back them up.

TOMAS
(gesturing to the boys)
I'm pretty sure between the rest of us we've got more than enough skills to back up anything he said.

SARAH
Don't Tomas-

TOMAS
Shut up, Sarah. When father hears about you snogging some degenerate-

LANCELOT
You really think you guys could take me?

TOMAS
Huh?

LANCELOT
You said you think the group here... (gesturing) could take me.

A priest opens the door.

PRIEST
What are you boys doing? You're late! Get in here right now.

TOMAS
(to Lancelot)
You're lucky.

LANCELOT
On the contrary. To be continued...

INT. CASTLE - DINING HALL - NIGHT

A lush dining hall. Tapestries, paintings, and the GREEN AND YELLOW FAMILY CREST line the wood walls. Dinner's served on a long opulent table on silver platters. Lancelot's father, **KING BAN**, on one end, and his mother, **ELAINE**, on the other.

Lancelot eats, staring at his food. Servants scurry about.

KING BAN
But that's not what I was asking Lancelot.

Lancelot stops.

LANCELOT
If I don't give you the answer you want to hear, why do you keep asking the same question over and over? Do you think I will eventually change my mind?

ELAINE
(sharply)
You think your irreverance is clever, I assure you it is not.

LANCELOT
I do not assume because the church says it is so, that it is so.

Elaine rolls her eyes.

LANCELOT
A priest is a man like any other, and more than capable of changing what he reads in a book to mean what he wants it to mean.

ELAINE
You believe a man who is speaking for God would do such a thing?

LANCELOT
(indignant)
God says to treat each other as brother and sister, but we don't really do we? God says to love thy neighbor, which sounds quite good actually, but that doesn't happen either.

KING BAN
Enough!

LANCELOT
We live as Royals though we really don't protect anyone but ourselves-

KING BAN
ENOUGH! I am not the one in question here, you are.
(beat)
They want to throw you out of school. Do you understand?!

This quiets Lancelot. He sits very still.

KING BAN
You are my only son, the heir to this land, and a member of the royal family. You will stop all this childishness and represent yourself as such!

Lancelot turns back to his plate. Elaine sips her wine. King Ban exhales loudly. They eat in silence.

LANCELOT
So, we studied the Greek legend of Icarus yesterday.

ELAINE
Wonderful story. Icarus flew too close to the sun.

LANCELOT
What melted his wings, mother? Was it an angry, punishing God, throwing him back down to earth? Or was it just simply the hot summer sun melting the wax off his wings?

Lancelot stares at Elaine as he chews his food. Elaine stares back. Then looks to King Ban, who only shakes his head.

LANCELOT
Then again, it's just a story in a book.
(beat)
Please pass the custard.

EXT. KING BAN'S CASTLE - COURTYARD

Lancelot fights with FOUR MEN at once. He has a SWORD in each hand, training to fight ambidextrous. **SIR MALLORY**, his battle-scarred teacher, coaches him.

MALLORY
Don't use them together. One can block, and one can attack.
(MORE)

MALLORY (CONT'D)
At the same time. Split your mind and attention in two.

Lancelot's footwork is amazing. He never stops moving. He holds off the men as they attack him incessantly.

MALLORY
Let your skills move the swords and free your mind to make decisions.

The men are fast and back him into a corner. One gets a "kill blow" in on Lancelot's side.

LANCELOT
Shit.

MALLORY
You're not concentrating.

LANCELOT
The two swords slow me down.

MALLORY
The two can do twice as much.

LANCELOT
I can take four men with one.

MALLORY
I can take ten with two. Your one would have no chance.

Lancelot's frustrated. Mallory pulls him aside.

LANCELOT
Sorry, I have alot on my mind.

MALLORY
So what? You think on the battlefield you can afford to be distracted? When entering combat, one must clear all the space in one's head for the fight itself. All else must go.
(beat)
Fight with hesitation and your enemy has the advantage, no matter how skilled you are. One does everything they can to <u>avoid</u> confrontation first, so that once the fight must happen, there only need be one focus, one commitment - kill your enemy.
(MORE)

MALLORY (CONT'D)
In the Far East, my master taught me to obtain the Warrior Mind. A state of complete immersion within the engagement.

Lancelot soaks up the advice.

MALLORY
The greatest fighters reach so deeply into this state that they achieve what is known as 'MUSHIN'. The immovable mind. A place of such incredible concentration, and all-encompassing awareness, that they feel nothing. Not pain, or the elements of hot and cold, or the conflicting emotions about what they must do. Once you descend into this state, you do not come out until your enemies are finished.

Lancelot walks to the middle of the courtyard. Closes his eyes. Takes a breath. When he opens his eyes, his focus is now far away. He nods.

The four men rush him from every side. The fight is quick and elegant, Lancelot moving with every move they have.

MALLORY
Eyes off their faces. Use your entire field of vision. Make them react to what you are doing. You dictate the rhythm and results.

Lancelot SLIDES between two of them, CUTTING both down in a single move. Using a wall to RUN UP, he spins and, reversing direction, takes the third down as he FLIES off the wall.

But the fourth ROLLS UNDER and stabs his exposed back.

LANCELOT
SHIT!

He throws one of the swords and turns on the fourth man. They parry for three swings and then Lancelot disarms him with an incredible move and has the sword to his throat in a flash.

Mallory looks unimpressed. Lancelot sits down, exhausted.

LANCELOT
Did you like the thing at the wall?

MALLORY
Very flashy.
(beat)
You have natural ability like I have never seen. You defy gravity itself. But without discipline, Lancelot, you will never rise to your full potential.
(beat)
I've met only seven men in my lifetime better than you. Not one of them would you survive.

Lancelot looks at Mallory.

LANCELOT
You're a bastard.

Mallory smiles. He's hit the soft-spot. Lancelot stands.

LANCELOT
Again.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Lancelot approaches the church, BOOKS under his arm. A CROWD of STUDENTS are gathered out front, WHISPERING.

LANCELOT
What's going on?

STUDENT
A servant boy was caught stealing food from the cafeteria. His punishment is being carried out in the courtyard.

LANCELOT
Punishment?

STUDENT
Fifty lashings.

INT. CHURCH COURTYARD

Lancelot RUSHES into the packed courtyard. People vying to get a good look.

On a small raised STAGE is Isaac, stripped bare to his waist, hands and head locked into a STOCK. A LEATHER BITE in his mouth. His ribs protrude from his starved frame.

The **CARDINAL** stands there, a black flogging WHIP in his hand.

CARDINAL
Stealing will not be tolerated. Not by anyone. Not under the rule of God.

The Cardinal turns to lash the boy.

LANCELOT
STOP!

Everyone looks at Lancelot.

LANCELOT
He did not steal the food.

CARDINAL
He has admitted to it.

LANCELOT
I know for a fact that he did not.
(beat)
I did.

A nervous MURMUR moves through the crowd.

LANCELOT
He was starving. He could hardly stand when I saw him.

CARDINAL
Stealing is stealing no matter who does it or what the reason may be. The book says those who steal-

LANCELOT
Forget the damn book!

Now the whole crowd is on edge. Angry SHOUTS can be heard.

LANCELOT
The book does not have a mind. IT CAN NOT THINK. It can not see if someone is hungry-

CARDINAL
Quiet yourself, Lancelot.

Lancelot does, reluctantly.

CARDINAL
Speaking against the church is a whole other offense, and do not doubt me that we will get into that in due course.
(beat)
But today, someone must be punished for stealing.

Lancelot unbuckles his sword. Pulls off his shirt.

LANCELOT
It was I who stole the food. I will take the lashing.

Everyone goes silent. Lancelot strides to the stage. The Cardinal and he stare each other down.

CARDINAL
As you wish.

The stock is opened. Isaac, stands stiffly, tears in his eyes. He runs off.

Lancelot defiantly puts the LEATHER BITE between his teeth. Bends over into the stock. They lock him in.

CARDINAL
None shall steal from the church without punishment to suffer.

Raising the whip, the Cardinal CRACKS it down upon Lancelot's back. He shudders in pain, but stares blankly forward. He will not shed a single tear.

INT. LANCELOT'S BEDROOM - HOME - A FEW DAYS LATER

Lancelot lies on his stomach. A nurse changes his bandages. His back is torn open and scarred top to bottom.

King Ban watches. Elaine is turned away, unable to look.

KING BAN
I do not know how smart it is to challenge forces beyond our control.

ELAINE
What will they do?

KING BAN
The Cardinal will consider allowing Lancelot to finish his studies.
(MORE)

KING BAN (CONT'D)
But he insists the he must serve penance and punishment for speaking out against the church.

ELAINE
(emotional)
Sometimes I think the boy is trying to kill himself.

INT. VILLAGE PUB - NIGHT

The place is packed. Lancelot, on the mend, walks in. Winds past big breasted WOMEN serving rowdy MEN and out to the back patio, where the younger crowd are.

A waitress hands him a stein of BEER. As he drinks, he spots Sarah. She laughs as some guy gropes her butt. She pushes him away, but the smile on her face says "don't stop." She gives him a kiss.

A girl whispers in Sarah's ear. Face dropping, she turns to see him watching. Cautiously, she walks over to him.

SARAH
Hi.

LANCELOT
Hi.

SARAH
I...

He stops her with a gesture.

LANCELOT
If it is what you want, who am I to say "no".

She looks unexpectedly moved... and heart-broken.

LANCELOT
Yes?

She nods softly. Then kisses him on the cheek.

As she walks away, we see the pain in his eyes. He chugs down the rest of his pint. Calls to the waitress.

LANCELOT
Another four of those.

EXT. PUB - LATE NIGHT

Lancelot stumbles out, completely wasted. He's ten steps down the street when he's surrounded by Tomas and his gang.

LANCELOT
Oh you.

TOMAS
We've got some unfinished business, Lancelot.

LANCELOT
Right... fantastic.

Lancelot turns away, JAMS his finger down his throat, and PUKES up a gallon of beer. Spits. Turns back. Gestures for them to advance.

LANCELOT
Okay, let's give it a go ladies.

TOMAS
Big talk for a-

Lancelot SMASHES Tomas in the face. Blood explodes from his mouth and he drops like a heavy bag of potatoes.

The rest of the group JUMP Lancelot, BATTERING him. Tomas rises. Pulls out a METAL POLE. Lancelot throws two boys off of him, turns and Tomas CRACKS him in the face.

LANCELOT
Pole.

He drops. They descend upon him like a pack of angry baboons.

INT. CHURCH ANTECHAMBER - MORNING

The Cardinal and a dozen priests sit at a table like a Senate panel.

Lancelot, face bruised, one hand wrapped in bandages, sits alone before them.

Behind Lancelot the room is filled. Present are King Ban, Elaine and Sir Mallory.

CARDINAL
Questioning the word of God is strictly not permitted, by anyone, of any class, at any time.
(MORE)

CARDINAL (CONT'D)
Usually this behavior would require expulsion from the academy.
(beat)
Lancelot we believe you can be an asset to the Church and this province. Hopefully in the future you may stand tall as part of your Royal Family, and follow in your father's exemplary footsteps. But today, you must serve the harshest of punishments.
(beat)
We order you, Lancelot, to serve the next year alone in hard labor.
(beat)
That year is to be spent in strict silence. Not a word is to be uttered from your lips.

Lancelot stares at the Cardinal.

King Ban looks away. Elaine covers her mouth. Mallory's gutted.

CARDINAL
Your sentence begins now.

The crowd erupts into conversation.

Lancelot raises his hand.

The Cardinal's eyebrows go up. He looks to a priest, who shuffles over to Lancelot with a piece of parchment, an ink well, and a pen.

Lancelot scribbles down a note. It's brought to the Cardinal.

The other priests gather around the Cardinal to read it -

WHO IS GOING TO FIGHT ME TO MAKE IT SO?

The Cardinal turns red with anger.

The priests, confused, CHATTER to each other. A WHISTLE silences them. They look up--

LANCELOT
I am assuming you can read?

The crowd is stunned.

CARDINAL
You have no idea what you are doing here, boy.

LANCELOT
Yes... I do.

CARDINAL
These rules are here to keep the peace. Without them we would have only anarchy!

LANCELOT
Your peace wreaks havoc on my soul.
(beat)
I hereby forfeit my royalty.

King Ban bursts onto his feet.

KING BAN
Lancelot!

CARDINAL
You understand that once revoked, you will never be able to regain your Royal standing. Ever.

Lancelot stares at him, unflinching.

LANCELOT
I do.

INT. KING BAN'S CASTLE - LANCELOT'S ROOM

King Ban and Elaine stand in Lancelot's room as he packs his things in a small satchel.

KING BAN
You are my only son! Do you have any idea what you are doing to this family?

LANCELOT
Of course I do, father.

KING BAN
You know nothing of the real world! You do not have an inkling about how it works! Sometimes one must bear the harsh realities of life for the sake of a harder truth. This is a fight you can never win, Lancelot.

Lancelot smiles sadly as he goes through his things.

ELAINE
Why must everything be a test for you? Why do you ask so much of yourself?

LANCELOT
Because no one else does.
(beat)
I want something to believe in. Something true.

KING BAN
You insult me.

LANCELOT
You are a wise man, father. You insult yourself.

King Ban looks like he may explode, but instead, he suddenly crumples. Sits on the end of the bed. Giving up.

Lancelot throws his bag over his shoulder. Gives one last look at his father and mother.

LANCELOT
I love you both. And I am grateful for all you have done for me.

EXT. KING BAN'S CASTLE - DUSK

Lancelot mounts his horse and is about to ride away, when Mallory steps out. The two exchange a conflicted look.

LANCELOT
Don't tell me, they sent you to stop me.

Mallory nods.

LANCELOT
Do you think I am wrong?

MALLORY
No, I do not. But these thing are far more complicated than they appear.

Lancelot looks away to the horizon.

MALLORY
I wanted to give you these upon your graduation. I guess this is some version of that, so...

Mallory holds TWO BAD-ASS SAMURAI SWORDS. On red/green silk from the Far East. The silver blades shimmer a blue-ish hue.

MALLORY
They are perfectly weighted and unbreakable. My sensei gave these to me when I graduated. He said they were only to be used by the very best fighter.

Lancelot, moved, takes them.

LANCELOT
Thank you, Mallory.

The two take each other's fists in a strong shake. As men.

MALLORY
Find something you believe in, Lancelot, lest your fire turns inward and consumes you.

Lancelot nods. Then rides off into the distance.

TITLE CARD:

12 YEARS LATER

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

ARTHUR, 27, sits up, startled awake. Scared and breathing hard. He's now a strong man with broad shoulders yet soft caring eyes. Right now lost in a dark, forboding wilderness.

A twig SNAPS behind him. Arthur JUMPS UP, spinning.

A CLOAKED FIGURE appears. Walking slowly towards him through the forest. Arthur trembles as the figure approaches.

ARTHUR
What... why are you back?

FIGURE
You have more to learn.

ARTHUR
Why?

The figure gestures.

FIGURE
Follow.

DEEP INTO THE THICK FOREST

Arthur struggles to keep up, though the figure doesn't walk quickly. A few moments later...

Arthur is alone. He looks around, confused. Then plods on.

Finally, he comes to a clearing. That is when he sees the WOLVES. He stops cold. Dread seeping in.

ARTHUR
No...

Huge and hungry, the wolves approach. Jaws dripping, teeth bared. Arthur turns, seeking escape. But he is surrounded.

Arthur is suddenly WRACKED with pain and falls to his knees. He SHUDDERS violently, CRYING OUT as he transforms into a wolf. The scared eyes still Arthur's.

The hooded figure reappears behind the wolves.

FIGURE
If you run, they will tear you to pieces.
(beat)
The pack will always fight and test the leader. Yet they know they must be lead. They need him. But no creature can follow one that has not earned their respect. And with wolves... there is only one way to earn respect. Win the fight.

The wolves ATTACK! Arthur, on all fours, fights for his life. Jaws SNAPPING, legs KICKING. He RIPS into a few of the wolves, but their numbers overwhelm him.

FIGURE
If you fight them all, you will lose. You only need to fight one. Which one?

Arthur breaks away. The pack circles him. He sees ONE WOLF, larger and stronger then the rest.

FIGURE
That is right. If you defeat the biggest, the strongest, no others will dare challenge you.

Arthur CHARGES the BIG ONE. Who throws him down and leaps for Arthur's jugular. But Arthur surprises him, ROLLING underneath, closing his jaws around the wolf's neck.

Arthur LOCKS HIS JAWS and WRINGS the big wolf around like a rag-doll. With a SQUEAL the big wolf goes limp, giving in.

Arthur drops him. The wolf stands gingerly. Then, in deference to the Alpha-male, offers his snout. Arthur opens his mouth, takes it in his own as all the wolves kneel.

A long sad HOWL. Arthur looks down at himself - he is human again, in the middle of this pack. Yet now they all feel unified with him. He looks around, the hooded figure is gone.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOME - MORNING

Arthur BOLTS UP in bed, *shaken by the DREAM*. Breathing hard. Covered in sweat. The sun already risen.

Home is a log structure. Worn from the elements. A gravestone sits out front. A single name on it, his mother's - CLAIRE.

ECTOR and KAY work outside fixing the wheel of their cart. Both have aged. Ector not for the better.

Arthur goes to grab his axe when he stops. Outside - the unmistakable sound of horse's hooves approaching.

He walks to the window and sees - a squadron of VORTIGAN'S SOLDIERS riding up, in black armor and armed to the teeth.

EXT. ARTHUR'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Arthur hurries out. Kay stands to the side. The lead soldier, **RAGNAR**, an unsettlingly quiet brute with piercing eyes, hands Ector a page of parchment. Points to Kay.

RAGNAR
That one is Kay?

Ector reads the parchment. Looks to Kay, worried.

ECTOR
Yes.

RAGNAR
(suspicious)
It wasn't easy finding you out here.

ECTOR
We are simple people who live off the land. That is all.

Ragnar eyeballs Kay, and then Arthur.

SOLDIER
(pointing to Arthur)
Another son? He doesn't look like you.

ECTOR
But a spitting image of his mother.

SOLDIER
How old is he?

ECTOR
He's just turned 21.

RAGNAR
Big for his age, no?

ECTOR
No need to tell me. He eats half of what we yield in crops.

Ragnar stares down Arthur. His horse shuffling nervously.

RAGNAR
Kay, your name was pulled in the Lottery. You must report ready for combat in The Games in four days time. You know the penalty if you should fail to show up.

KAY
I will be there.

Ragnar and the soldiers ride off. Ector's anger erupts as he crumples the parchment and throws it away.

ECTOR
What more can they want from me...

Arthur looks to Kay.

ARTHUR
What will we do?

ECTOR
We move on. Burn this place to the ground and-

KAY
No. They will hunt us down and find us. It is only a matter of time.
(beat)
I will go and fight. Serve my duty. I am ready.

ECTOR
Kay, I can not allow that-

KAY
It is the only way, father! You know that. So, let us not discuss this anymore. Let's pack up. We will need to be on the road by mid-day if we are to make it to the city in time.

Kay walks into the house. Ector stares at the ground.

ARTHUR
Why did you lie about my age, father?

ECTOR
Because I didn't want them to think you were somebody else.

CUT TO:

HOOVES FURIOUSLY POUNDING, DIRT EXPLODING INTO THE AIR...

EXT. PETRIFIED FOREST - DAY

A BLACK-ARMORED BATTALION races through fog-canopied woods, protecting a MASSIVE COACH pulled by a dozen HORSES.

LANCELOT, now late 20s and dashing, watches from a horse, high on a ridge. He slips on a HELMET, then ROCKETS down the slope behind the convoy. Perfectly aligned in the rear soldier's blind spot.

UP AHEAD: **GRIFLET (short, feisty, red haired)** and **PERCIVAL (a blonde-haired dreamer)** - DROP from the trees, falling fifty feet to the top of the speeding Coach, and cutting the throats of the SOLDIERS guarding it as --

DAGONET (a dark, burly rock of a man) ON HORSEBACK - RIDES UP in front the Coach. Holding onto a rope tied to his saddle, he JUMPS off and is rapidly dragged across the rugged ground by his galloping horse. Dozens of hooves pounding around him.

Confused soldiers try to get him but it's impossible as-

LANCELOT STANDS UP on his horse, takes two running steps off it's mane, LAUNCHING himself ONTO THE BACK of the horse in front of him. THROWS the soldier off and takes the reins.

Dagonet LETS GO of the rope. He's swept under the carriage hull, grabs the axle, swings up, and latches to the bottom.

Lancelot pulls his CROSSBOW. THWACK, THWACK, THWACK! Swiftly kills the coach driver and his guards.

Griflet pulls a SHORT BOW. Rapidly fires giving Lancelot cover as he JUMPS from the horse to the coach.

LANCELOT
Fancy to see you here.

GRIFLET
Lovely day.

PERCIVAL
Too bad it's all about to end.

LANCELOT
Too bad indeed.

Up ahead: the road becomes a narrow bridge.

Fifty soldiers pursue the coach. A dozen try to mount it as Griflet and Percival draw swords, fighting them off.

Beneath the coach, Dagonet pulls a final BOLT causing...

The WHEELS OF THE COACH fly off in all directions. The Coach slams to the ground, dirt ERUPTING as Dagonet swings himself up, narrowly avoiding the crashing wood and steel.

Soldiers and horses streak past the coach, unable to stop.

DAGONET
Fancy to see you here.

GRIFLET
We already did that one.

DAGONET
Oh. Well, blow off then.

A MASSIVE TREE comes careening down - CRASHING ACROSS the road - cutting off the army from the cratered coach.

WALCOTT (barrel chested with hard eyes) rides down from the woods with three extra HORSES.

WALCOTT
Anyone for a pony ride?

As soldiers try to scramble over the great tree...

Lancelot and the men rapidly sift through the remains of the coach finding an armory worth of weapons and--

A small CHEST with Asiatic lettering on it.

LANCELOT
This is it. Let's go.

CUT TO:

BOTTLES OF LIQUOR POPPING OPEN...

A cheap room on the top floor of a brothel. Lancelot and the men drink and celebrate.

Lancelot CRACKS open the CHEST. GREY DUST spills out.

The men stop, stare at the dust, puzzled.

WALCOTT
You're joking, right? Lancelot?

Suddenly sober and edgy.

DAGONET
Where's the gold, mate?

LANCELOT
No gold, Dagonet.

WALCOTT
No gold?!

GRIFLET
Oh boy...

Walcott smashes a bottle.

WALCOTT
You bastard. I'm gonna cut your throat--

Lancelot pulls out a leather pouch, spills a large pile of SILVER COINS on the table.

LANCELOT
That's what I've got. It's yours. Take it.

Walcott starts dividing up the coins, pocketing his share.

LANCELOT
Or... think bigger.

DAGONET
Bigger?! You said this was BIG. It was gonna be the BIGGEST ONE YET!

LANCELOT
It is.

WALCOTT
Do me a favor: don't bother me for the next job.

He leaves with a door slam. Awkward silence.

LANCELOT
He'll be back once he's sobered up.

Percival gestures to the dust.

PERCIVAL
What is it, Lancelot?

Lancelot puts a finger into the dust. Smells it. Tastes it. Then smiles.

LANCELOT
The future.

PERCIVAL
The future of what?

Lancelot looks up.

LANCELOT
It's called "Hu Yao"... Gunpowder. And it's the future of everything.

The men look intrigued...

LANCELOT
Vortigan has a shipment of gold bullion coming in from the Northern territories tomorrow.

DAGONET
Bullion?! That's... wow.

LANCELOT
Everything that comes to this city must go through those front gates.

GRIFLET
No shite. But there's an entire ARMY guarding it.

LANCELOT
Exactly. Which is why they think it's safe to just simply move it through the center of town.

PERCIVAL
Lancelot that's... not possible. It's an ARMY.

LANCELOT
Gold bullion. And with this...

Lancelot pours a small pile of the gunpowder onto the table. CRACKS the hilt of his sword on it and **BOOM**! Everyone JUMPS BACK as it explodes in a flash of light and smoke.

LANCELOT
With this, anything's possible.

Silence.

DAGONET
I'm in.

GRIFLET
Me too.

Lancelot grins.

LANCELOT
Fancy that.

INT. BROTHEL - LATER

Lancelot, drunk, rolls around in bed having SEX with a WOMAN. He's drinking from a liquor bottle while they do it. She LAUGHS. He LAUGHS.

She's really getting into a rhythm, when... he seems to have stopped. She waits a moment. The bottle rolls out of his grasp to the floor. She looks down at him. He's SNORING.

GIRL
Hey!

LANCELOT
(half-awake)
Hmmmm.

GIRL
Hello?!

No response. She rolls her eyes, then flops back down.

EXT. STREET - CENTER OF CAMELOT - LATE MORNING

Arthur, Ector and Kay roll into town and stop to get rations. Arthur looks over... sees EXCALIBUR. In front of the church, still sunken in the stone where Uther buried it. A group of SMALL BOYS take turns trying to pry it out, to no avail.

KAY
Legend has it that whoever pulls the sword from the stone is the true King of England.

Arthur smiles.

ARTHUR
Should we try?

Now Kay smiles. They walk towards it when-

ECTOR
Boys! Let's go.

The two look at the sword, then each other. Shrug.

KAY
I guess we'll never know.

They turn as the group of small boys run past. One loses his footing and SLAMS into a monster of a soldier, **VOTT**, who drops a case of liquor, which SMASHES to the ground.

VOTT
LITTLE BASTARD!

Vott KICKS him in the face. The boy is sent sprawling.

VOTT
I'm gonna have to pay for that out of my own pocket, you rat!

The boy starts to stand, scared. Vott unsheathes his sword.

VOTT
Don't you even think of walking away-

ARTHUR
He didn't mean it.

Everyone looks at Arthur. Ector sees, dread on his face.

And in the crowd, Lancelot, watching curiously.

ARTHUR
It was an accident. I'm sure he'd like to make it up to you.

VOTT
Make it up? How in hell is a kid going to do bloody anything for me?

Vott moves towards the boy. Arthur steps in his way.

ARTHUR
What are you going to do to him?

VOTT
None of your damn business!

ARTHUR
But we are all witness and must live with whatever you choose. Therefore it is my business.

ON LANCELOT'S FACE - something sobering washes across him.

The boy suddenly runs. Vott spins, but the boy is gone. Vott looks to Arthur.

VOTT
You're gonna pay for that-

Ector steps in front of Arthur protectively. Holds out SILVER COINS in his palm.

ECTOR
Please. I will pay for the liquor. And for your troubles.

Vott looks at the COINS, it's alot. Quickly pockets them.

VOTT
Get on your way. And don't let me see you around here again.

Ector glares at Arthur as he pulls him back toward the cart.

ARTHUR
That was the last of our money!

ECTOR
Quiet, Arthur. We have bigger things to worry about right now.

Lancelot watches as Ector, Arthur and Kay head off. Dagonet and Griflet walk up.

DAGONET
Everything's in place.

As they walk away, EXCALIBUR gleams in the sunlight.

EXT. ARENA OF "THE GAMES"

Arthur, Kay and Ector arrive. People are swarming everywhere. Some gearing up as their names are called, others trying to see the surreal spectacle.

The chilling SCREAM from inside, followed by the CHEERING of the crowd.

A GAMES-KEEPER stands atop a short tower outside the arena.

GAMES-KEEPER
Number thirty-one! Royce Randall!

A young man steps up.

ROYCE
Here!

GAMES-KEEPER
Head in! It's time to fight!

Arthur watches as Royce's MOTHER weeps, hugging the young man. Royce is trying his best to summon his courage.

ROYCE
Mother, I'll be fine. Please go.
I'll be back in time for dinner.

Royce gives her one last smile and heads in. She shakes like a leaf, turns hesitantly, and walks away.

ECTOR
Arthur, stay here and watch our things while Kay and I go sign him in. Do not go anywhere.

ARTHUR
Yes, father.

Ector and Kay disappear into the crowd.

EXT. GATES OF THE CITY

Griflet "casually" watches as the massive GATES open and SEVENTY SOLDIERS escort a LONG CART upon which are stacked WOODEN BOXES - filled with GOLD BULLION.

GRIFLET
Jesus...

EXT. SQUARE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN

Lancelot checks inside a satchel - SIX SMALL hand-made GUNPOWDER filled BLADDERS - medieval GRENADES.

Griflet runs up.

GRIFLET
Just passed through the gates. There's *alot* of them.

LANCELOT
Don't lose your bottle on me now, Griflet.

Lancelot takes notice of the GUARDS at every corner of the square. Across the way, positioned unseen behind the guards are Dagonet, Percival and Walcott. Ready to make their moves.

EXT. ARENA OF "THE GAMES"

Arthur watches dozens of men putting on their armor, sharpening their weapons.

Another CHEER goes up inside. Arthur looks at the black stone walls. Ten yards away is a stack of crates, and a small cracked hole in the wall above that.

Arthur carefully walks to the crates and climbs up. Checks the cart. No one is even paying attention to it. Arthur looks through the hole and sees...

INSIDE THE ARENA

Royce walks onto the field, alert. Behind him, a gate opens. The crowd ROARS. He stands waiting, breathing hard.

Royce's eyes widen as a MASSIVE CREATURE come RACING out toward him. A huge ANTHROPOD, but with it's insides on the outside and fangs, claws and teeth all over the place. Dead bodies skewered on spikes along it's spine.

Royce can barely raise his sword when the teeth come at him from everywhere. His helmet rolls off as his head is CRUNCHED by the spitting jaws of the beast.

The crowd CHEERS!

Arthur jerks away from the hole, falling to the ground. He scrambles back to the cart and -

Everything is gone!

Arthur panics. Looking around frantically, he spots a THIEF scrambling away with Kay's SWORD!

Bobbing in and out of the swarm of people, Arthur pursues the thief down an alleyway, then into a marketplace.

EXT. CHURCH SQUARE - CENTER OF TOWN - CONTINUOUS

The BULLION CART AND SOLDIERS pass through a HUGE STONE ARCH into the square.

Lancelot slips behind two GUARDS.

Arthur dashes in by the church. He's lost. The thief long gone. Tears of frustration fill his eyes. He's messed up big time, and he knows it.

The SEVENTY SOLDIERS and GOLD cross the square...

Arthur sees the sword in the stone. Desperate, he walks over.

Lancelot and his men pull out their WEAPONS...

Arthur reaches for Excalibur. Grasps its mighty handle and *PULLS...*

The sword SLIPS from the stone, almost HUMMING as it is released, as if nothing ever held it there.

Arthur gazes at it, entranced. Its blade luminescent. Perfectly balanced despite its girth. So light and free in his grip. He SWINGS it around, feeling it vibrate with each movement.

He smiles. Then he realizes... it is suddenly DEAD QUIET.

Every single face in the courtyard stares at him. Mouths hang open in awe. Eyes bulge in disbelief.

Including the SEVENTY SOLDIERS, now stopped.

Dagonet, Griflet, and Walcott have frozen, inches away from killing their guards.

Lancelot is astonished as Arthur stands, Excalibur in hand.

MAN
It's... it's the King!

MURMURS cross the crowd.

LANCELOT
Good lord...

Arthur looks around - now panicked. A soldier yells out --

SOLDIER
Tis' the son of Uther!

ALL the soldiers draw their swords.

LANCELOT
Oh hell.

Lancelot WHISTLES loud. THREE SHORT BURSTS OF SOUND.

DAGONET
Damn it!

Lancelot's men abort the mission. Melt into the crowd.

SOLDIER
KILL HIM!!!

The soldiers explode, ATTACKING from every direction.

A woman SCREAMS. Arthur, back-peddling away, with all his instincts, and all his strength, swings Excalibur.

A high-pitched SOUND emanates from the blade as it HISSES through the air. It meets the first soldier's sword, CHOPS right through it, SPARKS flying everywhere, then SLICES through the soldier, and without losing speed, cuts through a second soldier as well.

Then -- Arthur *runs like hell*...

THROUGH THE PACKED STREETS, AND BACK THROUGH THE MARKETPLACE

The SOLDIERS tight on his heels, knocking people to the ground, CRASHING into a vegetable stand.

Arthur turns a corner. An ARROW snaps through the air, POPS him in the ribs. His breath is KNOCKED out of him.

He runs, flinching from the pain at every step, but is cut off at the next turn by more soldiers. He's surrounded.

A SPEAR ROCKETS towards him -- just as it is about to skewer him -- SLAM! Arthur is YANKED to the side. The spear buries itself into the door next to him.

Arthur looks to who saved him, and there is Lancelot.

Lancelot SPINS his CROSSBOW in his hands. PUMPS it with a MINI-WINCH on the side, like a shotgun, HEAVY BOLTS load into the READY BLOCK. Then he OPENS FIRE - CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! - plowing down four SOLDIERS.

LANCELOT
Follow me.

Lancelot shoves Arthur through the door, takes the lead as they run through a maze of gates, alleyways, and buildings.

The soldiers seem to multiply. Lancelot turns a corner, SNAPS small FLINT, lights TWO GRENADES, rolls them in different directions, and -- BOOM! BOOM! Takes out a two dozen men.

ARTHUR
What was *THAT?!*

A soldier steps out of nowhere in front of them, swinging a HATCHET. Lancelot fires, a CROSSBOW BOLT SLAMS into his face.

They take off. Arthur struggles to keep up with the arrow in his side. Lancelot sees and stops in an alcove.

LANCELOT
Be quiet.

Pulling a dagger, Lancelot CHOPS off the shaft of the arrow. Arthur blanches from the pain, the arrow nub still sticking out. Lancelot SMACKS him across the face.

ARTHUR
What the bloody hell?!

LANCELOT
Stay awake.

The two stand silent. BOOTS POUNDING all around outside.

Lancelot cocks his head, listening. It's suddenly too quiet. He closes his eyes. Unsheathes his TWO SAMURAI SWORDS, one in each hand. Takes a deep breath...

LANCELOT
Here they come.

CRASH! A squad of soldiers BLAST through the doors.

SOLDIER
We've got them!

Lancelot OPENS his eyes. Though his teeth are gritted for battle, his expression is completely serene, almost unearthly. He has now entered **MUSHIN** - The Warrior Mind.

LANCELOT
Let's go.

Lancelot moves into overdrive. Two swords SPINNING, barely visible, CHOPPING through men like a cuisin-art. Full ninja-style fighting. JUMPING over blades, SLIDING under men he cuts in two, RUNNING up the walls. RIPPING his enemies apart.

Arthur, the emotion of survival fueling him, wields Excalibur, a man on fire. His skills are heightened by holding the great sword. It is one of his limbs.

In moments there's nothing but dead bodies at their feet.

In one cool move, Lancelot re-sheaths both swords at once.

LANCELOT
There's many more on the way. We must escape the city.

INT. VORTIGAN'S CASTLE HALL

Vortigan sits with **GENERAL MALEGANT**, and **CORRODER**, a sadistic man with gruesome pin-hole scars peppering his face and arms.

CORRODOR
It is all possible, your majesty. Beyond the Eastlands it is densely populated. They would make a strong labor force.

VORTIGAN
I want that land, Corrodor. From there we can stage an unstoppable wave and sweep into the Far East.

CORRODOR
It is not that easy. They are supported by the Romans to the south.

VORTIGAN
What is it the Romans seek most of all?

CORRODOR
The Romans seek respect... and respect power.

VORTIGAN
So, we must show them a display to convince them, and then offer them allegiance.

The generals bristle. Malegant pushes away from the table.

MALEGANT
I will never swear allegiance to the Romans, especially that bastard Emperor Lucius. I am sorry my lord, but I will not do it.

VORTIGAN
Relax, General. It is only for the moment until we take control of all the territories that surround them. Then we will take them from all sides and pound the Romans and Lucius into the dust.

The door flies open and a messenger dashes in.

MESSENGER
Your majesty.

CORRODOR
What is it?

MESSENGER
The sword... someone has pulled the sword from the stone.

PUSH IN on Vortigan as he rises from his throne.

VORTIGAN
Where is he now?

MESSENGER
He has fled.

VORTIGAN
Find him at all costs. And bring me my daughter, *immediately*.

INT. STONE CHAMBER IN THE TOWER OF VORTIGAN'S CASTLE

A SAGE in robes removes a black RAVEN from a cage. Walking to the window, he whispers something into the raven's ear.

He throws the raven out the window. It's wings open and catch air as it flies relentlessly NORTH...

EXT. "THE GAMES" ARENA

Ector and Kay arrive to see - the empty cart. Everywhere are SOLDIERS searching, on high alert.

ECTOR
Oh no...

Ector grabs Kay, spinning him into the crowd.

KAY
Father, what's going on?

ECTOR
They have discovered your brother.

OFF Kay's confused look.

CUT TO:

BACK ON THE STREET

Lancelot and Arthur are hopping through windows, climbing up a balcony, and ducking into -

THE BROTHEL

Scantily clad women everywhere. Lancelot runs to the back with Arthur, into a room. Dagonet and the men are there.

DAGONET
What's the hell's going on here Lancelot?

LANCELOT
I need you to create a diversion.

Dagonet grabs Lancelot, pulls him close.

DAGONET
I don't know what's going on with this guy and that sword, but you've just stepped into something we shouldn't have anything to do with.

LANCELOT
We need to get him out. Move onto our contingency plan.

GRIFLET
The entire city is being shut down.

DAGONET
No flags. That's the rules, mate. That's what you said.

LANCELOT
This isn't about that.

GRIFLET
No bloody flags Lancelot.

LANCELOT
THERE'S NO TIME FOR THIS!

Lancelot stares Dagonet down.

LANCELOT
Just do as we arranged. I'll see you there. Trust me.

Lancelot hands Dagonet the satchel of grenades. Then a loud KNOCK - soldiers at the back door.

DAGONET
Crap.
(beat)
I'll help you get out... but I'm not coming.

GRIFLET
You're on your own Lancelot.

They exchange a look. The soldiers start RAMMING the door.

LANCELOT
We're all on our own, Griflet.

OUT FRONT

Soldiers are SMASHING in the door, when - A WHISTLE.

DAGONET
Up here you freaking idiots.

The soldiers look up. Dagonet, on the roof, drops the satchel down in the middle of them. **BOOOOOOM!** A massive explosion.

BASEMENT WINDOW

Lancelot and Arthur squeeze out the small window, into a side street. Lancelot opens a street drain. They jump down into -

A CATACOMB OF SEWERS.

LANCELOT
We have horses waiting on the South side of the city if we can make it out.

ARTHUR
My father and brother are at the Games. I can't leave without them.

BOOTED FOOTSTEPS fill the streets above them.

LANCELOT
If you don't move now, you will never see them again. That I can promise you.

Lancelot takes off into the maze. Arthur, torn, follows.

They twist and turn their way through the labyrinth. VOICES can be heard as SOLDIERS flood the tunnels.

The two run past a cross section. A dozen ARROWS whiz by, just missing them. The pounding FOOTSTEPS getting closer.

Arthur is panting. Clearly in pain. Sweating profusely.

ARTHUR
You're lost...

LANCELOT
Uh...
(looks around)
Yep. Definitely lost.

TWO SOLDIERS appear ahead of them. Without slowing a step, Lancelot swiftly draws a sword and CUTS both down.

Around the next turn - daylight.

LANCELOT
We're almost there!

They CHARGE through the opening. And come SLIDING to a STOP. Pin-wheeling their arms to keep from falling down the 500 FOOT DROP into the rocky ocean below!

ARTHUR
I'm assuming this is not the "there" you were thinking of.

These are the incredible cliffs from the film's opening. Sheer rock face with a few small ledges. Dozens of sewer openings above, below, and around them.

Behind them, thirty more SOLDIERS flood into the tunnel.

Lancelot looks down. A long heavy CHAIN holds open a massive GRATE above the mouth of the tunnel. The chain is attached to a PULLEY.

The next LEDGE is 50 feet below. It eventually reaches flat land where large trees hang over the cliff. Big exposed roots hold to the earth at the edge.

LANCELOT
If we can make it down to that ledge, we can scale over to the South side of the city.

ARTHUR
Yeah... that sounds *insane*.

They exchange a look. Arthur, shaking his head, grabs hold of the chain. Repels down the cliff. Lancelot right behind him.

Vortigan's troops reach the opening. The ends of a DOZEN ROPES come flying down.

Arthur lands on the ledge. It is only two feet wide. Letting go of the chain, he starts scaling to the side.

Soldiers FLY out of the mouth of the tunnel above, sliding down the ropes at high speed. Swords out and ready to fight.

Lancelot, still making his way down on the chain, DUCKS under the first sword that SLASHES at his head.

He KICKS off the rock, SWINGS into the soldier. Grabs and throws him off the cliff-face. The soldier plummets down, CRASHING onto the rocks below.

Lancelot unsheathes a sword, engaging into combat with the next soldier. They clash and parry as more soldiers drop down around Lancelot. He holds them off with incredible agility.

THIS HAS BECOME A VERTICAL BATTLE ON THE ROCK-FACE -- MEN SWINGING AND SLASHING FIVE HUNDRED FEET ABOVE THE OCEAN!

Lancelot glances up. Above, a dozen soldiers repel down towards him. He looks down. Soldiers pour from the openings below. Scaling upwards to him.

He flips out his CROSSBOW, AIMS UP and FIRES a BOLT. It SEARS through the air, SPLINTERING the LATCH that holds the pulley.

The metal GRATE comes SMASHING DOWN, PULLING UP the chain as it falls. Lancelot holds on as he is ROCKETED UP the cliff, cutting ropes as he FLIES by, sending the soldiers falling.

Their bodies SLAM into the other soldiers who are climbing up the cliffs from below, knocking them off the wall and into the rocks and ocean.

Arthur, Excalibur in hand, fights soldiers all around him. CHOPPING men down, working his way forward along the ledge.

Lancelot climbs into a sewer opening. Ten soldiers below him on ropes heading for Arthur.

He grabs onto the CHAIN, wraps his legs and feet around it, unsheathes BOTH SWORDS, and then drops his body upside-down over the edge!

As he drops, he tightens his legs to control his fall. Pushes off the wall and swings side to side, cutting the ropes.

Arthur barely gets out of the way as men fall around him.

ARTHUR
Hey!

LANCELOT
Sorry!

Above Lancelot, new soldiers arrive and release the chain. Lancelot falls off, catching the ledge above Arthur with one hand. One SWORD tumbles down and catches on the ledge below.

The chain CRASHES down past Lancelot. Arthur dives out of the way, the chain taking out the soldier he was fighting.

ARTHUR
Didn't I just tell you about that?!

Arthur throws Lancelot's sword up to him. He catches it just in time to cut down a soldier exiting the tunnel next to him.

Arthur makes it to the outcropping, where the cliffs meet flat land. Grabs a root, and swings himself onto the ground.

Lancelot jumps down onto the ledge Arthur was on. Scales to the side. Is almost there when a soldier drops down right behind him. The soldier raises an HATCHET.

ARTHUR
Lancelot!

Arthur THROWS Excalibur over his head, end over end.

Lancelot ducks, diving for a huge tree-root. Excalibur flies over his head and SLAMS the soldier square in the chest, running him through half-way down the blade.

The soldier stands there, wavering. Holding onto the rock wall, trying to steady himself.

Arthur, instinctively reaches out his hand, and the great sword FLIES OUT backwards, spinning and landing perfectly into Arthur's palm. Lancelot stands up next to him.

ARTHUR
Whoa.

LANCELOT
Cool sword. What else can it do?

ARTHUR
(shaking his head)
Who the hell knows.

EXT. FOREST OUTSIDE THE CITY

Arthur and Lancelot run hidden in the trees. Up ahead they see - their horses waiting. And also - Walcott and Percival.

LANCELOT
Everyone get out okay?

WALCOTT
Far as we know.

Lancelot helps Arthur mount his horse. Percival stares at Arthur dumbstruck. Walcott watches with a glint in his eye.

Lancelot pulls Walcott and Percival to the side privately.

LANCELOT
What are you two doing here?

PERCIVAL
(amazed)
I never thought I'd meet a King. He looks like a King, don't he?

LANCELOT
I have no idea.

WALCOTT
We saw him pull the sword.

LANCELOT
And...

PERCIVAL
He is the saviour. We're free men again! Do you understand what this means?!

WALCOTT
We could get set up pretty nice for saving his life, Lancelot.

LANCELOT
What? What are you talking about?

WALCOTT
Why else did you do that back there? Think big, right?

Lancelot exhales.

LANCELOT
It had nothing to do with reward, Walcott. And it sure as hell has nothing to do with flags.

Lancelot shakes his head. Walks over and mounts his horse.

WALCOTT
Then what are we doing here?!

LANCELOT
I have no idea what you're doing here. That was my point.

ARTHUR
I need to go back.

LANCELOT
What's that?

ARTHUR
I told you my family is still in that city. I'm not going anywhere without them.

LANCELOT
Christ. You step back into that city and you'll be dead in a heartbeat.

Arthur turns to ride back to the city.

LANCELOT
Wait! Arthur, just... let's get somewhere safe. Then we will figure out how to rescue them.

Arthur stares at him, stubbornly.

LANCELOT
Look, with a handful of men, I know how to take on a hundred. But two, or four, is not a handful. There's no chance. It's impossible.

Arthur looks at the city in the distance. Then finally nods. The four riders head off into the woods.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY

Soldiers dump a cart stacked with dead bodies from the Games to a massive pit full of bones. Then leave. Moments later...

Starving, mad, VAGRANTS come out of the woods. One of them starts to chew into a foot, and another an arm.

VOICE
OUCH! GET OFF OF ME!

Out of the pile jumps Kay. Arm bit. The vagrants HISS at him.

KAY
Stay the hell away from me you bloody cannibals!

Ector crawls out from under a body. Looking sick and white.

ECTOR
Good Lord. Let's go.

They hurry into the woods... only to be surrounded by twenty BANDITS on horseback. The bandits are eerily calm and still.

BANDIT
My guess is that's them.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST

Arthur, Lancelot and the men cross a stream. Arthur's weak from blood-loss. Lancelot dismounts. Helps Arthur down.

LANCELOT
(to his men)
Collect wood and water.

Walcott and Percival ride off.

Lancelot inspects the wound. The arrow shaft protrudes a few inches out. He opens a VIAL of POWDER. Ignites it. The powder BURNS white. He puts a SPOON over the flame. Drops shards of NICKEL METAL in. It BUBBLES and liquefies.

ARTHUR
What is your name?

LANCELOT
Lancelot.

ARTHUR
I owe you my life, Lancelot.

LANCELOT
You don't owe me anything. And let me get one thing straight with you - I don't believe in Kings and dynasties and all that rubbish.

ARTHUR
Then why'd you save me?

Lancelot looks blankly at him. Hands him a piece of LEATHER.

LANCELOT
Put this in your mouth. Do not scream.

Arthur bites down on the leather. Lancelot YANKS the arrow out. Arthur's eyes bulge as he almost screams.

LANCELOT
That's the easy part.

Lancelot SPLASHES yellow LIQUID on the wound. It HISSES. Pours the hot liquid metal into the wound.

Arthur shakes in pain, then passes out.

CUT TO:

THE RAVEN FLIES ACROSS A ROUGH AND HARSH MOUNTAIN RANGE

A heavy brooding forest below. Snow across the treetops.

We are in THE BLACK MOUNTAINS.

The raven flies upward, against the screeching wind and driving snow. Into the mouth of a SHADOWY CAVE.

INT. CAVE - BLACK MOUNTAINS

Torches line the walls. The raven flies deep into the network of caves. There are PEOPLE here, dressed in hooded black robes. It is a COVEN OF DARK SORCERY.

The raven lands on a perch. A CLOAKED FIGURE picks up the bird, inspects it. Carries it into a stone room.

Cauldrons boil. Unnerving things float in glass jars that line the walls. A lab of black magic. Evil seeps through it.

In the middle of the room, reading from a scroll, is a woman.

CLOAKED FIGURE
A harbinger has come for you.

The woman turns - it's **MORGANA**.

Stunningly beautiful. Long black hair, porcelain skin, and a smoking hot body. Her green eyes full of writhing energy.

She takes the bird. Strokes it's wings. Then BREAKS IT'S NECK. Twists it's HEAD off and tosses it into a cauldron.

The BLUEISH LIQUID boils instantly. Morgana leans over the steam as it rises up, closes her eyes, and *listens*.

There's a WHISPERING in the mist - voices speaking backwards in tongues. Morgana's lips move as she deciphers the message.

Her eyes fly open, suddenly black and pupil-less. Her lips curl into a smile. Pure venom.

MORGANA
Aaaaaaah... my bastard brother has finally returned.

EXT. SORCERER'S COVEN - BLACK MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

A MASSIVE BLACK STEED bursts from the mouth of the cave. Morgana rides hard into the howling snow and ice, wrapped in black cloaks, lit in the moonlight. Heading SOUTH.

SMASH CUT TO:

ARTHUR'S EYES BLINK OPEN.

It's late afternoon. He's alone in the forest. Gets up, when--

A SNAP behind him. He spins. What he sees freezes his blood.

There before his eyes is the cloaked figure from his dreams. Walking towards him with a LONG STAFF in his hand.

For the first time, the cloaked figure takes down his hood, and Arthur finally sees MERLIN. His face older and more weathered. But his eyes full of the softness wisdom brings.

MERLIN
Arthur... I have waited a long time to meet you.

ARTHUR
(dumbfounded)
You...

The sound of a CROSSBOW BOLT locked into the firing pin. Lancelot is behind Merlin, aiming at his head.

LANCELOT
Who the hell are you old man?

MERLIN
I am Merlin. (to Arthur) I was a very close friend of your father's.

ARTHUR
My father and brother are trapped in the city.

MERLIN
They are safe, don't worry about them.
(beat)
Ector is a good man, but he is not your father.

Arthur stares.

ARTHUR
What? What do you mean?

MERLIN
(to Lancelot)
You can put your weapon down. And tell your friends they can come out from hiding.

Lancelot does. Walcott and Percival come out from the bushes.

MERLIN
(to Arthur)
Your true father was Uther Pendragon. The last and greatest ruler of this Kingdom. And you are his heir to the throne.

Arthur's world begins to spin.

ARTHUR
I don't believe you.

MERLIN
Need I to convince you? You pulled the sword from the stone, Arthur.
(MORE)

MERLIN (CONT'D)
Only the one whose blood runs from the kings can do such a thing. The last man to carry that sword in his hand was your father. And now, you.
(beat)
Arthur, you are the rightful King of England.

Arthur looks at Excalibur, overwhelmed. He can not deny the deep connection the sword seems to have with him.

MERLIN
It moves like it is part of you, because IT IS PART OF YOU.
(beat)
You can feel it. Inside yourself, you know it to be so.

Merlin hands Arthur a leather scabbard with red, white and navy symbols. The length detailed in silver and gold. Arthur slips the mighty blade inside. It fits like a glove.

Percival and Walcott exchange a look of astonishment.

Arthur looks at Lancelot, who watches guardedly.

ARTHUR
Merlin, I don't understand. What is to happen now? What do you expect of me?

MERLIN
You don't ask easy questions, Arthur. But then again, I didn't raise you to.

ARTHUR
You really were the one... you came to me-

MERLIN
-in your dreams. Yes. There was no other way to keep you hidden. To keep you safe.
(beat)
I had to teach you, to prepare you for this day.

Arthur, a deep sense of dread taking hold of him.

ARTHUR
For *what*?

MERLIN
It has begun Arthur. When you pulled that sword, the wheel started to turn. Front and center we are thrust into this final epic battle against the forces of darkness. To try and turn this suffocating tide of evil back and claim this earth in the name of free men once again.
(beat)
Vortigan and his Northern race seek to forever shut the book of man, to squash humanity until there is no trace left of the dignity and spirit we hold inside. When there is no blood left to spill, and all are gone, he'll re-write the pages and tell an altogether different story. Nothing short of genocide is his plan. Total and complete destruction. There will be no trace of this civilization when he is done. There will be only a history of his own creation. His dynasty. And between him and this black future stands only one man.
(beat)
<u>You</u>.

Arthur steps away. Leans on the sword. Shakes his head.

ARTHUR
This is crazy.

Arthur looks to Lancelot, who gazes off in his own thoughts.

Merlin gestures to Arthur, as he did in his dreams.

MERLIN
Follow.

CUT TO:

<u>MERLIN LEADS ARTHUR, LANCELOT, AND THE MEN TO A ROCKY PEAK</u>

At the top of the mountain are the ANCIENT RUINS of a DRUID CASTLE, eroded out of stone. Four stories tall, much of it covered in vines and moss. Tents are set-up throughout.

Standing there waiting are - the BANDITS. Over FIFTY MEN. They all watch Arthur expectantly as he walks in.

LANCELOT
I'm liking this less and less every second.

Arthur sees Ector and Kay. He jumps off his horse, goes to them. Ector hugs him tightly. Kay looks on reticent, unsure.

ARTHUR
I'm sorry, I didn't know father-

ECTOR
Shhh. Don't You can't imagine the weight that's been lifted from my heart today. That it wasn't all for naught.

Merlin puts a hand on Ector's shoulder.

MERLIN
A job well done.
(to Arthur)
Arthur, these men come from many different parts of this land. They have all sworn their lives to defeat Vortigan and return peace to this kingdom. Some are nobles, some are cobblers. All are rebels. And they are here in service to you, the sole heir to the throne of England.

Arthur is speechless. The men exchange skeptical looks amongst each other.

INT. ARTHUR'S TENT

Arthur paces nervously, agitated. Merlin enters.

ARTHUR
There's no way. I can't do this. I will not have these men die over me, Merlin. I have seen too much death in my time.

MERLIN
And you will see much more before this is done.

ARTHUR
No. I'm not-

MERLIN
(softly)
Thousands have died for you already, Arthur.

Arthur looks at Merlin, the statement hangs in the air.

MERLIN
Thousands for you to be here now...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CITY OF CAMELOT - FLASHBACK

THE CITY IS ALIVE WITH SOLDIERS STREAMING OUT OF THE CASTLE. THE ENTIRE FORCE OF THE ARMY IS ON THE MOVE.

MERLIN (V.O.)
When Vortigan learned the truth about you, he sent out his army across the entire land and killed every newborn in the Kingdom.

Vortigan goes house by house through the city. PEOPLE rush around, panicking. One FAMILY tries to run, but Vortigan catches them. Pulls the BABY from the mother's grasp.

MERLIN (V.O.)
The "cleansing" went on for over a year. An entire generation was wiped out.

Corroder leads with unflinching brutality. Carrying out the madness of Vortigan's conquest.

MERLIN (V.O.)
You see Arthur, you are a blood-line heir to the throne. As long as you live, the prophecies will always show that between Vortigan and his dynasty there is one man standing in the way. The true King of England.

In his tower, Vortigan watches the destruction, his eyes ablaze. Morgana pulls BONES from a splayed open GOAT. **Reads the prophecy**. She throws the bones aside, frustrated. She shakes her head 'no'. Vortigan begins to shudder with rage.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ARTHUR'S TENT - PRESENT DAY

MERLIN
Vortigan will not sleep, he will never relent, until he finds you and has vanquished the final breath from your frame.

Arthur stares into the corner, quiet.

MERLIN
It is alot to bear, Arthur. But it is part of being King. The lives of all those in your kingdom rest in your hands, and yours alone. No one can share that weight with you. And I am sad to say, it is a weight that you will carry the rest of your life.

EXT. ARTHUR'S TENT

Merlin comes out. Addresses a REBEL waiting outside.

MERLIN
Get someone to redress his wound. Right away.

INT. ARTHUR'S TENT - LATER

Arthur lies on his back, overwhelmed. In steps a beautiful woman in leather armor, wearing a sword and two daggers.

She sees him, stops in her tracks. He recognizes the SCAR along her eye - it's **the tomboy** from so many years ago.

ARTHUR
You're...

She smiles, curiously.

ARTHUR
I never got your name.

TOMBOY
Deliah.

ARTHUR
We... never really met. You were once very kind to me.

DELIAH
I think it was the other way around.
(beat)
If I'd known I was feeding a King I'd've been a little more generous.

Arthur smiles. Deliah kneels down next to him. Opens the cloth over Arthur's ribs. Sees the gashing wound.

DELIAH
I'm going to have to get my fingers in there and clean out the shards.

ARTHUR
That doesn't sound very fun.

She smiles. Rolls up her sleeves. Washes her hands.

DELIAH
This is going to hurt.

She slips her fingers into his wound. He closes his eyes, focusing past the pain.

ARTHUR
So, how'd you end up here?

She pulls a shard out of his side.

DELIAH
When I was thirteen, my father's name was pulled for The Games. We fled. For almost two years we lived on the streets, begging, from city to city. One night, I don't know how, they found us. I woke up as they were chopping my mother and little brother to pieces.

Arthur looks at her. She remains focused. Pulls a few last shards out. Then cleans the wound.

DELIAH
My father grabbed me and ran. Ran until he had nothing left. He told me to keep running, and to never look back. I did. Behind me I could hear his cries as they took him.
(looking at him)
After that run, I swore I would never run from them again.

She stitches his side closed.

ARTHUR
I am sorry.

Deliah nods.

DELIAH
Me too.

She finishes. Wraps his side.

DELIAH
You should rest.

He smiles gently, respectfully. She allows herself a small smile back, taking him in for a moment. And then she is gone.

EXT. DRUID RUINS - NIGHT

Lancelot is packing up his horse. Arthur walks up.

ARTHUR
Lancelot. Where are you going?

LANCELOT
I can't stay.
(beat)
You're different Arthur, even I can see that. You've got it all right on the inside. Your compass points true north. That's why I stepped in and did what I did back there. But I don't ride under a flag, and I don't buy into anybody's 'cause'.

Lancelot climbs onto his horse.

ARTHUR
If you were me, what would you do?

LANCELOT
You want the truth?

Arthur nods.

LANCELOT
I'd get the hell out of here while you still can.

Lancelot turns his horse.

LANCELOT
But that's just me. Good luck with whatever you choose.

Lancelot rides away. Arthur watches, feeling even more alone.

EXT. VORTIGAN'S CASTLE

Morgana thunders in through the gates, and dismounts her horse in a single panther-like movement.

INT. VORTIGAN'S CHAMBERS

She strides in. Vortigan goes to her. They kiss on the lips. Uncomfortably more intimate than is appropriate.

VORTIGAN
Did you read the prophecy?

MORGANA
I did.

VORTIGAN
And?

MORGANA
In the future as cast today, you reign over both this land and all of the far east. One unified kingdom, ocean to ocean. And the race of men is extinguished once and for all.

VORTIGAN
That is the future!

MORGANA
Uther's son and the Sword of Power are now connected. Obscured, but very real and forming, are glimpses of a future where Arthur sits upon your throne as King.

Vortigan walks away. His anger rising.

VORTIGAN
There is a spell shrouding Arthur, keeping my seers from finding him.

Morgana smiles.

MORGANA
Merlin. He may be able to hide him from our eyes, but he can not cloak Arthur's mind...

EXT. ROCKY RIDGE - NIGHT

Arthur sits alone in the dark. Deliah walks up. Sits.

DELIAH
You okay?

Arthur looks at her, shrugs. She smiles.

DELIAH
Stupid question.

She hands him some bread.

DELIAH
I saw you didn't eat much.

Arthur takes it.

ARTHUR
Thanks.

DELIAH
So, you had no idea you were King?

ARTHUR
No. I certainly never felt like a King, and I still don't now. I'm the same person I've always been.

Deliah hands him an old worn piece of FOLDED PARCHMENT.

DELIAH
You've always had the heart of a King, Arthur. I can't think of anything more important than that.

Arthur unfolds it. Seeing the faded INK FLOWER he once drew.

DELIAH
What's scaring you so much?

ARTHUR
Everything. I don't even know where to start.

DELIAH
Start with me.

ARTHUR
You don't scare me.

She looks deeply, directly into his eyes.

DELIAH
Well, that's good.

Arthur leans over and kisses her. She parts her mouth to take the kiss. Her arms are around him and they are entwined.

ARTHUR
I still can't believe you're here.

DELIAH
Shhh. Stop talking.

INT. ARTHUR'S TENT - NIGHT

Arthur and Deliah naked... quietly, passionately, making love in the darkness.

For just this moment, there is nothing weighing on Arthur. Something in this universe finally feels right again.

INT. VORTIGAN'S BATHING ROOM - NIGHT

Vortigan, nude, kneels into a tub of murky green water. Candles lit everywhere. His enormous frame covered in battle tattoos and scars, head to toe.

Morgana lifts up two LONG SILVER NEEDLES, and from the side, pierces his eyeballs. Vortigan clenches his teeth.

Blood and clear liquid drip into the broth. Tendrils reach up along Vortigan's body. Morgana JAMS his head under the water.

MORGANA
Go visit my wretched brother.

SMASH CUT TO:

ARTHUR SLEEPS RESTLESSLY. LIPS MOVING SILENTLY. EYES SHIFTING RAPIDLY SIDE TO SIDE. HIS BODY JERKS, MUSCLES CONTRACTING.

SMASH CUT TO:

A FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT SEARS THE SCREEN.

Arthur stands in the middle of a battlefield. Excalibur at his side unsheathed. He watches in horror. Unable to move.

IN SLOW MOTION thousands of bodies collide and crash together. Far as the eye can see. Armor smashing armor. Swords chopping into shields. Men dying.

Arthur looks down - there are white poppies covering the ground. They turn red as they are splattered with blood.

He looks up - the sky's filled with snow.

He looks to his left - a woman in silhouette rides towards him on a white steed. He can not make out her face, but we will see more of her in the future - this is **GUINIVERE**.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
(realizing)
This is where I die...

Through the black smoke - Vortigan walks towards him. Arthur can only stare wide-eyed at this monster, as he slowly advances, his gargantuan shadow covering him.

VORTIGAN
Arthur... You know who I am.

INT. VORTIGAN'S BATHING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MORGANA
I've found you...

Morgana pulls out a JAR. Inside - HUNDREDS of TINY SHINY BLACK-SKINNED IRIDESCENT HUMANOID CREATURES encased in clear EGGS. Bone-thin-limbed, with flat bright yellow eyes, and layers of sharp carnivorous silver teeth.

She opens the jar, pours the EGGS into the bubbling tub.

A FLASH OF WHITE -- BACK IN ARTHUR'S DREAM

In SLOW MOTION, Vortigan approaches. Arthur tries to lift the Excalibur, but it seems to weigh a thousand pounds.

Arthur looks over towards Guinivere - but she is gone.

VORTIGAN
You understand that your death will come at my hands.

ARTHUR
I am not afraid.

VORTIGAN
You should be.

Vortigan lifts his massive hands. In his fists, hanging by their hair, are the chopped off heads of all his family.

Uther and his three sons. And his mother.

The heads roll and bounce off of one another as Vortigan walks closer.

Suddenly, all their eyes OPEN, and they SCREAM in unison.

CLAIRE
Please go back, Arthur! GO BACK! RUN!!!

Ector's head shakes, smoking. Burned by some unseen object.

ECTOR
OH GOD! The pain!!! Please stop the pain!

Kay's mouth frothing. Struggling to get air.

KAY
I-(gurgle)...

And then the last head comes around - it is Deliah. Tears run down her face. Her breath coming in short, fast gasps.

DELIAH
There's too many of them, Arthur. I suffocate in the dirt. The sun never comes up here... and they slay me. Over, and over, and over.

Then, Vortigan is next to Arthur. Towering above him. He smiles. Black ooze runs between his teeth.

VORTIGAN
(whispering)
I shake with delight at the thought of having you in my hands, Arthur. You will suffer... oh god yes. You will *suffer*.

SMASH CUT TO:

ARTHUR WAKES WITH A JOLT, GASPING FOR AIR, SOAKED IN SWEAT.

He stumbles out of his tent. It is still night. He chokes a few times, and then vomits.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Merlin opens his eyes from a trance. He looks troubled.

INT. RUINS - CONTINUOUS

Arthur wipes his mouth when - A SCREAM from upstairs. Then CRASHING SOUNDS, and all hell breaking loose.

Deliah rushes out of the tent. Ector and Kay run up. They all rush upstairs. It's PITCH BLACK. Men are being attacked in the dark. A RASPY RATTLESNAKE SOUND shakes everywhere.

Arthur gets a torch lit. When he holds it up the blood drains from everyone's faces as they see --

ECTOR
Good lord. Kakane!

The ceiling and walls are covered with the creatures Morgana sent magically through - the **KAKANE.** Only now they have HATCHED and GROWN BIGGER, each one four feet long.

They pour in through the windows like an insect infestation. Out of their fingers shoot 6-inch razor sharp CLAWS.

Men are fighting them everywhere, but the Kakane move too fast. Their talons and teeth flashing everywhere, tearing men apart in seconds like piranha. The place is a slaughterhouse.

Arthur, Ector, Deliah and Kay dive into the fight. All around them men are dropping, eaten to the bone instantly.

Kay chops the arm off one, but another grows right back in seconds. These creatures regenerate.

ECTOR
You must take off their heads! That is the only way to stop them!

One jumps on Percival, knocking him to the floor. Inside it's snapping maw the layers of teeth shake back and forth at high speed, creating the "rattling" noise.

PERCIVAL
My God!

Deliah SLICES the head off the thing. The disembodied head still tries to get to Percival. Percival KICKS it out the window and grabs his sword.

Arthur CHOPS through packs of them. More just keep coming.

ECTOR
Blasted creatures of darkness.

One Kakane, much larger than the others, crawls along the ceiling. This is the LEDONAT. Their leader. In search of --

ARTHUR. The Ledonat's eyes DILATE, and it LEAPS onto Arthur's back, razor talons digging into Arthur's shoulders.

ARTHUR
AAAAAAARGH!

The Ledonat BITES DOWN, but Arthur gets an ARMORED FIST into it's mouth. The teeth GRINDING into metal.

Arthur skewers the creature. The Ledonat PULLS ITSELF DOWN THE SWORD BLADE TOWARD HIM! Arthur throws it across the room.

The monster LEAPS right back at Arthur. Inches from his face -

Deliah's sword slices the Ledonat in half.

More Kakane come rushing in from every direction.

ARTHUR
There are too many...

A BLUE BOLT of ENERGY LIGHTS UP the room. Merlin has arrived.

MERLIN
Everyone get DOWN!

The men drop to the floor. Merlin FIRES his wand around the room, BLASTING the Kakane off the walls and ceiling.

A SHRIEKING CRY fills the room as they are fried. In moments the Kakane are all dead.

Arthur looks around. Over half the men have been killed. Many others are badly injured. Arthur, shaken, glares at Merlin.

ARTHUR
What the hell was that, Merlin?

MERLIN
An assassination attempt. The first of many, I'm sure.

EXT. RUINS - MORNING

Hurried movement as the remaining men disassemble their gear and vanish into the woods.

Merlin strides over to Arthur, who packs up irately.

MERLIN
What did you say to them, Arthur?

ARTHUR
Last night, I saw Vortigan. It was a premonition, yes?!

Merlin does not answer.

ARTHUR
I saw my father... and he dies, doesn't he? And my brother. And Deliah!

MERLIN
We all die, Arthur.

ARTHUR
Not like that... and not over me.

MERLIN
The future is a fight between free will and fate, both trying endlessly to gain the upper hand.

Arthur shakes his head.

ARTHUR
I am sorry, Merlin. I can not live through that. You can not ask me to choose between those that I love and this *kingdom*.

MERLIN
It may not be a choice, Arthur. You have been through much pain, and I do not wish you to have to go through anymore. But you are the King of England, Arthur. And I fear life has a powerful way of forcing destiny.

ARTHUR
This is my life, Merlin. Not yours. Or my father's. And I choose NOT TO BE KING.

Arthur walks away. Walcott and Percival watch this from afar.

WALCOTT
I'm heading back. What will you do?

Percival shakes his head, gutted. Turns and rides off.

Arthur finds Deliah saddling her horse.

ARTHUR
Hey.

DELIAH
Hey.

ARTHUR
I want you to come with me.

She stops and looks at him.

DELIAH
The rebellion can go on, Arthur. How can I turn my back?

ARTHUR
We can start over, Deliah. In the quiet of the woods, away from all this death. Do not tell me your heart does not want this.

DELIAH
Of course it does.

Arthur steps close to her.

ARTHUR
I want you with me. I need you with me.

He kisses her. When they break apart he rests his forehead against hers.

DELIAH
Okay... Yes. I'll go.

EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Kay, on his horse, full of conflicting emotions as he watches Arthur hug Ector good-bye.

ECTOR
Follow your heart. You will find your way, son.

ARTHUR
Where will you go?

ECTOR
We will figure something out. We've gotten this far. The Lord will show us where to go next.

Arthur nods. Turns to Kay.

ARTHUR
Good-bye Kay.

KAY
Good luck, Arthur.

Kay rides off brusquely. Ector follows. Deliah walks up.

ARTHUR
We head East...
(beat)
Home.

EXT. SOARING AERIAL VIEW OF THE COUNTRYSIDE - SUNSET

Flowers are blooming. A river cuts through the landscape. Arthur and Deliah ride across the hills.

ARTHUR
This is the farthest edge of the range. We are not far now.

Deliah closes her eyes as she rides and lets the setting sun kiss her face. Arthur watches, smiling. Content.

INT. VILLAGE PUB - NIGHT

Lancelot drinks a pint in the shadows. Across the crowded room, WALCOTT walks in, alone. Sits at the bar, *fidgety.*

Two soldiers walk in. One of them is HELLDOR, who killed Arthur's mother - the other is OLAF, who tried to rape her.

Lancelot turns, lying low. Walcott exits. Helldor follows.

EXT. VILLAGE PUB - BACKDOOR - NIGHT

Lancelot swings quietly onto the roof. THIRTY SOLDIERS wait out front the pub. Lancelot silently crosses to the alley. Helldor and Walcott are below in the shadows.

HELLDOR
If you're lying to me you're in deep trouble.

WALCOTT
He had the sword.

HELLDOR
Does he have men protecting him?

WALCOTT
He went off alone with the girl.

Lancelot registers this.

Helldor pays Walcott, who quickly leaves. Olaf comes out.

HELLDOR
We've got him.

They mount their horses, and with their battalion, ride like wildfire into the night.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Walcott walks home. He's grabbed from behind and pulled between two houses, A DAGGER to his throat.

LANCELOT
Damn you Walcott! What did you do?!

WALCOTT
(scared)
Lancelot?! Jesus, calm down! I gave them false information!

Lancelot SLICES Walcott's ear off.

WALCOTT
Mother Mary! Christ!

LANCELOT
You're a liar, Walcott. How much did you give 'em?

WALCOTT
You can't stop them.

Lancelot covers Walcott's mouth, and JAMS the dagger up into his armpit. Walcott yells out, but the sound is muffled.

LANCELOT
Where was he heading?

WALCOTT
Please. They'll kill me.

LANCELOT
You're not understanding me, mate.

Lancelot TWISTS the knife. Walcott's eyes bulge out.

LANCELOT
I'm going to cut you up until you tell me where I need to go.

Walcott sucks air, trying to breath. Whispers.

WALCOTT
Past Eastern Ridge... then due south towards Innerlands - slipped into deep woods... very - hard - to find...

Lancelot nods.

LANCELOT
He's smart.

WALCOTT
Very... smart.

LANCELOT
But now he's dead.

WALCOTT
Trust me, Lancelot. They want that man so bad... I've never seen anything like it. You follow him, you'll be dead too.

Lancelot cuts Walcott's throat. Drops his body to the ground.

LANCELOT
Shit.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Arthur and Deliah ride slowly through the pastoral woods.

ARTHUR
There it is, up ahead.

The CABIN Ector built. Waiting as it was when Arthur left.

ARTHUR
We'll just load up with supplies and then head deeper, due East.

EXT. CABIN - MOMENT LATER

Deliah walks slowly, looking around. A smile on her face.

DELIAH
It's beautiful, Arthur.

ARTHUR
We'll build another just like it.

She walks to him. Puts her arms around his neck.

DELIAH
It's like something out of a dream.

They kiss.

A twig SNAPS behind them. Arthur looks up.

HELLDOR
More like a nightmare.

HELLDOR and his THIRTY SOLDIERS surround them, weapons drawn.

Arthur steps in front of Deliah when EVERYTHING SLOWS DOWN. He recognizes Olaf, then Helldor.

FLASHBACK -

Helldor running his mother through. She falls down dead.

BACK IN REAL TIME -

Deliah suddenly THROWS TWO DAGGERS. They streak across and pin-cushion two soldier's faces. Dropping both dead.

Arthur unsheathes Excalibur. Deliah pulls out her LONG SWORD.

The soldiers rush in. Arthur collides with them, metal crashing off metal.

Deliah stabs one soldier through, but another CHOPS open her arm. She kicks the attacker to the ground and skewers him.

Olaf grabs Deliah from behind. She fights with all she's got, but Olaf disarm her and wrestles her to the ground.

DELIAH
Arthur!

Arthur turns. Olaf punches Deliah twice in the face.

ARTHUR
Deliah!

Arthur fights his way towards Deliah. TWO ARROWS fly at Arthur. He cuts them both out of the air.

She SCREAMS as a soldier raises his sword to kill her. Then the soldier's chest EXPLODES in a cherry-blossom as Arthur BURSTS Excalibur through his backside.

SOLDIER
AAAAAAA!

With a WAR-CRY, Arthur cuts the head off another soldier.

Arthur is SMASHED on the head by OLAF'S MACE. Blinded by the blow he swings at everything. HELLDOR'S FLAIL CRACKS Arthur behind his legs, taking him down.

DELIAH
NOOOO!

Deliah rips free. Disarms a soldier and slices him open. She spins the blade. Two more go down. Then a soldier rams her leg with a SPEAR. She goes down.

Arthur fights to get to her, but there are too many of them.

Deliah crawls, covered in mud. A shadow covers her...

Helldor, a wicked smile on his face.

HELLDOR
Not so fast... darling.

She looks for Arthur, just as Arthur looks over.

They connect eyes. For a moment everything stops.

And then Arthur is SLAMMED IN THE FACE BY OLAF'S MACE.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK:

CLOSE UP ON ARTHUR'S BLOODIED FACE

He blinks as he comes to... looking up, trees float by above him, silhouetted against the sky.

ARTHUR
(a whisper)
Deliah...

He's lying on his back on a wooden cart, being dragged through the forest by horses, surrounded by a dozen soldiers, and Olaf, all on horseback.

Helldor and the other men are nowhere to be seen.

Arthur looks down. Sees he is locked at the wrists by metal cuffs. At the bottom of the cart by his feet is Excalibur.

ARTHUR
Where is she?!

Olaf looks over. Smiles.

ARTHUR
Name yourself soldier.

Olaf rides silently, then...

OLAF
Olaf.

ARTHUR
And the name of your commander?

OLAF
Why do you care?

ARTHUR
You afraid to tell me?

Olaf snorts at this.

OLAF
Helldor.

Arthur nods.

ARTHUR
Now I know the names of the men who killed my mother.

Olaf grins, wide.

OLAF
I'd ask you which one she was, but there have been so many. And I'm not good with faces.

ARTHUR
Well, you'll remember mine, because it will be the last one you see before you die...

Olaf laughs. So do the other men.

Two CRACKS sound through the woods - and two of the soldier's heads EXPLODE as CROSSBOW BOLTS knock them off their horses.

OLAF
HO!

The soldiers stop, weapons drawn, eyes searching the woods.

SOLDIER
What the-

And his chest splits open, THWACK! He falls dead too.

Arthur, rolls onto his knees with a look of realization. He holds his hands up over his head...

OLAF
Put your-

The metal cuffs EXPLODE as a CROSSBOW BOLT BLASTS them open with a marksman's precision.

TIGHT ON LANCELOT'S FACE, DUG INTO THE BUSHES, AIMING DOWN THE LENGTH OF HIS CROSSBOW. He cocks another bolt in.

Arthur jumps from the cart in a half-flip, snatching Excalibur as he MOVES, and then in the same fluid motion, CRYING OUT with everything left in him, ATTACKS.

THE REST OF THE SCENE PLAYS IN **SLOW MOTION** WITH ACCENTUATED SPEED-RAMPED FLASHES BETWEEN IMPACT, CREATING A BALLETIC EMOTION TO THE VIOLENCE -

Arthur moves like lightning, killing everything in his path.

The sound of HOOVES POUNDING. The men look up. Lancelot FLIES OFF his horse, a sword twirling in each hand at high speed.

SSSSSTIK! WHACK! Two more men go down.

A soldier thrusts his sword at Arthur, who dodges it and catches the soldier's wrist mid-thrust.

Across the woods, Arthur sees another SOLDIER pull back his BOW to fire at him. Arthur twirls around, THROWS EXCALIBUR point first. It ROCKETS across the woods, PINS the archer through the torso to a tree.

Arthur then disarms the soldier whose wrist he still clutches, uses the soldier's own sword to kill him.

Arthur reaches out his hand - Excalibur FLIES back into his palm, just as THREE SOLDIERS rush him. Arthur moves - kicking one soldier in the chest, stabbing another in the stomach, and spinning to cut another's throat open.

The more men that fall, the brighter Excalibur GLOWS.

SLASH - CHOP - THRUST - RIP - KILL

SNAP back into REAL TIME MOTION.

Arthur is face to face with Olaf.

Olaf's eyes glare, nostrils flaring. He grips his MACE.

OLAF
YOU BLOODY-

Barely a flash of light as Arthur SLICES Excalibur's razor sharp blade through the air.

A look of shock on Olaf's face... then his head falls right off his body.

Arthur and Lancelot are the last men standing.

ARTHUR
Deliah.

EXT. FOREST

Tree branches whip by. Arthur and Lancelot on horseback, racing at breakneck speed, back toward the house.

EXT. HOUSE

Vortigan's men are gone. Arthur leaps from his horse. Lancelot right behind him.

Arthur's run slows as he sees... Deliah.

Helldor's SWORD, slammed half-way to the hilt through Deliah's torso, pinning her to the ground.

Arthur collapses to his knees. Tears filling his eyes.

Lancelot, a sickened look on his face, catches him before he falls to the ground. Holds him tightly.

Arthur, stares up into the heavens, arms open wide, and SCREAMS. All the grief. All the torment. Bursting out.

INT. VORTIGAN'S COURT

Vortigan has his hands over his face. He looks up.

VORTIGAN
And we have no idea where he is?

In the room with him is Corrodor, Morgana, and Helldor who simply shakes his head 'NO'. Vortigan looks at Corrodor.

VORTIGAN
Hunt him down. Find him.

CORRODOR
Yes, my lord.

Corrodor and Helldor exit. Morgana grins.

MORGANA
You don't need to find him. He's going to come to you now.

VORTIGAN
How do you know this?

MORGANA
I don't need magic to know that when you rip a man's future out of his hands it's only a matter of time before he comes looking to set things right.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Lancelot eats quietly. Arthur stares off into the woods.

ARTHUR
You once told me that you knew how to beat a hundred men with a handful. Is that true?

Lancelot stops eating, answers carefully.

LANCELOT
Yes.

ARTHUR
And if we have a hundred men... can we beat a thousand?

LANCELOT
I told you Arthur, I'm not interested in-

ARTHUR
I'm not talking about that.

Arthur stands.

ARTHUR
I'm talking about making things right. I'm talking about ending this madness once and for all.
(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Because I don't believe this is how men are supposed to live. I believe in something better. You interested in that?

Lancelot just looks at him, struck.

ARTHUR
I'm going to ask you one more time, and if you can't give me the answer I'm looking for then we ride away in opposite directions. And do me a favor - don't save me again...
(beat)
If we have a hundred men, can we beat a thousand?

Lancelot looks up at him.

LANCELOT
I don't know. I can tell you when we get there.

Arthur nods... a fire in his eyes now.

ARTHUR
Well then... let us ride.

EXT. ROCKY CREST - NIGHT

AERIAL SHOT - the countryside under the full moon. WE SOAR ACROSS it reaching a circle of OLD STONE PILLARS. Inside them-

About SIXTY MEN gather. Arthur nods to Merlin as he walks up. Dagonet, Griflet and Percival arrive and approach Lancelot.

DAGONET
Not sure what we're doing here, Lancelot.

LANCELOT
Changing your minds. Hopefully.

The men have a familiar look of uncertainty on their faces. Arthur scans the crowd, eyes stoic and unwavering.

ARTHUR
There are many of you who doubt me. So let there be doubt.
(beat)
I can not guarantee you victory. I can not guarantee you safety.
(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
But I can guarantee you the possibility of something much more valuable. Justice.

Arthur walks closer to the men.

ARTHUR
I will not hide anymore, I will not cower, I will not wallow, and I will not fear what is waiting for me next. Why fear death when this life we lead under Vortigan is death already. We must force something to *change*.
(beat)
I am but one. This is my choice. You are each one. It is your choice. But together we are many. Fight with me. I can promise you this - I will fight until either I am dead or this land is free again. One or the other. No compromise.

The crowd, though moved, are frozen in their tracks.

Lancelot walks forward. Stops in front of Arthur. The two men look at each other. The wind blowing. Then, Lancelot kneels.

LANCELOT
My name is Lancelot. Son of King Ban of Orkney.

DAGONET
(shocked)
What the hell...

The crowd murmurs, realizing who it is.

GRIFLET
Is it me, or did he leave that tid bit out when we met him?

Lancelot bows his head.

LANCELOT
May I be the first to swear allegiance to you... my King.

Arthur draws Excalibur. It shines, raised before them.

ARTHUR
Who else will join this rebellion?

One by one, others walk forward and kneel. Each is knighted by Arthur. And then, finally...

Dagonet, Griflet and Percival kneel down next to Lancelot.

DAGONET
You're a royal?

LANCELOT
It's a long story.

GRIFLET
So, how big are we thinking now, Lancelot?

LANCELOT
Pretty big.

PERCIVAL
I'm so damn excited. I'm not going to be able to sleep for a month.

A powerful older MAN and his two SONS walk up from the hillside. The crowd quiets in recognition. Merlin smiles.

The man walks to Arthur, shakes his head in disbelief.

OLDER MAN
After all these years.

MERLIN
Arthur, let me introduce you to Sir Galahad. The greatest of your father's knights.

Arthur is moved. Transported. A lifeline to a time he never saw, to a father he never knew, has found him.

ARTHUR
It is an honor to meet you, Sir Galahad. Your legend precedes you.

GALAHAD
I served your father in many great battles, and I am here today to swear you my servitude, as well as that of my sons, Gawain and Gareth.

The three kneel down.

GRIFLET (V.O.)
Listen up people. I am here to tell you, the resistance has begun.

EXT. TOWN OF DERRY - DAY

In the middle of the town square where Arthur grew up, Griflet stands on the box where Hoel once stood.

GRIFLET
We are taking this land back!

The crowd's getting nervous. The kid is asking for it.

WOMAN
Come down from there before something bad happens.

Griflet smiles.

GRIFLET
But that's the point ma'am.
(then, yelling)
VORTIGAN'S DAYS ARE NUMBERED! YOU HEAR ME?! I'M GONNA KICK HIS FACK'N ARSE ME-SELF!

People are nervous now. A few walk away.

GRIFLET
I'M GONNA KILL THEM ALL! HEAR ME?!

HELLDOR and his squadron of soldiers come around the corner.

GRIFLET
What the hell took you so long?

HELLDOR
Step down.

GRIFLET
Don't think I will.

Helldor pulls out a HATCHET.

HELLDOR
Gonna be hard to stand up there when I chop off your legs.

The crowd starts clearing out of the square.

GRIFLET
Where are you people going? The good part's just about to start!

People hurry away in disbelief.

Helldor smiles.

The sound of BOW STRINGS STRETCHING all around them. Helldor looks up. Arthur's men line the roofs with bows ready.

Helldor looks at Griflet, who is now the one smiling.

GRIFLET
And now - *here's the good part.*

ARROWS WHIP from the rooftops, skewering Helldor's men.

Arthur and the rebels burst from every corner. Helldor's men barely draw their swords before they're cut down.

Only Helldor stands. Arthur walks to him. Throws him the sword Helldor left buried in Deliah's body. He catches it.

ARTHUR
Missing something?

Helldor looks down at the sword. Then holds it out defensively in front of him.

ARTHUR
For that alone, in a moment, I will kill you. But it is actually twice now you have ripped my future from my hands, Helldor. Do you remember the first?

HELLDOR
I don't know what you are talking about.

Arthur CHOPS Helldor's sword hand off at the wrist.

HELLDOR
AAAAH!

Helldor backs away - into Lancelot, who stands behind him. Lancelot shoves him back towards Arthur.

ARTHUR
Right where you are standing, twenty years ago, you killed my mother.

Helldor stammers, putting it together.

HELLDOR
I just follow orders.

Arthur raises Excalibur. Helldor looks up, eyes glued to the great blade. It CHOPS down, splitting him in two.

The crowd stares in shock.

Arthur pulls out a LARGE BOLT OF FABRIC. Shakes it open. It's the **FLAG OF CAMELOT**. The crest of Pendragon emblazoned on it.

He holds it over his head for all to see. The breath is taken out of the crowd. They stand in awe of the sight of it.

He throws the flag over Helldor's dead body.

ARTHUR
Let everyone know, Camelot marches once again.

INT. VORTIGAN'S CASTLE - JUDICIAL GALLERY - NIGHT

Corrodor, his generals, and ALL TWELVE NOBLES of the land sit at a table. Including King Ban, Lancelot's father. Older now.

Vortigan walks in. The all kneel down.

VORTIGAN
Stand up you bastards.

They do. Vortigan throws the FLAG OF CAMELOT onto the table.

VORTIGAN
Who knows what this is?

Nobody speaks as Vortigan's eyes read them.

VORTIGAN
Arthur Pendragon is an outlaw and a ruthless killer. As we sit here, at this very moment, he resides somewhere inside this kingdom, in one of the twelve provinces. WHICH MEANS ONE OF YOU TWELVE NOBLES IS HARBORING A MADMAN!

Vortigan SLAMS his fist onto the table. Everyone jumps. King Ban glances around. Sees the fear in his companions eyes.

VORTIGAN
This game is simple. My army will set out to find Arthur. If we find him in your province before you hand him over yourself - your family will be extinguished from this earth. Whoever hands me Arthur will be spared.
(beat)
You are dismissed.

The Nobles all leave.

MORGANA
His passion is igniting people's hope. It is only a matter of time before the spark becomes a fire.

VORTIGAN
No king can rule a kingdom when there's no one who will dare follow.

Corrodor nods.

VORTIGAN
We must punish this population in a way so harsh and shocking that they will abandon him like rats flee a sinking ship.
(beat)
Either they deliver him to me, or I will break their bodies and shatter their minds. One way or another, Arthur will come begging for me to stop.

CUT TO MONTAGE:

VORTIGAN'S TROOPS AND BATTERING RAMS POUR OUT OF THE CITY

Village to village, city to city. Entire homes are flattened with battering rams. People flee as Vortigan strides through the streets pointing randomly at whoever he sees. His men chase them down. Violence explodes.

Everyone is questioned. Names are gathered.

ARTHUR AND HIS MEN IN THE WOODS

Arthur sinks Excalibur into the dirt. Places his ear to the blade. He listens. HOOVES CLOPPING. He looks up and nods.

Vortigan's soldiers come rolling through. Arthur's men drop from the trees, ambush them.

CORRODOR IN RESPONSE

Rolls out torture machines into the streets. People are shoved into IRON MAIDENS. Heavy steel doors lined with two foot spikes are slammed shut, skewering the people inside.

ARTHUR AND HIS MEN STRIKE BACK

Poisoning the water supply to the army barracks.

LATER

Corrodor walks into the barracks to see all the dead soldiers, still in their beds.

VORTIGAN ESCALATES THE VIOLENCE YET AGAIN

Suspected conspirators are stretched on racks in the middle of villages for all to see. Bodies are hung in every corner of every town. People are beheaded. Drawn and quartered.

Through the flames and smoke, there is nothing left of sanity or civilization. Vortigan grins smugly to himself.

Survival. Fear. Terror... all that remain.

EXT. DESTROYED VILLAGE - MORNING

Arthur and his men walk through this burning wreck that once was a small village. It looks like an atom bomb hit the place. Scorched bodies everywhere.

Behind Arthur, his men have carts full of food and supplies. They hand them out to the homeless, hungry, and wounded.

Arthur stops at the hanging body of a ten year old boy. He cuts the body down and cradles it. His eyes well up.

A woman, covered in soot and blood, walks up.

WOMAN
Why? Why have you brought this upon us?

Others gather around. An angry mob is forming.

MAN #1
This is not our fight! Why must we suffer like this?! What have we done?!

Another man steps forward, a BOW pulled taut, an ARROW aimed directly at Arthur's head.

MAN #2
I should kill you now. End all this.

Lancelot draws a sword like lightning, but Arthur raises a hand for him to stand down. Takes a deep breath.

ARTHUR
(to Man #1)
You have done nothing. But this is your fight.
(to Man #2)
You can kill me if you wish, but none of this will stop. The monsters that did this are not going away.
(beat)
We will rebuild your homes. We will bury your dead. But you must fight. You can not turn a blind eye to this insanity and pretend that because it is your neighbor dragged off in the night that you will be okay.

Arthur looks at the man with the bow. The arrow aimed right between Arthur's eyes.

ARTHUR
If you stand on two feet and can carry a weapon, now is your time to fight. It is your god given right. We fight for you, but we can not win without you.

Arthur looks at the crowd.

ARTHUR
And if you choose to stand on the sidelines and watch, well then... you get what comes to you.
(then, repeating his mother's last words)
There is no price we can ever afford in exchange for our dignity.

The man with the bow puts it down. Tears fill his red eyes.

ARTHUR
Do not give up. Do not give in.

And with that Arthur mounts his horse. Lancelot nods to him. They ride off with their men.

ARTHUR
We won't have the people for much longer. We need to move faster.

LANCELOT
I know.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Arthur sits down next to Lancelot at the fire.

LANCELOT
I'm just not sure how quickly one can make people stand and fight.

ARTHUR
Fast, if you have the right person telling them to do so.

LANCELOT
Meaning?

ARTHUR
I need you to go see your father and ask him to support the rebellion.

Lancelot blinks. Then laughs.

LANCELOT
You're... no way. No... are you out of your head?

ARTHUR
We need the nobles, their men, and the people of their lands, unified as one. And we need it now. With the nobles, everyone would fight. There's no other way.

LANCELOT
(shaking his head)
You don't understand.

ARTHUR
I do. Yours is the most respected family. He holds the power to bring the others in-

Lancelot throws down his food. Stands.

LANCELOT
They are all cohorts with Vortigan! Going to them will backfire, Arthur! If even *one* of them turns us in to Vortigan, that's it.
(MORE)

LANCELOT (CONT'D)
We'll be completely exposed. He'll walk right in and crush us.

Arthur sits calmly.

ARTHUR
So, Lancelot, why did you save me that first time?

Arthur stands, fire and compassion in his eyes.

ARTHUR
You're a fraud, my friend, but a beautiful one at that. You pretend to have no allegiance to a flag, but you do. Why don't you stop pussy-footing around and *commit* to that which you are so afraid of?

LANCELOT
And what is that, Arthur?!

ARTHUR
Look in the mirror and face yourself, Lancelot. You are a good man. Get beyond your pain. Good men fight for good.

Arthur let's it hang in the air. Walks off into the night.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Lancelot sits next the water, lit by moonlight. Conflicted...

CUT TO:

A KEY TUMBLING OPEN THE LOCK OF A DOOR...

INT. KING BAN'S CASTLE - LIBRARY NIGHT

King Ban reads by lantern light. He hears something.

KING BAN
Hello?

There's no answer. He walks over to the door and opens it. A HOOD is thrown over his head, and ROPES bind him.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CANDLE LIT TENT - NIGHT

The hood is pulled off King Ban, and the ropes fall to the ground. He looks up, a mix of emotions run across his face.

LANCELOT
Hello father.

KING BAN
WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON HERE?!!!

King Ban notices Arthur standing in the shadows.

KING BAN
Who is this?

LANCELOT
This is Arthur Pendragon.
(beat)
Father, I am part of the rebellion.

King Ban stares at him, thunderstruck.

KING BAN
Good Lord.

LANCELOT
We need your help. There is a plan to win this kingdom back. We want you to hear it. And then we want you to talk to the other nobles and win us their support.

KING BAN
I haven't seen you in over fifteen years. This is lunacy. I'm not listening to a damn thing-

King Ban rises, but Lancelot pushes him back down.

LANCELOT
We kidnapped you for your own protection father. Understand? If you are caught connected to us, you were forced to be here.
(beat)
Now... we're not asking you to listen, we're telling you. So sit down and pay attention.

The King shakes his head. Sighs.

Arthur steps forward. Stabs Excalibur into the ground before the King, who can't help but stare at the mythic sword.

ARTHUR
King Ban, you are the most powerful noble in the kingdom. And your people hate you.

King Ban shoots a glare at Arthur.

ARTHUR
They do. They look at you as a traitor. One who has abandoned them for your own good fortune.
(beat)
What they don't understand is why you have made bargains with the devil. That you have been forced to compromise your heart. To stand and defy would only be your own doom.
(beat)
What I know is that you would never choose this if there were any other choice before you.
(beat)
Now, the other choice presents itself.

Arthur spreads a map spread out on the floor.

ARTHUR
Wolves hunt as a pack. But they work individually. Disorienting their prey from many angles at once. Before the prey knows it they have been encircled and it's too late.
(beat)
Organization without warning.

He leans over the map and begins to layout the plan.

ARTHUR
Riots breakout across the land, seemingly unrelated, but in actuality, coordinated.

His finger points to fifteen different areas spread out across the entire map.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
The villages are set between the towns. Towns between the cities. It forces Vortigan's men to move into pockets to contain them.
(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Then, at one organized moment, you ignite the **Red Signal of Camelot,** uniting the twelve provinces to attack. The pockets connect, encircling the towns. He has no choice but to send more troops. The more he sends the better, as he unknowingly thins his defense of the capital. We'll have the three cities of the south in a matter of hours.
(beat)
By the time they figure out what has happened, we march the unified force North and take back Camelot.

Arthur stands.

ARTHUR
In just a few days from now, this kingdom can be free again.

KING BAN
It's irresponsible. And reckless. I do what I do to protect my people from even greater misery and death. All your plan will result in is Vortigan killing thousands of innocents.

Lancelot places a hand on his father's shoulder.

LANCELOT
Father. You told me stories as a boy, of a time when there was peace across this land. If you could turn back time, just for a moment, and return to that place, would you?

King Ban stares into his son's eyes.

KING BAN
I-

LANCELOT
You would.
(beat)
Father, for the first time in my life... I believe. I believe that one day I too may have a chance to walk across this land. In peace. Like you once did.

For a moment, the King listens. Underneath all the pain, the dream is still there. Tears rim his eyes.

KING BAN
We all want a better time, a better world. But the answer is NO.

King Ban walks for the door.

ARTHUR
The uprising is happening. Whether the nobles support it or not.

The King stops.

KING BAN
Don't be insane, Arthur. You just said yourself it can not succeed without the nobles involvement. Without us this plan is nothing short of a massacre.

ARTHUR
Then a massacre it will be.

King Ban stares.

LANCELOT
I guess I'll be seeing you on the other side, father.

King Ban looks at his son one last time, and walks out.

INT. VORTIGAN'S COURT - THE NEXT NIGHT

Vortigan and his COMMANDERS eat. A MESSENGER runs in.

MESSENGER
My lord, riots have broken out in the villages of Belton and Erdon.

Vortigan looks at Corrodor. Who looks to one of the Generals.

CORRODOR
Send in troops to stomp them out.

EXT. TOWN OF ERDON

Arthur and Lancelot watch. The entire town is ablaze. People revolt in the streets. Years of pent up aggression gone wild. The Black Flag of Volkor has been set on fire above it all.

In the distance, the first wave of Vortigan's soldiers come riding over the hills. Farther away to the East another squadron heads to Belton, the village next over.

ARTHUR
And here they come.

EXT. KING BAN'S CASTLE

King Ban, atop a parapet, looks out over the flatlands. Far away villages burn. Vortigan's soldiers ride out in battle formation.

KING BAN
This is madness.

INT. VORTIGAN'S CASTLE HALL

Another MESSENGER enters.

MESSENGER #2
My lord, a riot that has broken out in the village of Hester.

Vortigan looks at Corrodor, when a third messenger comes in.

MESSENGER #3
My lord, riots have broken out in the towns of Deleroy and Tilden.

Now Vortigan looks pissed. A fourth messenger enters.

MESSENGER #4
My lord, riots have broken out in the villages of-

Vortigan leaps up, his chair flying across the room.

VORTIGAN
ENOUGH!
(to Corrodor)
Send troops to every town and village. I want this stopped right now.

Corroder rises, grabs his sword. Turns to his generals.

CORRODOR
Send a full battalion to each. Overpower them. Brutally.

EXT. TOWN OF PULISAT

The second wave of SOLDIERS ride in, swords out. The people are dropping in packs, overwhelmed by the trained soldiers. It is indeed turning into a massacre.

EXT. ERDON

Arthur and Lancelot lead their rebels against Vortigan's men in this small village.

GALAHAD
Arthur...

Arthur and the men turn to see - the battalions coming over the horizon. They are going to be crushed in minutes time.

EXT. KING BAN'S CASTLE

The King's head hangs down. His jaw clenched tight.

KING BAN
Damn you son.

EXT. FLATLANDS SOUTH OF CAMELOT

Corrodor and his men ride their horses South when they see -

A **RED FLARE** SHOOTS INTO THE NIGHT SKY FROM KING BAN'S CASTLE.

CORRODOR
What the hell...

EXT. ERDON

Arthur sees it, as does everyone.

GALAHAD
My Lord. The Red Signal of Camelot.

Lancelot shakes his head. Smiles to himself.

LANCELOT
You old bastard. I knew you had it in you.

RED FLARE SIGNALS GO UP... TOWN TO TOWN, VILLAGE TO VILLAGE, ACROSS THE HORIZON.

EXT. FLATLANDS SOUTH OF CAMELOT

Corrodor stops his horse. Sees the people pouring out of the towns and encircling the troops from every side and angle.

A HORN can be heard echoing out across the kingdom. The castles of the Nobles lift their gates, their small squadrons of knights now mounted for battle and on their way.

The people descend upon Vortigan's men. Pulling the soldiers from their horses. Some townspeople are killed, but there are too many of them to be stopped. The soldiers are overwhelmed.

CORRODOR
We must get back. Immediately.

EXT. THE SOUTHERN STRETCH OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES

AN AERIAL VIEW as the mass of people converge, crushing Vortigan's troops.

Arthur, Lancelot and his men raise the FLAG OF CAMELOT.

The people CHEER. They feel the wind of change in their sails. Arthur rides out in front.

ARTHUR
North to Camelot!

EXT. KING BAN'S CASTLE

King Ban watches from the tower as the masses head North.

KING BAN
Good luck, Lancelot.

INT. VORTIGAN'S CASTLE - THE CAPITAL

Corrodor enters. Vortigan's eyes burn red. Morgana is there.

CORRODOR
We do not have enough men left to defend the capital. We must retreat immediately. Once we return to the Northlands we can regroup and plot how to re-take-

Vortigan SMASHES Corrodor's head into the wall. Kicks him ruthlessly in the gut. Blood coming out of his mouth.

VORTIGAN
Arthur is going to regain Camelot. Is that is what you're telling me?

CORRODOR
We will be back, my lord. And when we are, we will be victorious.

Vortigan looks like he's going to crush Corrodor. Then...

VORTIGAN
Gather the army. March north. Kill every man, woman and child in our path. Burn everything to the ground. Scorch the earth. Leave them nothing. Nothing.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Soldiers TORCH all the homes, the trees, the food.

Vortigan looks back as his army marches out of town, the raging fires reflected in his black eyes.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT - A FEW HOURS LATER

People, exhausted and crying, hold onto their children and families as they watch the city burn.

Then, over the hill - the FLAG OF CAMELOT rises up as the rebel army appears with Arthur leading.

The people see him. Burst into tears. Fall to their knees. Arthur's men give them water and blankets.

Arthur and his men stare at the smoke-engulfed city.

GALAHAD
My God, Vortigan has fled.

Everyone's in shock. Smiles cross the faces of the troops.

MERLIN
Arthur, Camelot is yours.

Arthur and Lancelot exchange a look.

ARTHUR
I'm going after him.

Merlin's brow furrows.

LANCELOT
Galahad, how many men can we ride with?

GALAHAD
We only have horses for a few hundred men.

MERLIN
Arthur, do not act in haste. We all want this to be done, but one should not follow the heat of emotions when making such a decision. Do not make choices out of fear. Out of anger.

ARTHUR
What do you propose, Merlin?

MERLIN
King Leodegrance controls the Borderland territory and has a network of old and reliable alliances. He is a good friend, and an honorable man. He has an unwed daughter. I suggest we arrange a marriage immediately. It would bring you a far reaching web of powerful connections to call upon.

ARTHUR
And what of Vortigan?

MERLIN
You have Camelot. You have your kingdom. You will stand to fight another day. On your own terms.

Arthur looks out at the burning city. Thinking.

ARTHUR
Merlin, why fight another day when I can finish this right now? With Vortigan on his heels. We have the moment, we must seize it.

Merlin looks away.

ARTHUR
Lancelot?

LANCELOT
We can catch Vortigan at daybreak at the Fields of Aslak before he reaches the Black Mountains.

GALAHAD
The great battlefield where your father, Uther, met the first wave of Northern Hordes thirty five years ago.

Arthur nods.

ARTHUR
There we close this chapter of horror and sorrow forever.

EXT. THE PLAINS OUTSIDE CAMELOT - NIGHT

A few hundred men ride out with only lanterns lighting their way past the now dark, smouldering city of Camelot.

EXT. HEADLANDS - EARLY DAWN

Sunrise nears. A lone rider, Griflet, races at full speed. He comes around a bend to meet Arthur and his army on the move.

GRIFLET
(out of breath)
They are marching north about half a league out from the River Tatalus.

LANCELOT
We can catch them before they cross the river.

CUT TO:

AERIAL WIDE SHOT - Arthur and his men pounding across the open fields, powering across the grassy hills.

We RISE UP as they reach a crest. Below, the mighty and wide RIVER TATALUS. The morning sun sparkles off its surface.

Beyond the river, the yellow-dead FIELDS OF ASLAK, where to this day nothing grows. Behind the fields - the BLACK FOREST.

Arthur and his men stare, confused. Griflet opens a small pocket telescope and searches across the landscape.

GRIFLET
Where the hell are they?

ARTHUR
Could they have made it to the Black Forest?

LANCELOT
They could not have crossed the river already.

They look east, then west. The quiet is unsettling.

GALAHAD
It's not possible. They must have beat us across. They are in the forest already.

Arthur stares at the edge of Black Forest.

ARTHUR
We must cross the river immediately.

LANCELOT
The river stretches for miles in each direction. If they are in the forest, by the time we circumvent the Tatalus we will have to face them off at the Black Mountains.

GALAHAD
That is not an option. Breaking that border is a declaration of war with the allies of the Northern Hordes.

ARTHUR
Then we cross the river here.

They look at the winding body of water. It is very wide.

LANCELOT
It's a big river, Arthur. And deep. That's not possible.

Arthur looks at Merlin.

MERLIN
What?

ARTHUR
Got any tricks up your sleeve?

Merlin looks at the size of the army. Sighs.

ARTHUR
Merlin, we need to do it, and we need to do it now. If there's a way, cough it up.

MERLIN
There is a spell. But for this many men, and horses, it's not going to hold for long. And I can not get you over. You must go under.

LANCELOT
Under?

EXT. EDGE OF THE RIVER TATALUS

Merlin, lips moving, spinning the spell. A strange translucent mist slowly engulfing the rebels.

MERLIN
Go!

The men urge their steeds forward. The horses begin rearing back with trepidation as they enter the water.

MERLIN
NOW!

Arthur and Lancelot push forward into the rushing water. The first row of men follow, slipping under.

UNDERWATER

It is quiet but for the low tinkling of the current. The horses struggle for traction on the muddy bottom. Long green plants undulate gently in the stream. The men's vision is murky, only able to see twenty feet in front of them.

The image is breath-taking. The army on horseback moving through the water. The current is stronger as they get deeper. The men lean into the rushing water to keep balanced.

ABOVE WATER

The last men slip into the river. Merlin follows. The wind blows gently. No clue of them ever having been there.

UNDERWATER

The front line moves forward. The deeper they go, the clearer the water gets. And that is when first Arthur, then Lancelot, and then the rest have a horrifying realization --

They are not the only ones under the water.

Out before them, submerged and waiting, is VORTIGAN'S ARMY. A mere twenty feet away.

They've been ambushed.

A chorus of muted WHISTLING sounds, like a swarm of angry insects. HUNDREDS OF ARROWS, spinning and cutting their way furiously through the water, heading directly towards them.

Movement is slow under water, only a few can get out of the way. Men are SKEWERED everywhere. Lifted out of their saddles, swept away in the current, disappearing from view into the murky water. Blood fills the water.

Horses are hit as well, losing their footing, their bodies pulled downstream, taking out other horses and riders as they tumble along the silty bottom.

Lancelot spurs his horse, rushing forward. Pulls out his CROSSBOW, and FIRES right into the front line.

BOLTS ROCKETING through the water. The first of Vortigan's men go down. Heads split open.

Arthur rides forward as well, draws Excalibur. It catches the light, and illuminates the scene more crisply. Arthur's WAR CRY is muted, but it shakes his men into battle.

Galahad, Gareth, Gawain and the rest, CHARGE.

The front lines collide! And we are into a battle scene unlike any other ever. EPIC, UNREAL, and completely mind-bending. The spectacle is awesome.

Swords cannot be swung, they must be stabbed through the water. Axes, morning stars and flails become useless. Daggers slash. Hand to hand combat is the fastest attack. Men release their shields and let them wash away in the rushing water.

Lancelot moves like a blur, attacks in quick thrusting motions with his dual swords. Popping heads like grapes. Throwing men into the current, out of his way for the next.

Arthur fights with fury. Excalibur is the only sword that can swing through the water without losing speed. He rips through men like a howling wind. Body parts floating away around him.

Vortigan has CURVED BLADES that wrap around his fists. He slices Arthur's men open. ROARING underwater as he kills.

Corrodor uses a SAX, a short Northern blade that cuts through everything. He moves furiously, relishing the combat.

Morgana, her robes flowing in slow-motion around her, arms outstretched. Her lips casting a spell.

Around her a school of five foot fish begin to circle. PIKE. Their mouths lined with hundreds of sharp teeth.

She points. The fish attack Arthur's men. Swimming up inside their armor, under their helmets. Ripping the men to pieces.

The men struggle to reach inside and pull them out. But the pike have jaws that lock. There is no way to pull them free.

Merlin casts a spell of his own. The water around him begins to bubble and hiss. He throws his hands out.

HEAT WAVES ripple through the water, radiating everywhere. The hot water CHOKES the pike. They go into a quivering fit as they suffocate and float to the surface.

The battle rages on. Galahad, Gareth and Gawain fight together, working as a unit, protecting each other's backs.

Then, Merlin's spell begins to wear off. The first men start to choke as the air starts to run out. Some try to swim to the surface, but their heavy armor weighs them down.

ABOVE WATER AT THE RIVER'S FAR EDGE

The first men break through the surface, choking to get air into their lungs. Crawling out into the mud.

A few warriors ride out still on horseback. The horses are wild eyed, snorting and shaking.

Other horses without riders come stumbling out as well.

Vortigan walks out onto shore. Throws down his curved blades. Pulls his mighty two-headed battle axe off his back. With a SCREAM he starts chopping Arthur's men down as they come out of the water.

Within a minute the battle is raging on shore.

Arthur and Lancelot surface. Behind them Galahad and his sons. Dagonet and Griflet.

A young REBEL makes it out. Lies there exhausted, panting for air. The boy looks up. Corrodor stands above him. Unsheathes his BROAD SWORD, and stabs the rebel in the back.

BACK UNDERWATER

Around Morgana the water churns violently. Suddenly, fireballs explode from her palms. Searing through the water like flaming asteroids.

ABOVE THE WATER LOOKING DOWN the fireballs ripple under the surface as they head for Arthur's men trying to get to land.

UNDERWATER

Percival grabs his chest. Running out of oxygen. The surface lapping a few feet away. Each step slow. The blue sky ripples above him. He reaches out. Fingertips break through, touching the precious air.

A SIZZLING sound. He turns his head to see - a FIREBALL coming right at him. He blinks, and then is consumed in the EXPLOSION. He washes away in flames down stream.

Other fireballs pummel Arthur's troops. Vaporizing the men.

ABOVE WATER

Merlin finally surfaces down a ways from the fighting, near some long reeds. Leans on his staff, exhausted.

Morgana rises out of the water, eyes burning. Her wet clothes hugging tight to her figure. Darkly sexy.

She walks out into the Fields of Aslak, where the battle has now spread. Swords and armor clash around her. She conjures another spell. Hands out in front of her, her eyes narrow.

MORGANA
Deus-reven-te-per-ua!

The dirt beneath the battling armies begins to shift. Something is rolling underneath the surface.

Arthur and Lancelot fight, the ground shifting below them. Galahad moves next to them. Merlin rushes up.

ARTHUR
What is this?

GALAHAD
She is raising the Battle Dead.

ARTHUR
What does that mean?

GALAHAD
There are thousands beneath us. Northern Horde Beserkers who fell at the great Battle of Aslak.

LANCELOT
And?

MERLIN
When the dead awaken, they are always angry, in pain, and hungry.

LANCELOT
Hungry?

Morgana's hair rises up all around her like static electricity is surging through her body.

MORGANA
RISE UP AND HAVE YOUR JUSTICE! EAT FROM THE FLESH OF YOUR ENEMIES AND BE WHOLE AGAIN!

One long SHRILL SCREAM seeps out of the ground. All around Arthur's men, grey rotted arms EXPLODE UP from beneath the earth. Grabbing the men and dragging them down into the dirt.

The rotted faces of the Battle Dead rise up. Standing ten feet tall. And go into a RAGE, attacking men by the dozens. Disarming them, hacking them to death with their own weapons, then eating them alive.

GRIFLET
Holy shite!!!

Griflet and Dagonet fight, side by side. All around them, men are going down.

DAGONET
COME ON YOU UGLY BASTARDS!

Arthur and Lancelot battle on, knowing the tide has turned.

LANCELOT
Arthur?

ARTHUR
Just keep swinging.

Lancelot RUNS at one of the Battle Dead. Drives one sword into its back, JUMPS, using the sword blade to LAUNCH himself onto its shoulders. His second sword takes off its head.

Arthur THROWS Excalibur. It SPINS sideways through the air, killing everything in its path, and then BENDS BACK around mid-flight like a boomerang, FLYING BACK into Arthur's hand.

Behind Galahad, an Undead Beserker rises up with a MACE in hand. Galahad senses it. He turns and sees the monster.

GALAHAD
Good lord.

Galahad dives right into it. They clash. Galahad is ROCKED by the mace. He falls down, loses his weapon.

The Beserker's huge maw of a mouth unhinges from it's jaw, opening wide, and comes down around his head, front teeth on his forehead. Galahad CRIES OUT as the powerful jaws close.

GARETH
Father!

Arthur and Lancelot turn when they hear the YELL. We do not see what they see. But we hear a horrifying CRUNCH.

Gareth and Gawain attack - killing the monster.

But it's too late. Their father is gone. The last of Uther's legendary knights has fallen.

Merlin, tears in his eyes, begins to CHANT.

MERLIN
Umbert-tam-too. Malto-san-bet.

His staff VIBRATES and GLOWS white. The wind WHIPS around.

MERLIN
UMBERT-TAM-TOO! MALTO-SAN-BET!

The staff SHAKES so hard Merlin has trouble gripping it.

MERLIN
RETURN THEE BACK TO THAT FROM
WHENCE YOU CAME! BACK TO THE FIRE
OF ETERNAL DAMNATION!

The great wizard SLAMS his staff into the ground. Like an Neutron Bomb going off, a SHOCK WAVE blasts out across the battlefield. The force of it RIPS the Battle Dead apart! They SCREAM IN UNISON. Rotted flesh pulled off their frames. Bones crackling and lifted into the wind like dust.

Everyone is knocked to the ground. A DUST STORM raging through the place. No one can see two feet in front of them.

As the dust clears, Vortigan sees he is now greatly outnumbered by Arthur's troops. Corrodor steps up to him.

CORRODOR
We must ride.

Arthur and Lancelot see Vortigan, Corrodor, and about thirty soldiers, riding away at full speed for the Black Forest.

ARTHUR
Let's go!

Arthur and Lancelot jump on their horses, race for the woods.

Morgana on horseback dashes off in a different direction.

Merlin spots her. Runs to a horse. Chases after her.

EXT. BLACK WOODS

Vortigan and his men spread out tactically as they dart away.

Vortigan looks back, sees Arthur behind him, pursuing him.

A conflicted look of anger crosses Vortigan's face.

VORTIGAN
(snarling)
This all ends here.

Vortigan suddenly turns his horse around, whips out his BATTLE AXE. He heads straight for Arthur with a WAR CRY.

EXT. SWAMP FOREST

Moss and gnarled trees. Dark and brooding. Merlin rides in. Spots Morgana up ahead. Chases her, but suddenly she's gone.

He stops his horse. Dismounts. Listens. Nothing.

Then, he sees Morgana's horse standing there without a rider.

The sound of FLAMES. He turns. A FIREBALL streaks through the woods right at him! He ducks, holding up his staff to protect himself, and the fireball EXPLODES all around him.

Merlin swings the staff around and fires a BLUE BOLT of LIGHTNING at her. She dodges. Behind her the trees are blasted to pieces. The shards falling down like snow.

EXT. BLACK WOODS

Lancelot sees Vortigan racing towards Arthur.

Corrodor and a dozen soldiers ride to join Vortigan.

Lancelot rises up in the stirrups of his charging horse and FIRES his CROSSBOW.

The BOLT ROCKETS across the woods. Vortigan raises his BATTLE-AXE and the bolt ricochets off harmlessly.

Lancelot FIRES a second bolt HITTING Vortigan's horse.

In one incredible move, as the horse stumbles, Vortigan leaps off it onto the horse of one of his soldiers flying past him.

He throws the soldier off, and without losing a stride, is barrelling back down on Arthur.

Vortigan and Arthur close in on each other.

Vortigan twirls the axe in his hand and readies it.

Arthur unsheathes Excalibur.

The space between them RUSHES CLOSED.

Vortigan swings his axe at Arthur's head. Arthur ducks under the swing, drops his body under the side of the saddle, CUTS OPEN Vortigan's leg and his horse.

Vortigan LEAPS OFF onto his feet as the steed CRASHES to the ground. One of Arthur's men on horseback rides at Vortigan.

Vortigan drops to one knee, and with his massive body throws the moving horse over his shoulder, SMASHING to the ground.

The rider rises. Vortigan's axe splits his head in two.

Arthur jumps off his horse and runs toward Vortigan.

VORTIGAN
Finally.

Vortigan swings his axe. Arthur swings Excalibur.

A massive CRASHING of steel and sparks as the two men COLLIDE! The fight between such disparate weapons is incredible. The choreography fast and physical.

Lancelot looks up to see Corrodor, a fleeting second away from CRUSHING his head with a MORNING STAR.

Lancelot tries to turn away, but it's too late. He ducks the blow, but it swings back and CRACKS him in the head.

Lancelot grabs onto his horse, trying to stay conscious, still riding full speed. Branches breaking across his face.

Riding alongside him, Corrodor WHIPS the morning star at Lancelot. Unable to avoid it, Lancelot CATCHES IT with a sickening CRUNCH. YELLING in pain, he yanks the morning star out of Corrodor's hands, grabs his arm and locks him up.

The two horses are in a full speed lockstep. Corrodor punches Lancelot with his armored fist, splitting his face open.

Lancelot CUFFS Corrodor back. Corrodor pulls his SAX, tries to STAB Lancelot in the face. Lancelot grabs his wrist. But Corroder SLICES into Lancelot's temple. Teeth gritted in pain-

LANCELOT
Okay. That's enough.

Corrodor looks down and sees -- with his other hand Lancelot has wedged his CROSSBOW up and under Corroder's breastplate.

Lancelot FIRES THREE TIMES - BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! The bolts ROCKING Corrodor's body as they rip apart his torso.

LANCELOT
You deserve much worse.

Lancelot swings his horse away just as Corrodor is SMASHED by a tree limb rushing by. His body rolls along like a rag-doll.

Vortigan's men surround Lancelot. Lancelot closes his eyes, unsheathes his SAMURAI SWORDS. His two blades start spinning at high speed. His eyes open, piercing. He's entered MUSHIN.

LANCELOT
Nobody gets out of here alive.

EXT. SWAMP FOREST

Morgana walks towards Merlin.

MORGAN
Your powers are no match for mine old man.

MERLIN
Your emotions cloud your judgement.

Morgana reaches out. Merlin feels himself being squeezed. She raises her hands up, lifts him 15 feet into the air.

In one angry movement, she SLAMS him into the ground.

Merlin gasps for breath. She rolls him over.

MERLIN
(whispering)
Child's games.

Morgana smiles, standing over him. Then, Merlin touches her foot. She looks down, surprised.

MERLIN
Mas-tu-dank-a.
(beat)
BIND!

BLUE ENERGY SNAPS out of his hand and starts wrapping her up like a rope. Her eyes open wide. She can not move her legs.

Before it envelops her torso, she gets off one last spell, in an ancient language not even Merlin knows.

MORGANA
ÏLÁ-ŒRTEÒ-BÅ!

Merlin's CRACKED by a GREEN WAVE OF LIGHT. His head ROCKS BACK, mouth and eyes wide open in a silent scream. His breath pulled out of him. His eyes roll back. And then he is gone. Limp on the brown needled forest floor.

Dagonet and Griflet ride up.

Morgana lays there, bound. Tendrils of blue light locking her as if she lay mummified inside a sarcophagus. Her eyes open and aware. She lays there silently, unable to move or speak.

And then they see Merlin.

GRIFLET
Oh no...

EXT. BLACK WOODS

Arthur swings EXCALIBUR. Cuts into Vortigan's axe. Vortigan pulls Excalibur from Arthur's grip. It clatters 10 feet away.

VORTIGAN
You remember what I told you when I came to you in your dreams?

ARTHUR
I am not scared of you, Vortigan.

Vortigan grabs Arthur and POUNDS him with his ARMORED FOREARMS. Arthur stumbles back.

VORTIGAN
You should be.

Vortigan THROWS Arthur down. Huge hands GRIP Arthur's throat. Tighten around his windpipe, choking him.

VORTIGAN
Boy, I killed your father with my bare hands. All your brothers I chopped to pieces. And your *true mother* knew the cold of my blade as it ran sweetly through her heart. But you... you, I will devour your flesh.

Arthur starts to black out when he hears - THE HORN OF CAMELOT. It's low call echoing out across the space.

Vortigan looks up. Gawain, Gareth, and what is left of Arthur's army, run towards the woods. Weapons held high.

Arthur reaches out... Excalibur FLIES off the ground into his hand. He SLASHES Vortigan's face. Vortigan roars out in pain. Arthur rolls out from under him.

Vortigan sees the army is almost upon him. Leaps on a horse.

VORTIGAN
We will meet again, Arthur. And the next time I set foot into this land, I will have no mercy on your race.

Vortigan races away. A dozen of his remaining men follow. Lancelot runs up to Arthur as Arthur's army rushes past them.

LANCELOT
They will not get him.

ARTHUR
I know.

LANCELOT
He'll be back.

ARTHUR
And we'll be ready.

EXT. CLIFFS ON THE BEACH BELOW THE CITY - SUNSET

A small ceremony. Arthur, Lancelot, and his men, send off the dead on BURNING RAFTS into the ocean. Galahad's crest covers one raft. Percival's another.

EXT. CAMELOT - NIGHT

THE FLAG OF CAMELOT is raised up the flagpole from the highest tower of the great castle.

The capitol, though a charred shell, is once again restored. Arthur has reclaimed the throne.

People celebrate everywhere. The CROWDS drink and dance and cheer. Fireworks go off. The feeling is pure elation.

INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Arthur watches quietly out the same window that his father, Uther, did so many years ago as he watched his kingdom fall.

Behind him, Merlin walks up, clearly unwell. Now walking with a cane. Struggling to breathe with each step. Arthur turns.

ARTHUR
We thought we'd lost you.

MERLIN
Me too.

Merlin sees the look on Arthur's face.

MERLIN
You have quite a celebration going on downstairs. They are wondering where you are.

On Arthur's face there is no lightness. No freedom. His brow furrowed, still struggling with the storm within.

MERLIN
What is it Arthur?

ARTHUR
I have lost my faith Merlin.

MERLIN
How is this?

ARTHUR
It is not enough. What we have done here. Is it?!

MERLIN
No, Arthur. It is not enough. Your work has just begun.

ARTHUR
How much is enough? When does it end?

MERLIN
You have started to follow the path to true freedom. You will notice as it grows inside you, so does it grow out towards the horizon.

Arthur's eyes are downcast.

MERLIN
I see you are in pain, and the only way out of this pain is... what? What do you feel in your heart will make it right?

Arthur looks at Merlin.

ARTHUR
Justice.

MERLIN
Justice for whom?

ARTHUR
For everyone.

MERLIN
Everyone?

Arthur is silent. Merlin nods - that's right.

ARTHUR
Will I ever be able to sleep soundly?

MERLIN
Once you stop fighting *yourself*, you will sleep like a baby.

Arthur looks out the window. The stars shine brightly in the velvet sky. Arthur takes them in, his look far away.

ARTHUR
They are all the same, aren't they?

MERLIN
In actuality, every one is different. But they are all equal. In value - all the same.

Arthur finally smiles. He understands.

INT. CAMELOT'S GRAND HALL

Arthur walks into the circular room, wide as a church.

There is a raucous celebration going on. People drinking and dancing. Music in the air. The place is packed.

Lancelot, at a table with Dagonet, Griflet, and his men, smiles upon seeing Arthur. He comes over. The two embrace.

LANCELOT
Look at what you have done.

ARTHUR
Couldn't have happened without you, Lancelot. Thank you.

Lancelot hands him a mug of ale. They drink.

LANCELOT
You look better.

ARTHUR
I have an idea.

LANCELOT
An idea.

ARTHUR
It's going to upset alot of people.

LANCELOT
Fantastic. I like it already.

ARTHUR
We are all created equal, Lancelot. Each and every man, woman, and child. And we're going to create a set of laws that protects them. No matter what one's class or creed. Prince and pauper - all equal.

Lancelot looks into Arthur's mug, as if he's drunk too much.

LANCELOT
Good lord, the entire world will try to stop this.

ARTHUR
Pretty much.

LANCELOT
You're a madman, Arthur.

ARTHUR
Yes, but I will sleep like a baby tonight.

The two clink mugs and drink. Look out at the party.

Merlin walks up quietly beside Arthur.

ARTHUR
So, who is this woman you want me to meet?

MERLIN
Marry, Arthur. Not meet, *marry*.

ARTHUR
Yes, yes, yes. First things first.

MERLIN
Her name is Guinevere.

Arthur, hearing her name for the first time, nods.

ARTHUR
Guinevere.
(beat)
Okay, bring her. Let's see what happens.

As Arthur turns back to the celebration, he has no idea what has been set in motion... the future to come. The tears. The deep sorrow. The devotion. The greatest love.

MERLIN
(to himself)
And so it shall be...

Ector walks up to Arthur. They hug.

ARTHUR
Father, I want you to build me a table.

Ector lifts an eyebrow, curiously.

ARTHUR
The biggest table you've ever built. Large enough for fifty men to sit at. With no-one at the head, so that no single voice is more important than the next.

ECTOR
I don't understand.

Arthur gestures to the circular shape of the room.

ARTHUR
I want you to build me a round table. A big round table.

CUT TO:

INT. DUNGEON

Morgana sits at the back of a cell, eyes burning. The bars of the cell have slowly moving blue tendrils running along the metal. A magical spell to make sure she can't get free.

Merlin walks in gingerly using his cane. Looking weak.

MORGANA
You made all of this happen, old man. A long time ago, it was your hand that tipped the glass.

MERLIN
I am sure that is how it must look to you.

Merlin sits, shuddering in pain. His breath short.

MERLIN
So, my poor girl. What exactly have you done to me?

Morgana smiles proudly. Excited about her dirty work.

MORGANA
Have you told them yet?

MERLIN
That I am dying? No.

Merlin looks at her solemnly. She giggles darkly.

MORGANA
You are so bloody *easy*, Merlin. The simplest of spells. The most painful of deaths.

She shrugs, pleased with herself.

MERLIN
I am sad for you. Your father is to blame for what has happened to you. Your whole life, dragged into the darkness of his soul.
You have greatness in you Morgana. You are truly touched. If only you could find your way to use your power for light instead of darkness.

MORGANA
You kid me, surely.

MERLIN
No. I do not. I believe there is still hope for you.

Morgana stares deep into Merlin's eyes. For a moment, a flicker of vulnerability crosses her expression.

MORGANA
(her breath caught in her throat)
I have done things... so dark... so horrible. You can not bear to imagine.

MERLIN
There is nothing that can not be forgiven.

Morgana looks away, emotions writhing. For a moment, released of her past, she looks like a scared little girl again.

MERLIN
None of this was yours.

Tears start to surface in her eyes.

And then, quickly as the clarity came, it is gone. She looks up darkly. The shadows wrapping her face in blackness.

MORGANA
Think me that easy, Merlin? Your tricks do not fool me. *I don't need your forgiveness*.

Merlin rises. Pain rocks his body. Morgana watches smugly.

MERLIN
The pain shoots through my muscles and face. Though I have strength, it can not grab hold. I can feel gravity pulling me like a jelly that seeps through the cracks in a table.
(looks at her)
You are slowly dissolving my bones. Yes?

She grins. Merlin nods.

MORGANA
Merlin, before this is over, when your body has failed you, and the afterlife offers you peaceful escape... <u>that is just the beginning of your pain</u>. I will drag you back here for more. Understand? I have ways to torture your very soul.

Merlin looks at her. A softness in his eyes.

MERLIN
And I will still forgive you.

Merlin turns and walks out.

Morgana's eyes well up. She explodes in anger. SCREAMING, she stands, throws her arms out in front of her. Hot-white orange bolts of energy rocket from her palms at the cell door.

The blue tendrils on the bars snap together when hit, locking to form a wall. Her stream of power CRACKLING into a waterfall of WHITE SPARKS as it slams into it.

Then it is over. The cell stands solidly.

Morgana's lip quivers. She backs away into the shadows, a damaged little girl. And folds into her darkness.

And the darkness becomes a BLACK SCREEN.

TITLE CARD:

END PART ONE...