

PRINCE OF THIEVES

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SUNSET. The glowing orb ripples like a blood-red eye.

A black robed figure. A face of the ages. Dark, wrinkled skin. Wizened almond eyes. He HOWLS at the sun. His voice ECHOES across the sky. The Moslem call to prayer.

Hundreds of feet below his tower, a mud walled city of minarets and mosques. A human ants nest. Scurrying to their devotions.

A TWELFTH CENTURY ARAB CITY.

INT. DUNGEONS - SUNSET

Pervasive blackness. MOANS of men in pain. DRIPPING water. Rats. Filth. The nadir of human degradation.

Bedraggled WHITE MEN, P.O.W.s FROM THE CRUSADES, caged together with ARAB CUTTHROATS. JAILERS wrench two crusaders from their cell. ROBIN OF LOCKSLEY and PETER DUBOIS. Their appearance reeks of long imprisonment, but remnants of their noble heritage still glimmer in their faces. Peter is so frail he can barely walk.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SUNSET

A furnace. Torture instruments glow red-hot. Chained VICTIMS. A massive INTERROGATOR scrutinizes the two white men. Indicates a ratfaced LOWLIFE, who points at Peter, jabbering in Arabic.

INTERROGATOR

He says you stole his bread.

PETER

It is a lie. I caught him stealing ours.

The lowlife jabbars some more. The interrogator debates.

INTERROGATOR

Cut off the infidel's hand.

The jailers haul Peter to the chopping block.

ROBIN

No! ... I took the bread.

PETER

That's not true.

ROBIN

They're not interested in truth.
You are too weak, Peter.
You would not live through it.

The Interrogator stares into Robin's eyes.

INTERROGATOR
Sacrifice for the weaker?
How noble... As you wish...
Cut off this one's hand as well!
... But first...

He indicates an Arab PRISONER, who is dragged forward.
His struggling hand is laid on the executioner's block.

INTERROGATOR
Show them the courage of Allah.

The prisoner's face braces for the pain. A red-hot scimitar
flashes down. The hand flips into a basket. Twitching.

Robin is next. His composure fails. He flops to his knees,
CRYING. The interrogator laughs. The jailers unleash the thongs
on Robin's hand. They stretch it out, forcing it down. Robin goes
limp, sobbing. Peter catches his eye... Robin winks.

The scimitar. Drawn from the coals. Spitting flame. Arcs down.
Robin is suddenly galvanized.

ROBIN
And this is English courage.

He hurls his holders aside. Swings upward, driving his fist
into the EXECUTIONER's throat. Grabs the sword.

Slash. His thongs melt like butter. A JAILER leaps at him.
Steaming, the scimitar slices into the man's chest.

Despite his bindings, Peter wrestles the Interrogator.
Knife pressed to his throat, Peter is forced against the furnace.
At the last second, he flips the man into the fire. SCREAMING.

PETER
That's for five years of hell.

A jailer aims a scalding blade at Robin's back.

VOICE (O/S)
Behind you!

Warned, Robin ducks away. SLAMS the jailer's head into the wall.

Peter frees himself, but they are still outnumbered.
While fighting, Robin acknowledges the man who shouted the
warning. An imposing, shaven-headed SARACEN. Heavily muscled arms
and chest, covered in tattoos. Even his bald head is ornamented.

ROBIN
You speak English?

SARACEN
The King's own. Set me free.

PETER
No, Robin.

SARACEN
For pity's sake. Mine is a sentence
of death.

Robin sidesteps, propelling a guard into a pit.

PETER
Don't trust him.

Two more guards attack, yelling fury. Robin eyes the curved scimitar.

ROBIN
What I would give for an English
sword. This is a pruning hook.

A guard swings at him with a giant axe. Robin slashes... shears
the axe handle in two.

ROBIN
Hmm! Not bad.

He runs the man through. Peter loses his sword. His opponent
moves in for the kill... Peter grabs tongs from the fire and
smolders his opponent with a backhand.

Commotion outside. RAISED VOICES and RUNNING FEET.

SARACEN
Free me and I will show you
a way out.

ROBIN
Why should we trust you?

SARACEN
If you don't, you are dead men.

ROBIN
He makes a point.

The door BURSTS open. MORE GUARDS rush in.

ROBIN
A good point.

He slashes the man free.

PETER
Robin!

ROBIN
Whatever blood is in his veins, he
does not deserve to die here.

SARACEN
This way!

He beckons them to the back. A hidden door leads into a tunnel.

INT. SEWERS - NIGHT

They wade through foul water up to their waists. The Saracen
leads... A snake lashes out for his face. Robin lops off its head.

SARACEN
You are fast, my friend.

ROBIN
Five years I've waited for the smell
of free air. That makes a man fast.

GUARDS drop down from above, carrying torches. Blocking the way.

SARACEN
You will need to be yet faster.

A narrow opening to their left... they splash through.
Half running, half crawling in the dank water. Fire arrows land
around them. The orange smoke is choking.

SARACEN
Poison air. Hold your breath.

Flames illuminate the walls, alive with a loathsome mass of
crawling slime. Peter falls. A pursuer descends on him,
thrusting a blazing torch at his face. The Saracen intercepts
the blow. Grabs the man's neck, SNAPPING it with one mighty twist.

PETER (coughing)
Thanks. I misjudged you.

SARACEN
Save your breath.

Gasping for air, they find the tunnel veers steeply downward.
A slippery granite tube. Losing purchase, they slide headlong.
Sharp rusted spikes jut out from the walls ahead.

Robin grabs at the walls to break the fall. No use. They're
picking up speed. He turns his sword crossways, bracing it
against the sides of the tunnel, as a brake. SPARKS fly.
The sword cuts into Robin's chest... but it works.

SARACEN
Allah be praised.

ROBIN
Amen, brother.

A bloodcurdling SCREAM. A pursuing GUARD tumbles down the sewer chute. The three men press themselves against the wall. The man hurtles by... IS IMPALED ON THE SPIKES.

A draft of fresh air from the roof of the tunnel. Using the spiked guard as a ladder, Robin climbs. Removes a grating.

EXT. ARAB STREET - NIGHT

Robin's head appears... ducks back down, as a squad of mounted soldiers THUNDERS right over him... he reappears. All clear. They're outside the prison wall. Robin helps Peter up.

ROBIN
God willing, we may now be safe.

SWOOSH. An arrow pierces through Peter's chest - fired from the prison wall. He reels... Robin leads him under the wall for protection. SHOUTS OF ALARM. SOLDIERS approaching.

ROBIN
Come, Peter. We must hurry.

Raising his sword, Peter faces the oncoming soldiers.

PETER
It is mortal. Leave me.

ROBIN
Hold onto my shoulder.

Peter shakes him off.

PETER
My mother... my little sister. Tell them I love them. Tell them I died a free Englishman.

Robin looks despairingly to the Saracen.

SARACEN
His wound is by the heart. We cannot save him.

Robin knows it's true. Peter pulls an insignia ring from a hidden pouch in his clothes. Thrusts it into Robin's hand.

PETER
Take this to my sister.
Swear you will protect her for
me... Swear it, Robin!

ROBIN (reluctantly)
I swear it.

Summoning hidden resources of strength, Peter charges at
the oncoming soldiers, brandishing his sword.

PETER
For England.

He fells the first Arab. The Saracen pulls Robin away.

SARACEN
.Come now! Do not fail your
friend. Make his sacrifice
an act of honor.

They vanish into the night. Fighting like a man possessed,
Peter is swallowed in a sea of enemy soldiers.

LATER: A DESERTED ALLEY

Robin and the Saracen catch their breath.

ROBIN
Farewell, friend. God speed you
on your way.

SARACEN
Our way is together. With the
speed of Allah.

He grins. This strange man has a sense of humor.

ROBIN
I go to England.

SARACEN
Then I go to England.

ROBIN
England? Why?

SARACEN
You saved my life. I must stay
with you until I save yours.

ROBIN
Go your own way. I relieve you
of your obligation.

SARACEN
Only Allah can do that.

ROBIN
And if I don't want you?

SARACEN
You have no choice... unless you
think you can kill me.

He grins broadly. Offers his hand.

SARACEN
My name is Aslan.

Resigned, Robin takes the proffered hand.

ROBIN
Robin of Locksley. You know a
short route to England, Aslan?

CUT TO:

Eerie shapes. Weaving. White light on water.
The moon reflected in the moat of a small castle.
Towers shrouded in night mist. Smoke curls from a chimney.

SUPER: LOCKSLEY CASTLE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, ENGLAND

INT. - LOCKSLEY CASTLE - NIGHT

Fire CRACKLES in an open hearth. Hams and a half sheep hang,
smoking. An old DOG SNORES at the fireside. A bone CLUNKS on
the floor, waking him.

VOICE (O/S)
Enough of that din, Remus.
I can't think.

Licking the bone gratefully, the dog looks in the direction of
the voice... Grey. Proud. Distinguished. LORD LOCKSLEY.

Seated at a table, wine goblet in hand, he pores over a wonderful
illustrated Bible. Reading to himself for solace and strength.
Empty chairs surround the vast table. A deep sense of
loneliness. He glances at a portrait over the fireplace... Robin.

The dog jumps. Hackles rise. Off-screen SHOUTS. Locksley
unsheathes a dagger. Obscures it in the folds of the Bible.
The door BURSTS open. A peasant, ragged, desperate. KENNETH.

KENNETH
My lord! Help me.

He's bleeding from a face wound. Another man grabs him from behind. Locksley's craggy-faced retainer, DUNCAN. Older than his master, but still strong, he holds Kenneth back.

DUNCAN
You must wait... I am sorry you
were disturbed, Master.

KENNETH (high anxiety)
My lord, please!

LOCKSLEY
It is alright, Duncan.
(to Kenneth)
You are Kenneth of Cowfall?

The peasant falls to his knees.

KENNETH
They've taken my Gwen. My daughter.

LOCKSLEY
Who has taken her?

KENNETH
Men on horses. In masks.
- (he touches his wound)
We tried to stop them. My son
is dead.

EXT. LOCKSLEY CASTLE - NIGHT

Steam pours from the nostrils of a black CHARGER. Lord Locksley mounts, in armor. Duncan attempts to detain him.

DUNCAN
You cannot go alone, Master.
Let me ride for help.

LOCKSLEY
That may be too late. Kenneth,
lead the way.

He kicks his horse into motion.

DUNCAN
Master, stay! There is an evil
moon tonight.

LOCKSLEY
Good will overcome, Duncan.
Trust in that.

Duncan looks up. Crosses himself. Dark clouds race across the moon.

CUT TO:

A wooded trail. Kenneth checks the ground. Locksley waits.

KENNETH
They came this way, my lord.

LOCKSLEY
Onward then. What is this place?

KENNETH
Nearby the Gregor Caves.

Locksley reacts - a hint of fear. They move on... Ahead, the hillside glows, rimmed in eerie light. Strange primitive CHANTS, wafted on the wind. Locksley ties his nervous horse to a tree.

Parting undergrowth, Kenneth creeps forward. CRIES OUT. He's face to face with the MAGGOT-EATEN SKULL of a goat.

Beyond it, a gruesome host of half-skinned HUMAN SKULLS, all arranged on stakes. Some male, others with rotting female tresses, staring eyelessly into the night. Kenneth turns to run... A hand grabs him.

LOCKSLEY
Steady, man. They are to dissuade
the faint of heart. Think of Gwen.

From the crest of the rise, they peer down into the craggy valley. A cave opening, ablaze with flames, leers at them like the mouth of Hell. Before the cave, a circle of stones. A miniature Stonehenge.

A medieval orgy. Men and women in masks and loose robes. Dancing. Drinking. Reveling. Pure carnality. Lord Locksley and Kenneth watch in horror. Faces ashen.

KENNETH
Druids.

LOCKSLEY
I trusted we were rid of such
evil a century ago.

An unearthly SCREECH. A creature leaps into the circle of stones. Grotesque gargoyle head, horns, fur-covered arms and legs. A living Hieronymous Bosch DEMON. Its clawed hands slash across a reveler's back, drawing blood in vicious streaks. The creature tastes the blood. The reveler is ecstatic.

KENNETH (petrified)
Is it the devil?

LOCKSLEY
If it is, I have some Christian
steel that will test his hide.

He draws his sword. A crucifix sculpted into the hilt.
A girl is dragged from the cave. Kenneth buries his head.

LOCKSLEY
Gwen?

Kenneth nods.

The demon SHRIEKS, dervishing around GWEN, who is carried onto the central plinth stone. A pagan altar, the shape of an elephant's head with its trunk raised. A masked figure stands at the head of the altar. The high priest of the dark rite.

The girl's body shudders as blood-red liquid is forced down her throat. The demon's voice is husky and hideous.

DEMON
Come, my virgin flower.

Hypnotized by the creature's voice and snake-like movements, Gwen stretches herself out. A single beam of sunlight slices through the mist, like a laser. The first light of the rising sun, it strikes directly on the altar, tracking down towards the girl's heart. The demon's raised talons close in on the white flesh of her neck. Gwen's eyes are open wide, in a trance. The crowd of revelers encircle the plinth. Awed anticipation...

A WARRIOR'S YELL!

Sword raised, Locksley THUNDERS in on his charger.
The terrified crowd parts. The demon SCREAMS like a banshee.

DEMON
Kill him! Kill him!

The followers throw themselves at Locksley. He beats them off. The high priest issues orders to ARMED GUARDS, who run to intercept. One aims a spear. Locksley hacks the shaft in half. Cuts men down left and right. Reaches the altar stone.

LOCKSLEY
Gwen! Up, girl, up!

Gwen shakes off her trance. The demon launches itself at Locksley. Talons rip flesh from his face. With all his strength, Locksley hurls the creature down.

LOCKSLEY
In the name of God!

His broadsword swings in a mighty arc. Slices across the gargoyle's skull. Clean through half the face... Impossibly, the demon rolls back to its feet.

The head is an elaborate mask - beneath are the yellow skin, white hair, and burning red eyes of an ALBINO CRONE. SCREAMING vitriol, the hag is unharmed.

Momentarily stunned, Locksley regains his senses, hauls the girl onto his charger. The guards close in. Locksley spurs his horse. Rides for an opening.

The masked high priest stands resolutely in his path. Brandishing a burning branch. The horse is freaked. Rears. Locksley and the girl are thrown.

Unarmed, Locksley charges the man. Slams him into the cave wall. The mask falls. Locksley gasps in recognition.

LOCKSLEY
Nottingham!

The SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM. Powerful build, black beard, cruel intensity in every feature.

NOTTINGHAM
You are an unwelcome surprise, Locksley.

LOCKSLEY
The King shall hear of this, Nottingham.

NOTTINGHAM
I think not.

Locksley is surrounded. One by one the men reveal their faces. Locksley backs up in shock, recognizing them.

LOCKSLEY
God help us.

NOTTINGHAM
One day all England will worship
with us.

LOCKSLEY
Never.

The crone spits venom in his face.

DEMON
I am Mortianna. You will die with
my name on your lips.

Locksley's AGONIZED CRY fills the valley. On the hillside, Kenneth averts his eyes. Turns to run. Five MASKED FIGURES block his way.

EXT. ENGLISH SHORE - DAY

A Twelfth Century French SAILBOAT at anchor. A cross on its sail.

A longboat rows to shore. Robin stands in the prow, in a pilgrim's hooded robe. He gazes at the approaching land. Unable to wait, he leaps into the surf and wades to the beach. He kneels, pressing his hands and face into the soil.

ROBIN

Home. Thank you, Lord.

Aslan steps from the boat, sniffing the air. The French SAILORS keep their distance from him. Robin takes his hand.

ROBIN

My friend, you have escorted me home.
I beg you to free yourself of your
vow. Return with the boat. I know
how heavy your heart must be, this far
from your family and native land...

ASLAN

Because I love them so dearly, I cannot
dishonor them.

A SAILOR creeps up behind Aslan, club in hand.

ROBIN

I thought you'd say that.

He nods to the SAILOR, who swings the club down. The Saracen sidesteps, grabs the man's arm and flips him into the surf. He turns a cold stare on Robin.

ASLAN

No man controls my destiny.
Especially not one who attacks
downwind and stinks of garlic.

Robin laughs. The Saracen remains intense.

ASLAN

If our positions were reversed,
I would have done the same.
Only I would have succeeded.

He smiles broadly. Robin claps him on the shoulder.

ROBIN

Come, Aslan. By nightfall we will
celebrate your honor when we dine
with my father.

EXT./INT. PEASANT'S COTTAGE - DAY

CRASH! An armored foot splinters the door of a farmer's hovel. CHILDREN SCREAM and run. A SOLDIER clubs at them, laughing.

Outside. MORE SOLDIERS. Some on horses, others on foot, with leashed HOUNDS. Pillaging. Vandalizing. Searching.

GUY GISBORNE: An impressive figure on horseback. Strikingly handsome- except that one of his ears is missing. We recognize his face from the Druid ceremony. He coldly addresses a pregnant woman with a child in her arms, FANNY

GISBORNE

You owe the sheriff three bushels of flax.

FANNY

You starve us. First the drought, now you take what food we have left.

GISBORNE

For starving people, you look fat enough.

SOLDIER (emerging from the hut)

He's not here, Sir. None but the woman and children.

GISBORNE (to Fanny)

Where is your mate? The man they call Little.

FANNY

He died last winter.

GISBORNE

Is that so? We hear he is very much alive. Hiding out in the forest. He probably ran away to escape your scolding tongue.

The SOLDIERS join in his laughter. Incensed, Fanny pounds her fist on his legs. Gisborne kicks her down.

FANNY

Norman swine!

A boy of 12 springs from nowhere, thrusting a hay fork at Gisborne's throat.

FANNY

No, Wulf! Don't! 'Twill only make it worse.

Wulf backs off. Nostrils flaring with repressed hate.

GISBORNE

Seize him!

While two soldiers grab the boy, others examine his hiding place. A secret thatched door, built into the side of a haystack... a bow and quiver... and a DEER carcass. GISBORNE dismounts.

GISBORNE

This is Lord Nottingham's deer.
Is this how you repay the Sheriff
for his protection?

WULF

Like a wolf protects sheep.

FANNY

I killed it. We needed the meat.

GISBORNE

Poachers hang. Either he dies
or you die.

WULF

My mother lies to protect me.

FANNY

No, Wulf!

Gisborne drags the boy to the carcass.

GISBORNE

You have deprived us of a hunt, boy.

He cups his hand in the deer's blood. Smears it on Wulf's face.

GISBORNE

The hounds know the scent well.

He tosses his bloody glove to the dogs. They tear at each other in their effort to rip at the glove.

GISBORNE

Run, boy. Like a deer. Give us
us some pleasure before you die.

To the accompaniment of the hounds' savage HOWLS and the horrified SCREAMS of his family, Wulf runs.

GISBORNE

Unleash them!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

Nearing home, Robin is buoyant. The Saracen, brooding, walks two paces behind him.

ROBIN

Why must you walk in back of me?

ASLAN

In your land am I not the infidel?
The unbeliever, the instrument of evil?

ROBIN

Our races have fought for a hundred
years to prove that point.

ASLAN

Then I trust it is safer to appear
as your slave than as your equal.

ROBIN

For an "infidel" you have uncommon
clarity of thinking. Yet you refuse
to tell me about your home and family.

ASLAN

Those are my burdens.

ROBIN

You speak my language. You have the
diplomacy and honor code of a nobleman.
I ask again, why were you to be executed?

The Saracen maintains a moody silence.

ROBIN

So, I must continue with my guesswork.
You are highborn? Probably...
You fell from favor... Clearly...
Why? You broke the law? You were a
rival for power?... A woman?

The Saracen reacts, almost imperceptibly.

ROBIN

By the Lord, that's it!

Aslan is silent, but Robin knows he's right.

ROBIN

They say there are Arab women of such
beauty that they can possess a man's
mind, that he would be willing to die
for them. Is that not so?

Ignoring him, the Saracen stops. Examines the darkening sky.

ASLAN
It is close to sunset.

ROBIN
Your people must marry women
chosen for them by others, right?

No reply. Aslan unfolds a prayer rug.

ROBIN
Who is she? The Mullah's daughter?
...Another man's wife?... That's it!

ASLAN
Endless clouds. Is there no sun
in your cursed country?

ROBIN
You dog! You painted old dog!
What is her name?

ASLAN
Which way is East?

ROBIN
Her name?

ASLAN
East?

ROBIN
Her name?

ASLAN
East?!!!

Robin folds his arms. A standoff.

ASLAN
Damn you!... Jasmina.

ROBIN
Ah, Jasmina! Is she beautiful?

ASLAN
Which way is East?

ROBIN
That way.

Aslan throws his rug on the ground. Kneels.

ASLAN
Are you sure?

ROBIN
I would know blindfolded. I'm five
miles from home... Was she worth it?

ASLAN
Worth dying for.

Robin stands smiling over him as Aslan begins his prayers...
BAYING of hunting dogs... In the distance, the boy Wulf runs
toward them, ducks behind a tree and clubs the leading dog with a
branch. The other hounds close in... PANTING with exhaustion,
Wulf swings into the branches. A hound savages his leg.

The soldiers surround the tree. The boy clambers precariously
onto the highest branch... Robin surreptitiously steals a
crossbow from one of the soldiers horses.

GISBORNE
You're not playing by the rules, boy.
Deer don't climb trees... Perhaps he
thinks he's a game bird. Shall we
teach him to fly? Cut it down!

The soldiers hack at the trunk. The tree quivers.

ROBIN
Hold! ...I am curious as to what
manner of creature is so fearsome
that it takes six men to attack it.

Shrouded in his pilgrim's hooded cloak, he approaches them.

GISBORNE
Stand back, stranger. This is no
affair of yours.

ROBIN
Have we treed the devil himself? Let me
see... Ah ha! A small boy. A truly
dangerous animal.

GISBORNE
I advise you to move on, pilgrim.
This is the Sheriff's land.

ROBIN
Wrong. This is my land, and my tree.
Therefore, whatever is in it also
belongs to me.

GISBORNE
I grow dangerously tired of your
wit... Chop it down!

 ROBIN
The man who strikes that tree dies.

He glances nervously at Aslan, who's still at his prayers.
The men stop in mid-swing. More surprised than scared.
Gisborne gestures to the largest of them.

 GISBORNE
Chop down the hooded fool.

 ROBIN (backing up)
Perhaps we could discuss this.

The soldier raises his sword. Robin lifts his cape... the
crossbow. Shoots from the hip. The bolt thuds through the
man's armor. He's dead before he lands.

 GISBORNE
Kill him!

 ROBIN
Aslan! It's time to redeem that vow.

 GISBORNE
Set the dogs on him!

Aslan ignores him, lost in his prayers. Robin lifts the other
arm - a second concealed crossbow. WHUMPF! The bolt flips the
dog handler into the vicious pack. Dead or not, he soon will be.
Robin unsheathes his sword.

 ROBIN
Aslan, get off your damn knees!
I have four of them cornered.

The Saracen remains head down. Or did we see him steal a glance?
Gisborne signals his men to attack. A wave of flashing steel.

 ROBIN
I hope there's enough of me
to satisfy you all.

Backed up to a tree, he grabs a branch and kicks out. Two men
fly back. He lunges at a third. His sword strikes flesh.
Robin sidesteps and hurls the fourth onto a sharp tree stump.

Gisborne thrusts. Robin reacts too slowly. Blood flows from his
arm. His sword falls.

 ROBIN
Aslan!!

Gisborne is on him, sword pressed to his back. Robin freezes.

 GISBORNE
Well, hooded stranger, allow
me to know your name before
I run you through.

A moment of silence... Like lightning, Robin spins, kicks out
Gisborne's legs. Slams one foot on the man's sword arm, the other
on his throat. Throws back his pilgrim's hood.

 GISBORNE
Robin of Locksley!

 ROBIN
On your knees, Gisborne. Pray.

He obeys. Robin raises his sword.

 GISBORNE
Please, Locksley! No!

Robin drives the point into Gisborne's rear. The man leaps.

 ROBIN
Now get off my land. And tell your
cousin the Sheriff what happens to
his scum when they pick on my people.

Gisborne takes off, colliding with Aslan as he folds his rug.
Reacts in shock at the sight of the strange Arab. Keeps running.

 ROBIN (to Aslan, furious)
You worthless savage! You travel
ten thousand miles to save my life,
then leave me to be butchered.

 ASLAN
I will fulfil my vow when I choose.

 ROBIN
Which does not include prayer
times, meal times, or any time
I'm outnumbered six to one!!

 ASLAN
You whine like a mule. You
are still alive.

 ROBIN
Barely.

Aslan examines Robin's wound. Dismissive.

ASLAN
A flesh wound. Why did you
let their leader go?

ROBIN
After six years of the stench
of death, I have no stomach for
needless blood on my hands.

Wulf climbs cautiously from the tree.

ROBIN
Have no fear, boy.

The boy nervously eyes Robin and the Saracen, fingering a
crucifix around his neck. Runs off into the woods.

ASLAN (laughing)
The conquering hero returns.

ROBIN
Ha! It was you he was scared of.

Aslan's humor is infectious. Robin's anger relents.

ROBIN
Come, my strange friend. Beyond
that hill lies the prettiest
little castle in all Christendom.
Warm hearths, hot food, real beds.

ASLAN
With feather pillows?

ROBIN
With feather pillows. Warm and soft
like Jasmina's embrace.

EXT. LOCKSLEY CASTLE - NIGHT

RUINS. The moon hovers ominously over the once-proud castle.
Burned to the ground. Gutted and deserted. Towers demolished.
Moat drained. Robin stares, struck dumb with horror.

The dark courtyard. Heartsick, Robin stumbles over debris.

ROBIN
Father! Hello!

His voice ECHOES around the fallen battlements. Aslan places a
hand on his shoulder and points... Suspended high on a tower wall
is a decaying HUMAN CORPSE.

CLOSE: A medallion round the corpse's neck. The Locksley crest.

ROBIN

NOOOOOO!

A paroxysm of rage and grief. He SMASHES furniture. SLAMS his fists relentlessly into the wall. Pained, Aslan looks on.

ROBIN

I should have been here.

Spent, he leans against the wall. In the silence, they hear an eerie TAPPING. Robin draws his sword... A hunched old man emerges, walking with the aid of a staff... Duncan.

ROBIN (shaking him)

Damn you, Duncan. Why didn't you cut him down?

DUNCAN

Master Robin, is it you? A miracle. I thought God had abandoned us.

ROBIN

You left my father to hang like a common thief, carrion for the crows.

ASLAN

Easy... Look at him.

Duncan steps into the moonlight. His face crudely scarred.

ROBIN

What has happened?

DUNCAN

They say they captured him worshipping with the Druids. He signed a confession before the Bishop of Hereford.

ROBIN

Did they have witnesses?

DUNCAN

Just one. Kenneth of Cowfall. The Bishop decreed all the Locksley lands forfeit.

ROBIN

Did you believe the charges?

DUNCAN

Not even when they took my eyes.

ROBIN

Who did this to you, Duncan?

DUNCAN
Guy of Gisborne. With the Sheriff
looking on.

Robin holds the old retainer to his chest. Stares into the
night in silent rage.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM CASTLE - NIGHT

Marked contrast. A forbidding fortress. Cliff-like battlements.

INT. NOTTINGHAM CASTLE - NIGHT

Face like thunder, Guy of Gisborne strides up curving stone
steps. A long corridor leads to a guarded oak door.

SENTRY
Sir Guy. His lordship is not
to be disturbed.

GISBORNE
Away, fool.

He shoves the sentry aside.

EXT. CASTLE BATTLEMENTS - NIGHT

Torches illuminate Nottingham's face. Chilling cruelty in
Manson-like eyes. Seated, his manicured hand distractedly strokes
a semi-naked girl. She sits at his feet like a frightened dog.
When Gisborne enters, she covers up.

NOTTINGHAM
Who bade you cover up?

He SMASHES his fist into his chair. She timidly uncovers.

NOTTINGHAM
Cousin, I trust you justify
your intrusion with news of
profound value.

His attention is riveted on a dark niche in the corner of the
courtyard. Unearthly sounds emanate from the blackness.

GISBORNE
I met a hooded man today. He
bade me warn you not to harm
his people.

NOTTINGHAM
His name?

GISBORNE
Robin of Locksley

 NOTTINGHAM
Ha! The prodigal son returns. He
is a whelp. This girl could best him.

 GISBORNE
This whelp bested five of my men
in the blink of an eye.

 NOTTINGHAM
Your men were probably drunk.
Yet you survived, Cousin?

Heavy scorn. The Sheriff pats Gisborne's hand like a child's.
The voice from the darkness becomes a loud CHANT. A wrinkled,
monkey-like figure dances into view, wearing a necklace of human
fingers. You might think she was a hundred years old, if not for
her incredible agility. MORTIANNA.

 GISBORNE (stunned)
You brought her here?

 NOTTINGHAM
Quiet!

The crone's fingers dart into a bag. Emerge with a writhing,
SQUEALING mass... a PIGLET. A knife flashes. Blood spurts into
an ornate sacred platter.

The girl flinches in horror. Mortianna shakes the contents of a
pouch across the bloody dish. Carved bone dice - Runes.

She rattles the platter. The rune symbols dance in trails of
blood. Eyes vacant, mouth frothing, she hisses out her incoherent
visions. Nottingham follows her every move. A connoisseur.

 NOTTINGHAM
What do you see?

 MORTIANNA
Change the seat of power.

 NOTTINGHAM
London?

 MORTIANNA
Change it.

 NOTTINGHAM
Move the capital to Nottingham?
Excellent. How?

MORTIANNA
Ally with royal blood.

NOTTINGHAM
Put someone on the throne and
rule through him? Who?

MORTIANNA
That is not revealed.

The idea takes shape in Nottingham's mind. Mounting intensity.

NOTTINGHAM
Ally with royal blood.
What else do you see?

MORTIANNA
Armies.

NOTTINGHAM
Whose?

MORTIANNA
Yours. Men and weaponry in
great numbers.

NOTTINGHAM
And victory?

MORTIANNA
Much blood will be spilled.

NOTTINGHAM
Whose?

CLOSE: A dice splashes blood. Lands - a death's head symbol.
Mortianna hammers the platter. The dice spins and lands again.
Again the grinning skull. The tray smashes to the ground.
The hag runs at Gisborne.

MORTIANNA
Who have you seen?!

She shakes him. SCREAMS spittle in his face.

GISBORNE (freaked)
No one. I have seen no one.

MORTIANNA
You lie! A man... A painted man.

NOTTINGHAM
What is wrong?

MORTIANNA
I have seen my death.

She whimpers. Spins, as if fearing invisible intruders.

MORTIANNA
The painted man. He haunts
my dreams.

GISBORNE
Locksley has a companion. A
dark-skinned foreigner. He had
the marked skin of Islam.

Mortianna trembles like an epileptic. Eyes wide with terror.

MORTIANNA
Kill them! Kill them!

She throws herself at Nottingham for protection. He caresses
her. Gisborne is thunderstruck.

NOTTINGHAM
Cousin. Prove to Locksley that
your survival was his last mistake.

MORTIANNA (frantic)
And the painted man! Kill him.

NOTTINGHAM
Kill them both.

He continues to stroke her. Her trembling subsides.

NOTTINGHAM
You have done well, Mortianna.
Exceedingly well. No one shall
harm you, I swear it.

Mortianna reaches out bloodied fingers towards the young girl,
who shrinks away. Nottingham gently takes the girl's hand.
Draws it to his mouth, as if to kiss it... and bites down
viciously, drawing blood. The girl SCREAMS.

NOTTINGHAM
Now, my child, Mortianna's kisses
will seem soft, like an angel's.
(to Mortianna)
Take her. You have earned her.

Mortianna grabs the terrified girl's wrist. Drags her away.

GISBORNE
It is madness bringing the hag here.

NOTTINGHAM

Fear not for my sanity, Guy. For in
madness there is great power.

EXT. LOCKSLEY CASTLE - DAWN

Red shards of sunlight slice through mist-shrouded trees.
Robin HAMMERS a crude cross over a hillside grave.
Heads bowed, Duncan and Aslan stand at his side.

ROBIN

Our last words in this world were
spoken in anger. He called the
Crusades a foolish quest, said
it was vanity to force other men
to our religion. He was right.

(he looks to Aslan, then back
to the grave)

Please forgive me, father.

DUNCAN

He loved you till the end, young
Master. He never gave up hope
of your return.

ROBIN

I failed him. I should have been
here at his side.

DUNCAN

You must leave, head north to safety.
Gisborne will surely seek revenge.

ROBIN

Leave me.

DUNCAN

I know what you're thinking. But one
man can achieve nothing against so
many. You would need an army.

ROBIN

Leave me.

ASLAN

Come, friend.

He leads the old man away.

CUT TO:

POURING rain. Robin stands drenched at the graveside. Aslan
watches from the shelter of trees. Duncan heats a stale chunk
of bread over the ashes of a small fire.

DUNCAN
He still stands vigil?

ASLAN
Like a rock.

Duncan offers half the bread to the Saracen.

DUNCAN
A curse on the Saracens! Were it not for
their ungodly ways he would never have
left. This would never have happened.

ASLAN
It surprises me that one who curses
others so readily has lived so long.

DUNCAN
I do not recognize the style of your voice,
friend. Are you Irish? A Cornishman?

ASLAN
Er...no.

DUNCAN
What manner of name is Aslan then?

ASLAN
A fine Saracen name.

DUNCAN
Lord, no!

He chokes in shock. Spitting bread.

ASLAN
Lord, yes. But eat in peace.
I take no offence.
(he glances at Robin)
By the prophet! What is the man doing?

Robin raises his dagger over his wrist. Aslan runs to him.

ASLAN
Wait!

Too late. Robin slashes the dagger across his palm.
Rain and blood mingle. Streaming onto the grave.

ROBIN
I swear by my own blood. I
will not rest until I have
restored my father's name.
(a whisper)
...Or until I am dead.

EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY

Ooze SUCKS at feet. The three men stomp through mud and rain.

ROBIN

We make a fine army do we not,
Duncan? A blind man, an Arab,
and a fool.

ASLAN

A fine wet army. I have never
witnessed a storm of such duration.
When does summer come to this land?

ROBIN

This is summer.

ASLAN

Then Allah truly is great.

ROBIN

Why, pray?

ASLAN

No food, no shelter, and weather
that would curse the end of the
Earth. We will all quickly be
dead, and I shall be rid of my vow.

They approach a stone wall, surrounding a thatched mansion.

ROBIN

You despair too soon, Aslan.
We shall find food and shelter
here among friends.

ASLAN

What is this place?

ROBIN

Peter's home. It is nearly seven
years since we left here together.

EXT. DUBOIS MANSION - DAY

Robin POUNDS on the door. A hatch opens. An OLD WOMAN's face.

OLD WOMAN

No beggars!

The hatch SLAMS shut. Robin POUNDS again.

ROBIN

Open up!

A pause. The hatch SLIDES back.

ROBIN

Tell the mistress of the house that
Robin of Locksley is at her door.

OLD WOMAN

Her ladyship is not at home.

She SLAMS the hatch again. Robin jams in his hand.

ROBIN

Aagh!

He shouts through the hatch, over his bruised fingers.

ROBIN

Is the child Marian at home?

OLD WOMAN

Maybe she is. Maybe she isn't.
Remove that hand.

Robin refuses. She waits imperiously behind the locked door.
Robin reluctantly withdraws his hand. Instantly the hatch SLAMS.

ASLAN

The hospitality here is as
warm as the weather.

They wait, shivering... The door opens a crack.

OLD WOMAN

Leave your weapons.

The three start forward. Her bony finger points at Robin.

OLD WOMAN

Just you.

INT. DUBOIS MANSION - DAY

The hall. Deer heads. Boar heads. Portraits of ancestors.

OLD WOMAN

Wait here.

He waits. Creaking FOOTSTEPS on the balcony.

GIRL

Who are you?

Dim lighting. Robin cannot make out who it is.

ROBIN
I am Robin of Locksley.

GIRL
You lie. Robin is dead.

ROBIN
I may meet my maker soon from
lack of sustenance. But for
now I am real enough.

GIRL
Step into the light. Turn around.

ROBIN
By heaven, am I to dance next?
Who are you?

GIRL
I am the maid Marian.

ROBIN
Then show yourself, child.
For we knew each other well.

GIRL
With the King away, these are lawless
times. There are outlaws villainous
enough to kidnap and ransom a
relative of his.

ROBIN
You know I am not one of them. Besides
I am sworn to protect you.

GIRL (laughs)
Protect me? Robin of Locksley was
nothing but a spoiled bully.

ROBIN
Allow that years of war and prison may
change a man. Step forward, Marian, so
I may see how you have changed.

She moves into the light... Fat. Rotten teeth. Ugly as sin.

ROBIN
Er... the years have been kind.

GIRL
Thank you. Now remove yourself from
this household.

A figure steps behind Robin. Sticks a sword in his back.

GIRL (turning away)
As you can see, we are already
well protected.

ROBIN
Wait, Marian! ...ouch!

The sword is jabbed into his back. Robin faces the man -
clad in black, with a metal fighting mask.

ROBIN
You are truly courageous against
an unarmed man.

The figure gestures towards the door. Robin sidesteps.
SLAMS an elbow. The sword drops. Slides across the floor.
Robin moves for it, but the man intercepts, drawing a dagger.

Robin darts to the wall. Rips off an antlered deer head.
Defends himself as the attacker slashes at the horns.

OUTSIDE - The SOUND of the fight indoors. Aslan hurls himself
at the door. It doesn't give.

INSIDE - Chunks of horn fly. Robin parries and thrusts.
The horns get shorter. Robin retreats.

Left with just the nubs, Robin hurls the deerhead at the mask.
Gaining advantage, he charges. Grabs the dagger hand, SMASHES
it into the wall. The knife drops. Robin unleashes a tirade of
punches. The attacker collapses. Robin wrenches off the mask.

Long hair tumbles down... a beautiful YOUNG WOMAN.

The front door CAVES IN. Aslan stumbles through... just in time
to see the woman's knee fly up into Robin's crotch. Robin folds.
The battle is over. The young woman stands over Robin.

YOUNG WOMAN
As she was saying, we have
no need of your protection.

Robin croaks through clenched teeth.

ROBIN
Marian.

CUT TO:

Liquid TUMBLES into a goblet. The three men at a table in the
kitchen. The fat girl, SARAH, who pretended to be Marian,
serves. Flashes a lusty smile at Aslan, who glances at Robin -
"Help!" Marian arrives. In a gown. Stunning. An impish grin.

MARIAN
I trust Lord Locksley has
recovered from his indisposition.

Aslan LAUGHS. Robin glares.

EXT. DUBOIS MANSION - DAY

Rock-strewn hills. Grazing sheep. Sun peeking through clouds.
Robin and Marian walk. Anger and anguish in her voice.

MARIAN
Why would he wish me to be protected by the
boy who burned my hair when I was a child?

ROBIN
We were together five terrible
years in a Saracen prison.

MARIAN
How do I know you didn't abandon
him there to save your own skin?

Robin hands her Peter's ring. She is shocked.

ROBIN
Marian, I'm sorry.

MARIAN
I will forward your condolences
to my mother.

She turns her back. He searches for a way to reach her.

ROBIN
On my return, I found my father
dead. The Sheriff denounced him
as a druid and took our lands.

MARIAN
The people fear the druids so much they'd
believe anything. Nottingham would have
me burned at the stake as a witch if he
thought he could possess my property.

ROBIN
Why do you not join your mother in
London? You would be safer there.

MARIAN
I will not retreat. Besides, I have
no interest in life at court. Gossip
mongering and currying favor. Here I
am my own person.

ROBIN

Then you must allow me to be your guardian.

MARIAN

I do not need a guardian.

She turns to face him. Streaming tears.

MARIAN

My brother is dead. You cannot
take his place.

Robin grabs and holds her.

ROBIN

Marian, I don't want to replace him.

MARIAN

What do you want?

Their eyes meet... a sudden intimacy between them. Robin moves
closer. Marian begins to respond, then pulls away.

MARIAN

This is wrong.

She runs back to the house. Robin stares after her.
Aslan appears in the doorway with Duncan.

ASLAN

Robin! The old man hears
horses. Approaching fast.

He runs to a bluff... a column of SOLDIERS snakes up the hillside.

ASLAN

Twenty or more. In battle armor.

MARIAN

Soldiers coming here? Is this
your protection?

ROBIN

I killed some of the Sheriff's
men. I fear I have placed you
in danger.

MARIAN

I can take care of myself. There
are horses in the stable. Go!

Aslan runs into the stables.

ROBIN

I'm not leaving.

Marian ices him with a glare. Aslan reappears, with two bareback horses. Soldiers appear on the crest, led by Gisborne... With a mischievous grin, Marian runs to the soldiers.

MARIAN

Stop them! They're stealing
my horses!

ROBIN

Damn the girl! Aslan, can you
ride?

In answer, Aslan grins. Leaps onto a horse. With a single swift move he hoists Duncan up behind him and digs in his heels. The mare leaps forward, and over the estate wall.

ROBIN

He can ride.

He heads his horse at the wall. It stumbles. Barely clears it. Stones fly. Robin struggles to hold on.

Marian stands directly in Gisborne's path.

GISBORNE

You have been sheltering outlaws,
Lady Marian.

MARIAN

They're thieves, you imbecile.
Bring back my horses, or the
Sheriff will know of your cowardice.

Gisborne knows she is lying.

GISBORNE

You're lucky he didn't steal your
virtue too.

(to his men)

A crown to the man who brings me
Locksley's head.

He leads the pursuit. A soldier hangs back. Grabs Marian's hair.

SOLDIER

A kiss for me, Saxon bitch.

MARIAN

Kiss this!

She unsheathes the dagger from under her skirt. Jabs the blade into his wrist.

MARIAN
Try me again, if you want to
leave a hand behind.

Shocked and pained, the man gallops away. Marian looks down at her dagger hand. It shakes violently.

CUT TO:

Water ERUPTS under hooves. Aslan fords a stream. Duncan hangs on for dear life. Robin strives to keep up. Half a mile behind, Gisborne splits up his men.

Trying for a shortcut, Robin finds himself at the steepest part of the river gorge. His horse balks at the drop. Robin flails at his mount with hands and feet. It backs away.

ROBIN
Damn you, animal!

Aslan SHOUTS from the far bank.

ASLAN
Treat it like a woman.

Robin continues to hit his horse and hurl abuse. Closing in, the soldiers unfurl their crossbows. A flight of bolts whistles ominously close to Robin. He must jump or die.

ASLAN
Have you never had a woman?
Gently, man. Soothe it!

ROBIN
Of course I've had a woman!
Come on, pretty one.

He pats the horse soothingly. The animal edges forward.

ASLAN
Softly. With your knees.

ROBIN
I know! I know!

The soldiers reload. Robin urges the horse at the steep drop.

ROBIN
Easy, easy.

Another wave of crossbow bolts. Robin launches the frightened animal into space. Hooves flail... touch down. Scramble up the other bank. Robin enthusiastically pats the horse's neck.

ROBIN
I love you!

The first two pursuers misjudge their leaps. Their mounts land sprawling in the river bed.

GISBORNE (yelling)
Robin of the Hood! Son of
the devil worshipper.

ROBIN
What is your pleasure, Gisborne?

GISBORNE
It was I who strung your father's
corpse to the castle gate. My
pleasure will be in doing the
same to you.

ROBIN
You survived one meeting. Our next
will be your last.

GISBORNE
Your father died a coward, cursing
your name and squealing like a
stuck pig. -

ROBIN
That's a lie!

Incensed, he is losing his judgement.

ASLAN (shouts)
Come, Robin! He is trying to
anger you into a trap.

A shaft pierces the flank of Robin's horse. It rears in fright. Robin clings on. Six soldiers, the men Gisborne split off, are climbing the embankment towards him.

Robin regains control. Rides right at them. Scatters them, and takes off again. Gisborne YELLS at his men to follow.

Robin and Aslan ride flat out. Open land turns to scrub. Seeing no followers, Robin pulls up and dismounts.

ROBIN
We have lost them. I'll lame this
mare if I ask her to go any farther.

He gently extracts the shaft from his horse. Aslan opens his pouch. Pulls out two shiny clear pebbles and a square leather hide. Rolls the pebbles into the tube and holds it to his eye. A primitive telescope.

Robin watches, curious. Through the scope we see movement on the hill behind them.

ASLAN
Here they come. Look.

Robin puts the device to his eye... the soldiers are close! He reacts in shock. Prepares to defend himself. Then realizes they are still in the distance.

ROBIN
Is this Arab magic?

ASLAN
No. Arab science.

He replaces the tube in his pouch.

ASLAN
How did your uneducated kind ever take Jerusalem?

ROBIN
God knows!

Aslan LAUGHS. Robin points towards an endless expanse of trees.

ROBIN
We can lose them in the forest.

DUNCAN
Sherwood is haunted, Master.

ROBIN
Either we take our chances with the ghosts, or become ghosts ourselves.

He remounts. They race into the trees. Gisborne's men thunder up, ... slowing as they enter the forest. Peering around them in trepidation, they slowly rein in. Robin looks back.

ROBIN
They're not following.

Gisborne curses his men, urging them on.

GISBORNE
Come on, damn you! There are only three of them.

SOLDIER
It's not the men we fear, sir.

Eerie HOWLING and RATTLING of bones. Aslan draws his sword.

DUNCAN

Banshees. They say they fly in
your mouth and suck you dry of
blood before you can scream.

He wraps his scarf over his mouth.

ROBIN

Be quiet! Listen.

Wind gusts the trees in angry waves. Emits deathly SHRIEKS.
The horses WHINNEY. Unnerved, Aslan smites around him with his
scimitar. Wheels at the sounds, striking only air.

ASLAN

Allah protect us from the
evil spirits.

Duncan clings to his back. Robin points.

ROBIN

Behind you!

Aslan slashes out, futilely.

ROBIN

No, there! And there!

Aslan flails. Robin cracks up.

ASLAN

Cease your mad laughing.
I can feel them.

Robin reaches into the branches. Pulls out a string of hollowed
wooden tubes - WINDCHIMES. Dozens of such strings on all the
trees. He blows over the hollow end. A low chilling MOAN.

ROBIN

Here are your ghosts, Duncan.
A child's toy put to good use.
You scare easily, my painted
Saladin.

His laughter is broken by a piercing YELL. A red-jacketed figure
swings down out of a tree on a rope. Catapults him to the ground.

The bushes are instantly alive. Shaggy, wild-eyed men, armed with
cudgels, scythes and hayforks. Twelfth-century Hell's Angels.
The red-jacketed young turk, WILL SCARLET, leaps around Robin.

WILL SCARLET (singing)

Ring around the rosie!

ROBIN

Aslan!

Aslan makes no move to intervene. The woodsmen eye the bizarre stranger, keeping their distance from him. Will kicks at Robin, who tries to grab him. Will skips out of range. Robin falls.

WILL SCARLET

Atishoo, Atishoo. We all
fall down. Beg for mercy,
rich man.

ROBIN

I beg of no man. Which of you
scum has guts enough to face
me man to man?

VOICE (O/S)

Yeah, bollocks, mate.

Robin looks up... I mean UP! A towering figure. Seven feet of grinning, muscled brute. The giant extends a vice that passes for a hand. Hauls Robin to his feet. His eyes twinkle with merriment. His whole body shakes when he laughs, which is often.

JOHN LITTLE

Who are ya, m'old cock?

ROBIN

Er... Robin...

He pauses, checking the faces of the angry peasants.

ROBIN

...Hood. Robin Hood. Who are you?

JOHN LITTLE

John Little. Bestman o' the woods.

ROBIN

Bestman? You lead this rabble?

WILL SCARLET

We waste time. Tax him.

ROBIN

Tax? For what?

WILL SCARLET

For passage through Sherwood.

ROBIN

I will pay no tax. Besides, I have
nothing but my cloak and my sword.

WILL SCARLET

A man who travels with two servants
and claims he's without money, is
either a fool or a liar.

Grabbing Robin, Little shakes him like a doll. Something
CLINKS. Robin's father's medallion. Laughing heartily, Little
rips it from Robin's neck and tosses it to Scarlet.

WILL SCARLET

And this one is a liar.
(he bites the metal)
Ahah! Gold!

The men CHEER. John snatches the medallion back from Will.

ROBIN

That is sacred to me.

JOHN LITTLE

Sacred to us too, mush.
This here'll feed us for a
bloomin' month.

Robin draws his sword.

ROBIN

You will have to fight me for it.

JOHN LITTLE

I'd love to, mate.

He grins hugely. A boy pushes his way through the throng.

WULF (to John)

Wait, father! I know him.

ROBIN

This man is your father?
Tell him how I saved your hide
from the Sheriff's soldiers.
That deserves some gratitude,
I believe.

He reaches for the medallion. John pulls it away.

JOHN LITTLE

Naw ya don't, laddie.

WILL SCARLET

You must be Robin of Locksley.
The blackguard who abandoned us
to Nottingham's plundering.

WULF

Be careful, father. He fights
like a demon. He walloped six o'
Sheriff's men?

JOHN LITTLE

Is that so?

Another grin. Licking his lips in anticipation, he lunges for
Robin's wrist. Wrenches the sword free. Bends it into a pretzel.

ROBIN

Aslan!

Aslan shrugs. Robin swings a fist into the giant's gut. John
doesn't flinch. Hoists Robin off the ground with one arm.
Cannonballs the other fist into Robin's stomach. Robin folds,

WILL SCARLET

Oh dear! The little rich boy
is lost for words. Thanks
for the taxes, Locksley.

JOHN LITTLE

And for the laughs.

The woodsmen find this hysterical. They disappear into
the trees. Will administers one final kick before leaving.
Robin staggers to his feet. Glares furiously at Aslan.

ROBIN

Son of an Arab whore! Once again
your assistance was invaluable.

ASLAN

You seemed more in danger of losing
your pride than your life.

DUNCAN

I recognized some of the voices. Many
were from your father's farms.

ASLAN

Your avenging army, my friend.

ROBIN

That rabble?

ASLAN

All they need is a leader.

ROBIN

They have a leader. A very
large one.

ASLAN
Defeat him and they will
follow you.

ROBIN
Allah has taken your brains.

DUNCAN
I hear the voice of a spoiled
child, Master Robin. I suggest
you cease your brave talk of
revenge and flee to the north.

ROBIN
You too? You expect me to fight
that behemoth?

DUNCAN
Your father would expect you
to act like a man.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

A large tree trunk spans a swift-flowing river. The ragged band
of woodsmen approach the makeshift bridge. Stop in their tracks.
Robin stands on the bridge, brandishing a long wooden staff.

ROBIN
This is my bridge. No one
crosses without paying tax.

JOHN LITTLE
Just bugger off, mate, huh?

ROBIN
If you wish to cross, it will cost
you a gold medallion.

JOHN LITTLE
Ain't I hurt you a bloody nuff for
one day?

WILL SCARLET
If he's in a hurry to end his
mortal misery, help him.

ROBIN
You don't have the courage to
face me again, John Little? Or
should I call you "Little John"?

John grabs a hefty gnarled staff. Strides to the bridge.

JOHN LITTLE
Alright, m'old cock. You wanna
nuther good wallopin'?

His confidence melting, Robin glances back at Duncan and Aslan, who grins like a fan at a boxing match. John storms at Robin. Staffs THRASH. Driven back, Robin connects a blow on John's foot.

The giant is off balance. Robin follows up. Lands a couple to the ribs. John responds with heavy swings, which Robin blocks deftly. Back and forth, blow for blow, all blocked. John chuckles with every swing. Enjoying the time of his life.

Their staffs lock. It's strength against strength. Robin is no match. With one mighty thrust, John hurtles him into the stream. The woodsmen CHEER loudly. Aslan watches impassively.

Robin scrambles back onto the bridge. John waits, grinning.

JOHN LITTLE
Lil' wet behind the ears, mate?

WILL SCARLET
Don't fool with him. Get him!

John charges. Robin fends him off, gets in some shots of his own. John swings in a giant arc. Robin ducks. John loses balance and falls to his knees. Robin allows him time to right himself.

John comes at him again, pummeling. Wood splinters from the impact. Brute force versus agility. Agility is beginning to prevail, when Robin's staff splits in two.

JOHN LITTLE
Swimmin' time again, ol' chum.

The coup de grace. Lands heavily. Robin teeters. Falls. Disappears under the foaming water... does not re-emerge. John waits. The spectators rush to the bank. No sign.

JOHN LITTLE
Bloomin' shame. 'E were a brave 'un.

Suddenly Robin arcs up out of the water. His hands clamp onto John's ankles. Robin heaves with all his might. John topples headfirst into the water. Surfaces in panic.

JOHN LITTLE
Help! Cain't bloody swim.

He submerges again. Robin pulls his head above water.

ROBIN
Do you yield?

The terrified giant SPUTTERS. Goes under again, flailing with arms and legs. Robin holds his head just above the surface.

ROBIN
Do you yield?

JOHN LITTLE
Yes!

ROBIN
Good. Now put your feet down.

John struggles, then his feet hit bottom... The water only reaches his chest.

JOHN LITTLE
I'll be buggered.

ROBIN
Pay me the tax.

A tense pause while all wait for Little's reaction.

JOHN LITTLE
Robin Hood, ya got balls o' solid rock.

He hands Robin back the medallion. Chuckling loudly, he swoops Robin up in his arms and carries him to the bank.

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - NIGHT

A bonfire CRACKLES. The woodsmen drink, eat, argue, and fight. A rabble. John passes Robin a jug.

LITTLE JOHN
Mead. Made it m'self.

ROBIN (drinks)
A fine brew, Little John.

He SPITS black objects from his mouth. Dead bees. John grins.

LITTLE JOHN
Real honey.

He takes the jug back. SNEEZES royally, spewing all over the brew. Oblivious, he hands the contaminated jug to Aslan.

ASLAN
With regrets, I decline.

LITTLE JOHN
An Englishman's mead not bleedin'
good enough for ya?

ASLAN
On the contrary. I thank you,
but my faith prevents me from
partaking in such enjoyments.

LITTLE JOHN
Your bloody loss, mate.

He swigs. Passes the jug on to Duncan, who drinks heartily.
Wulf cautiously approaches Robin.

LITTLE JOHN
What is it, boy? Speak up!

WULF
I wanna thankee, Lord Locksley.
I owes ya m' life.

ROBIN
You owe me nothing, Wulf. I am
glad I chanced by in time to help.

LITTLE JOHN
C'mon, lad, drink! 'Twill
put hair on your bloomin' chest.

Wulf tries the brew. The impact is instant. He turns green and runs.
His father cracks up.

ROBIN
Tell me about your men, John.

John points to a short fellow with the build of a tree trunk.

LITTLE JOHN
This stumpy one 'ere's David o'
Doncaster. We calls 'im Bull.

ROBIN
How do you come by the name, Bull?

BULL
'Cuz o' my size, Sire.

ROBIN
Because you are short?

BULL
Nay. 'Cuz I be so long.

Proudly, he starts to pull down his pants.

ROBIN
No, Bull. Save it for the ladies.

Drunken LAUGHTER. Robin turns to the next man at the fireside.

ROBIN
Your name, friend?

The man's bald pate blushes scarlet as he tries to respond, but he stutters too badly to get out a comprehensible word.

LITTLE JOHN
That be Hal Brownwell, but the
lads calls 'im Hal Hiccup.

The others make HICCUP and BELCHING sounds, and crack up at Hal's embarrassment. Hal strikes out angrily at his tormentors.

ROBIN
Hold! Hal, you have the face and
hands of a farmer. I wager you are
a strong and honest man, and I'd be
glad to have you at my side in a fight.
The next man who makes light of you
will have me to answer to.

There is MURMURING around the group, but no one elects to try it.

ROBIN
How is it there are so many of you
in hiding?

LITTLE JOHN
We're outlaws. Got prices on our
'eads, every man jack. Blasted
Sheriff says we owes 'im taxes.

ROBIN
How do you fare?

LITTLE JOHN
We get by, I reckon.

ROBIN
While the Sheriff steals your
land and your families starve?

LITTLE JOHN
What in bloody blazes'd ya
have us do?

ROBIN
Your ghosts will only keep his
men at bay so long, my friend.
Soon the Sheriff will hunt you down
and hang you. You must fight back.

LITTLE JOHN
We show as much as a toe outside
the forest, they'll slaughter us
like bleedin' sheep.

ROBIN
We must organize. Win by guile.

LITTLE JOHN
"We?" Ya lookin' to join us, matie?

ROBIN
No. To lead you.

WILL SCARLET
Ha! I would never be led by the
son of a druid.

ROBIN
There are many here who knew my
father to be a kind and generous man.
I doubt that in their hearts they
believe him capable of such a horror.

MURMURS of agreement from around the fire. Robin turns to Will.

ROBIN
What is your name, friend?

WILL SCARLET
Count me not a friend, Locksley.

LITTLE JOHN
Stuff a flippin' cork in it, Will.
The man's our guest.

Will gets up. Angrily pushes his way out of the group.

LITTLE JOHN
That there's Will Scarlet. Pay 'im no
'eed. 'E's full o' piss and wind.

ROBIN
He is right to distrust me. I am
a rich man's son. I have done no honest
labor. But today I am as poor as any
of you. Nottingham has stolen all
that I own. And when I killed Gisborne's
men, I too became an outlaw.

LITTLE JOHN
Ya're full o' bloody wind an' all,
mate. This 'ere load o' rubbish agin
the Sheriff's bloomin' army? Ya must
be bloody jokin'.

ROBIN
We can win. And I believe we will.

LITTLE JOHN
Ya're a daft bugger, Robin Hood, but
ya're a brave 'un, I'll give ya that.
Drink up, laddie, cuz tomorrow ya mayn't
be so lucky! Tomorrow I shall best ya
an' crack that blasted noble head in two.

LAUGHING loudly, he throws back his head for a long draught of mead.

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP - SUNRISE

A steady trickle of rain DRIPS from leaves onto the nose of the sleeping Saracen. He wakes, CURSING. All around him the woodsmen lie on the forest floor, covered with rags and hides. COUGHING and SNEEZING. A sorry mess. Robin sits, brooding.

ASLAN (gloomily)
I have led you wrong. This is
no army. These men live like dogs.

ROBIN
English dogs. They can learn.

ASLAN
Learn what? To build kennels?

He sullenly stalks away. Robin shakes his head. Aslan is right. He rouses Duncan, who is asleep at his side. The old man GROANS awake, holding his head. Seriously hung over.

ROBIN
Too much mead, old friend.
What day is it?

DUNCAN
Sunday, I believe.

ROBIN
Good. Do they still give alms
to the poor at the mass?

DUNCAN
They do. These days the need for
mercy is greater than ever.

ROBIN
Then I must ask you a favor.

EXT. ROAD TO NOTTINGHAM - DAY

Duncan walks alone, with the aid of his staff. Body stooped, clothes ragged, a pathetic figure. Ahead is the main gate to the walled city of Nottingham.

Fresh horse manure. A man's hand reaches into it and spreads it over his clothes. And his face - Robin, dressed as Duncan.

EXT. CITY GATE - DAY

Robin taps his way through the CROWD. Past the piercing stare of the armored GUARD at the gate.

GUARD
Hey, you!

Robin keeps going. A hand clasps his shoulder. Spins him round.

GUARD
Do I know you?

Robin gazes into space, trying to look blind. The guard SNIFFS his soiled hand.

GUARD
My god, you stink!

ROBIN
Pardon my blindness, sir.
I'm always falling down.

GUARD
Yeech! Get away from me.

He launches a kick in Robin's rear. Robin hobbles away, hiding a smile. The guard tries to wipe off his hand on the wall.

INT. NOTTINGHAM CATHEDRAL - DAY

Jesus hangs from the cross. A magnificent stained glass window. In the ornate pulpit, the BISHOP OF HEREFORD, bedecked in ermine.

BISHOP
We beseech thy blessing, Lord, on
all your people, but most especially
on our noble Lord Nottingham. Grant
him the wisdom to guide and protect
our glorious city.

Nottingham and Gisborne sit piously among the congregation of NOBLES and wealthy MERCHANTS.

BISHOP

Grant him also the strength to bring
to justice the lawless men who
threaten its safety. Help him to
stamp out the curse of the dread
Druids who would seize from us our
children, even as wolves steal the
lambs from their mothers.

The rear of the church. Standing crushed together, the poor and
afflicted. Old and young. Starving children. Among them, Robin.

The sermon ends. As the nobles file out, the poor are galvanized.
Begging hands reach out.

VARIOUS

Alms! Have mercy, Milady.
Pity, fine sir. For my baby. etc.

The rich drop a few mites, sparking a mad scramble. Church
OFFICIALS roughly keep order. Marian passes some coins to the
MOTHER of a small child. A hand grabs her wrist.

ROBIN

Alms for a blind man. For one
who cannot see your beauty.

MARIAN (recognizing him)

This is dangerous.

ROBIN

So you care for my safety?

MARIAN

No, for mine. I do not wish
to be seen with an outlaw.

ROBIN

Under the Sheriff's law, that's
a badge of pride.

MARIAN

He's put a price on your head.

ROBIN

How much?

MARIAN

A hundred gold pieces.

ROBIN

Is that all? I have not
annoyed him enough. Soon he
will offer ten thousand.

MARIAN

For ten thousand I would turn
you in myself.

(glances back at the Sheriff)
Nottingham is mounting an army.

ROBIN

How do you know?

MARIAN

He has rounded up every blacksmith
in the county. He has them holed up
in the castle making swords and armor.

ROBIN

What is he planning?

MARIAN

I don't know, but there's no
limit to the man's ambitions.
(the Sheriff heads towards them)
Go!

ROBIN

If you need me, I will be with
the woodsmen. Send for me as
"Robin Hood"

MARIAN

Robin! Do something for me.

ROBIN

What?

MARIAN

Take a bath.

ROBIN

Care to join me?

With a grin, he slips into the crowd as Nottingham arrives.

NOTTINGHAM

You shine like the sun, my lady.

He raises her hand, as he did the girl's in the castle. Kisses it.

NOTTINGHAM

You have been meeting with
young Robin of Locksley.
(She tries to hide her shock)
My cousin tells me the knave
deprived you of some horses.

MARIAN (recovering)
Yes. A most disagreeable experience.

NOTTINGHAM
I deeply regret it, and I promise
you he will be brought to justice.
For subjecting you to such treatment,
I will hang him from the walls with
his own entrails.

That gleam of insanity. Robin watches from a distance.

MARIAN
I would like to see that, my lord.

The Sheriff places his hand possessively on her shoulder.

NOTTINGHAM
My dear, a woman of your refinement
is not safe living alone. If you
would consent to bring your household
within the city walls, I could give
your needs my most personal attention.

MARIAN
I thank you, Lord Nottingham, from the
heart, but for now I prefer to stay
in my family's ancestral home. My cousin,
King Richard, will be deeply moved to hear
of your concern for my welfare.

NOTTINGHAM
Alas, the King has many enemies both abroad
and at home. I fear for his safe return.

MARIAN
Fear not, my dear Sheriff. He will
return. When he does, he will wish to
reward his faithful subjects.

The Sheriff smiles sourly and takes his leave. Marian deflates
with relief. The Sheriff walks alone towards a side door.

BEGGAR
Alms, my lord.

Nottingham makes to shove the man aside. With a swift move, the
beggar grabs the Sheriff in a headlock. Slides Nottingham's own
dagger to his throat and drags him out of sight.

ROBIN/BEGGAR
A hundred crowns, Sheriff?
You insult me.

Nottingham starts to struggle. Robin draws blood.

ROBIN
Remember young Robin of Locksley,
Sheriff? Meet Robin Hood. Your
nemesis. Your avenging angel.

NOTTINGHAM
If you kill me, you will hang.

ROBIN
If I kill you, I will hang happy.

NOTTINGHAM
What do you want?

ROBIN
I want to give you a chance.
A chance you do not deserve.
A chance to right your wrongs.

NOTTINGHAM
I'm listening.

ROBIN
From this day forward you will cease
to tax my people. You will renounce
the charges against my father, and
you will return his lands to me.

NOTTINGHAM
Why should I?

ROBIN
Because for every harm you do,
I swear by God I shall visit
on you threefold in return.

NOTTINGHAM
Empty words.

ROBIN
I am here with a blade at your
throat. As long as I live, you
will always know that I could be
here again.

A YELL from across the church. Gisborne has spotted them.
Robin digs the knife a little deeper.

ROBIN
Your answer?

NOTTINGHAM
Never, fool.

ROBIN
Then it will begin.

Gisborne YELLS orders. Robin hurls Nottingham against the wall.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM CATHEDRAL - DAY

Robin runs to the courtyard and leaps on the Sheriff's horse, which is held by a stunned GROOM. He rides through the busy marketplace. A CROSSBOWMAN tracks him. A sure shot.

Marian spots the danger. She fakes being tripped and stumbles into the bowman. His bolt flies harmlessly into the air.

MARIAN (innocently)
Please excuse my clumsiness.

Robin charges for the city gate. As he passes, he kicks the guard who hassled him into the wall.

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP - DAY

Men gather around as Robin dismounts, admiring the horse.

ROBIN
A personal loan from the Sheriff.

ASLAN (furious)
You should not have left without me, Englishman.

ROBIN
How so? You have not raised a finger to protect me.

ASLAN
Before I had a choice.

ROBIN
It was my choice to do this alone.

ASLAN
A foolish risk. If you had been killed, I would be cursed for eternity for failing to fulfil my pledge.

ROBIN
Aslan, if I didn't know better, I would swear you were worried about me.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM CATHEDRAL

The Sheriff maniacally spits out orders to Gisborne.

NOTTINGHAM

Starve them out. Slaughter their livestock.
I want to see Locksley's own people
fighting each other to bring him to us.

GISBORNE

I swear he will not live to
see the next full moon.

EXT. HAMLET - DAY

A SQUEALING HOG is loaded onto a wagon. SOLDIERS round up the
livestock. An old FARMER protests.

FARMER

Go' bless ya, sir. Leave us the sow.
She's with young 'uns. The next
litter'll feed us thru the winter.

SOLDIER

You've heard of Robin Hood?

FARMER

Yes, sir.

The soldier brutally kicks the old man to the ground.

SOLDIER

Then pray he is brought to us
before winter.

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP - DAY

A trail of refugees. WOMEN and CHILDREN carry their belongings
into camp. Wulf runs to greet his mother and siblings.
A contingent of woodsmen confronts Robin.

WILL SCARLET

You brought this misery on us,
Locksley. We can barely feed ourselves.

LITTLE JOHN

Sheriff hasn't left us a bloody
pot to piss in.

ROBIN

Then we shall take from him and
his rich friends.

This provokes a barrage of protests. The men are angry.

WILL SCARLET

Brave talk, Locksley. I say we
take the rich boy in.

MURMURS of general agreement.

ROBIN

Will, do you think the Sheriff will
give everything back after I am gone?

WILL SCARLET

He will give us the reward,
and our pardons.

ROBIN

Alright, Will. You can take me in on
one condition. You must fight me. You may
use the Sheriff's horse and arm yourself
as you please. I will fight on foot. Unarmed.

WILL SCARLET

Unarmed?

ROBIN

.. If you lose, you will accept me as your leader.
If you win, you may take me in. Dead or alive.

WILL SCARLET

Dead, Locksley.

CUT TO:

Hands tighten a girth. Will confidently jokes with his cronies.
Woodsmen form a primitive circle of spectators. Little John and
his wife, Fanny, keep to themselves, while Wulf openly talks with
Robin, Aslan and Duncan. Robin is stripped to the waist, his
muscled skin ravaged with scars.

ASLAN

This man has true purpose.
He means to kill you.

DUNCAN

And you have given him the means.

WULF

Will is ruthless, Robin. Guard your back.

ROBIN

I am grateful for your concern, friends,
but I have to prove to them it is
possible to overcome unequal odds.

(shouts)

I am ready, Will.

Will bends, as if checking the horse's legs. Secretly grabs a handful of sand. Swings into the saddle and digs in his heels.

Closing in, Will flings the sand in Robin's eyes. Robin clutches his hands to his face, blinded. Will spins back to the attack.

His sword SLASHES. Reacting to the sound, Robin rolls aside. The men CHEER like a big fight crowd.

Robin's POV is blurred. Ducking the blade, he grabs Will's arm. A blow glances off his shoulder.

Robin falls to his knees, still blinded. Will rides right at him, to trample him. Robin scrambles away. Will wheels his horse. A flashing hoof grazes Robin's chest.

Robin leaps to his feet and YELLS at the top of his lungs. Panicked, the horse rears, WHINNYING wildly. Will struggles to stay in the saddle. Loses his sword.

Robin seizes the moment and runs to a water trough. Douses his face. Yells at Will.

ROBIN
Come on, you little pisspot.
Do your worst!

Will grabs a spear from a bystander. Robin stands his ground. Will lunges, Robin sidesteps.

ROBIN
The horse is smarter than
you are, Will.

Some of the men LAUGH. Will is incensed. Robin ducks and weaves, easily evading Will's repeated charges. Robin ducks right under the horse's belly.

ROBIN
Here, Will! You aim like
a girl, Will!

Will stabs wildly, more and more frustrated. Laughter spreads, as Robin plays hide and seek around the horse's legs. Grabbing the end of the spear, he clowns a tug of war.

Enraged, Will strains and tries to kick Robin away. Suddenly, Robin lets go. Unbalanced, Will flies backwards off his mount.

Robin snatches the spear and raises it over his fallen adversary. The crowd falls silent. Robin strikes. The point quivers in the ground below Will's crotch. Will wriggles in terror. Impaled, his pants rip open.

ROBIN
Thank the Lord you are not
endowed like Bull.

The crowd is convulsed with laughter. Robin catches his breath.
Does not see Will, who grabs a heavy staff and runs at him.
A strong hand grasps Will's arm as he is about to strike.

LITTLE JOHN
Bollocks, Will. Jus' bugger
off, eh?

Overpowered, Will relents. With a defiant glance, he skulks away.

LITTLE JOHN
Ya got us by the short and
'curlies, Robin Hood. Now let's
hear what ya got to bleedin' say.

Robin scans the faces. He has their attention.

ROBIN
Nottingham has taken from us everything
we own. Now we are going to start taking
from him.

LITTLE JOHN
'Ow in bloody blazes are we gonna do that?

ROBIN
We are going to tax him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

AUTUMN. The forest is a mosaic of green, gold, orange, and red.
A GIANT EYE in a circle of glass. Aslan, his telescope raised.

SARACEN
Here they come.

ROBIN
How many?

ASLAN
Two wagons. Twenty escort.

ROBIN
Twenty? They usually have five.

He grabs the telescope... a phalanx of mounted SOLDIERS, a cart
loaded with barrels, and a tax wagon. The wagon is an armored
box on wheels, with crossbow slits in the side. Guy of Gisborne
commands the escort.

ROBIN
This is no ordinary convoy.

Bull calls up from below, where a ragged group of woodsmen lies nervously in ambush.

BULL
'ow many?

ROBIN
Er, about ten.
(then, to Aslan)
Why scare them? They can't
count anyway.

ASLAN
And they call me the Barbarian.

ROBIN
Let's go.

Together they run down the hill, keeping low.

Gisborne eyes the forest. The beer cart is steered by a fat red-faced FRIAR, raucously singing hymns and quaffing from a jug, which he repeatedly dips into one of the barrels.

Arrows WHISTLE in. The Friar YELLS and drops his jug. A soldier is hit. At the forest edge, four woodsmen reload their longbows. Dressed in green, their faces camouflaged.

The mounted soldiers charge them. The woodsmen run into the trees. As the horsemen close in, the runners leap into a trench. Lift up matted screens of brush and grass. It's as if they disappeared. The soldiers slash wildly at the thick screens.

More arrows fly. More soldiers fall. The others spin in confusion, trying to discern the enemy. More woodsmen break from cover. Run down a narrow path. Gisborne urges his men to pursue. They ride in single file, beating their way through the tangled branches.

The runners dive into the trees, as other men haul on ropes, raising a giant screen in the soldiers' path. The horses swerve, on the edge of a twenty-foot drop to the river gorge. Momentum carries many of them over the cliff.

BACK ON THE ROADWAY

Robin and Aslan swing down from the trees onto the tax wagon. Kick down the two drivers and take the reins, steering the wagon off the road. The archers inside are unable to fire at them.

Little John leaps onto the beer cart, sending the Friar hurtling back among the barrels. The Friar slams his head and drops unconscious. John whips the horse, driving the cart after Robin. Another camouflage screen is lifted into place, covering their route.

Gisborne races back to the road... the wagons are gone. He rides frantically back and forth. Searching and CURSING.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Robin climbs onto the tax wagon's roof. Angry SHOUTS from inside.

ROBIN
Surrender your weapons. I give
you my word you shall go free.

In answer, a swordblade jabs up through the roof, near his feet.

ROBIN
Ah, I feared as much.

He signals to Aslan, who steers the tax wagon into the river. Water floods in through the slits. Inside, panic. Drowning rats.

The bowmen scramble out. What they see stops them dead. Both banks are men in green, longbows aimed directly at them.

CUT TO:

SPARKS. An axe pounds into the lock of a strong box. The lock snaps. Little John pries open the lid. Reacts in astonishment. The trunk is filled to the brim with glittering gold coins. The woodsmen press around. CHEERS of celebration.

LITTLE JOHN (awestruck)
I'll be buggered.

ROBIN
This treasure had a purpose.
We must find out what.

He turns at the sound of a brawl from the Friar's cart. The Friar is at the bottom of a struggling heap of bodies.

ROBIN
Get off him. He's a man
of the cloth.

Robin drags the men off. The Friar clammers to his feet. Around him are strewn battered and winded woodsmen.

FRIAR

The lord's blessing on you, kind Sir. These sinners were attempting to steal these libations destined for the monks of St. Catherine's.

He indicates his cargo of barrels.

ROBIN

It appears to me, reverend Friar, that many of the libations have found their way into your own esteemed person.

Ignoring him, the Friar mounts the cart.

FRIAR

A thousand pardons, Sir, but duty beckons. I must hasten on.

ROBIN (grabbing the bridle)

A moment, my reverend friend. You travel with poor company when you travel with Nottingham's soldiers.

BULL

Aye, tax him.

This sparks a chorus of comments."

ROBIN

My men are thirsty and have much to celebrate.

FRIAR

Lord bless me, Sir, are these your men? I had mistook them for common thieves. Kindly step aside.

ROBIN

Surely the Lord has the charity to spare a few barrels to good Christian men.

The Friar relents, loosening his grip on the reins.

FRIAR

Well, Sir, if you wish them to share in the good lord's brew...

Casually reaching under the seat, he pulls out a club. Smites Robin with it.

FRIAR

...you must best me for it.

Robin staggers. The Friar whips up the horse. Dazed, Robin grabs for the fat man's leg. Gets a holy sandal full in the face.

FRIAR
Giddyup, nag!

The Friar's horse, as obese as his driver, slowly raises his head from the grass and ambles forward. Robin runs after them and dives at the Friar, toppling him from the cart.

ROBIN
You leave when I say.

Scrambling to his feet, the Friar glances skyward.

FRIAR
Protect me, Lord.

He sweeps his foot, knocking Robin's legs out from under him. Hurls his full body weight on top of him. Whooomf!

FRIAR
Yield!

He bounces on Robin's stomach. Robin can barely breathe. The woodsmen are enjoying the spectacle.

FRIAR
Confess that Friar Tuck is
a better, holier, and braver
man than thou art, knave.

ROBIN
Never! Whoomf!

FRIAR
Yield, I say! Yield to Friar Tuck.

Desperate, Robin bites the Friar's leg. Tuck HOWLS. Robin extricates himself, grabs for a weapon. Smashes the Friar's head with his drinking jug.

ROBIN
Yield yourself!

He dives onto the Friar and hammers his head into the ground.

ROBIN
Yield to Robin Hood.

Tuck holds up a hand in surrender. Robin eases off.

FRIAR (feeling his head)
Thank you, Lord, for teaching
me humility.

ROBIN
Well, Friar Tuck. We have need of an
honest man of God, to minister to these
men and their families. What do you say?

The Friar struggles to his feet. He reviews the motley faces of
his potential flock. His eyes light on the grinning Saracen.

FRIAR
I'd rather roast in Hell.

He punches Robin in the gut.

CUT TO:

Friar Tuck, strapped into the traces, pulls the beer cart. Sweating
profusely, grunting with strain. His horse contentedly follows.

ROBIN
Giddyup, Friar.

He flicks the reins, steering the cart into camp. Women and
children rush to greet their men. Jeer the roped soldier-
prisoners. The Friar checks out his flock. A WOMAN curtsies,
another crosses herself, CHILDREN touch his robe in wonder.

ROBIN
What do you say now, Tuck?
Here are the meek of the Earth.

Tuck surveys the hopeful, hungry faces. The little hamlet of
half-built huts. He folds his hands in a moment of prayer.

FRIAR
The Lord moves in mysterious ways.
I accept.

ROBIN
You will not regret it.

FRIAR
Aye, but you may.

CUT TO:

A blazing fire. Deer carcasses roast. Tuck's barrels supply
the refreshment. Robin and Aslan pass out coins to each family.

ROBIN
Buy yourself a new sow, Stephen.

FARMER
Thankee, Robin.

Little John and Bull approach. John indicates the two prisoners
roped to a nearby tree.

LITTLE JOHN
Cain't get a bleedin' squeak outa
'em, Rob.

BULL
They'd be spittin' it out good
if they'd knowed anythin'.

LITTLE JOHN
Reckon the Cap'n knows summat;
Rob, but stubborn ol' cocker 'e is.

ASLAN
Perhaps it is time for some
heathen persuasion.

CUT TO:

The Captain of the soldiers stares up at Robin defiantly.

CAPTAIN
Spare your breath. I know nothing.

ROBIN (reasonable)
I believe you. But this Arab here,
he's got it into his barbarian brain
that you know a whole lot more than
nothing. And when he gets like this,
he's very hard to reason with.

With a hair-raising WAR CRY, Aslan leaps into view. Stripped to the waist, brandishing his scimitar. The Captain tries to back away. Robin tries to restrain Aslan, is hurled aside. Snarling, drooling at the mouth, Aslan explores the Captain's body with his hands. A butcher checking meat.

ROBIN
I strongly advise you to talk.
He hasn't eaten in weeks.

CAPTAIN (rising terror)
What does he want?

ROBIN
You.

CAPTAIN
For Godsakes, get him off me!

ROBIN (very deliberately)
No, Aslan... not this one, Aslan.
...how about this other one?...
fatter, yes... more meat.

The other soldier, who definitely has more flesh on the bone, is struck dumb with horror, as Aslan turns his attention to him. With one swing of his sword, Aslan slices through the man's ropes. Drags him to his feet. Little John runs over.

LITTLE JOHN (urgent)
No, Robin, no! They be God-fearin' men.

ROBIN
I cannot stop him, John. Besides, if they will not tell what they know, then they must pay the price.

LITTLE JOHN
Kill 'em aye, but not like this. 'Tain't Christian.

Blood-curdling SCREAMS from behind the wagon where Aslan has dragged his victim. The Captain's face pales. Then silence.

The demented Arab slowly reappears. Blood drips from his lips. He munches the flesh from a long bone, on the end of which is the soldier's glove... the man's arm. Turning to Robin, Aslan SHOUTS in Arabic and gesticulates wildly at the Captain.

CAPTAIN
What does he say?

ROBIN
Well, roughly, he says that he doesn't care for the way your friend tastes, and he wants you.

CAPTAIN
No, God, no! I'll talk. Just keep him away. Keep him away!

BEHIND THE WAGON -

Bull holds the other prisoner, muffling the man's mouth and trying to suppress his own laughter. Beside them lies a large chunk of venison. The man is unharmed, except that he's missing a glove.

INT. WOODSMAN'S HUT - NIGHT

The walls shake with Little John's laughter.

LITTLE JOHN
Sure changed the color of 'is britches, didn't 'e?

ROBIN
Thanks to our cannibal friend.

Aslan repeats his wildman act, munching on a chunk of venison.

LITTLE JOHN
Gonna laugh my bloody balls off.

BULL
Why'd the Sheriff be sendin' gold
north o' the border?

ROBIN
To hire mercenaries. The Celts
are savage tribesmen, trained
to kill from birth.

LITTLE JOHN
Aye, the Romans built a bleedin'
great wall to keep 'em out.

BULL
What does 'e want wi 'em?

ROBIN
Since he also has every smith in
the county working in the castle, we
can assume he is planning a little war.

LITTLE JOHN
Agin' who?

ASLAN
England.

INT. CASTLE ARMORY - NIGHT

Sparks. Smoke. Sweat. The Sheriff inspects his weapon factory.
His eyes glint with the reflections of the smithy's fires..

A door CRASHES open behind him. FOOTSTEPS. Paying no heed, he
draws a sword from a furnace. Its blade white-hot.

GISBORNE
We were ambushed. In Sherwood Forest.

Nottingham tests the sword against an anvil.

NOTTINGHAM
Spanish steel, cousin. So much
stronger than our native blades.
Any losses?

GISBORNE
All the men are gone.

NOTTINGHAM

Yet again you are the sole
survivor, cousin? Interesting.
And the gold?

GISBORNE

Well, it er... disappeared.

The Sheriff looks at Gisborne for the first time.

NOTTINGHAM

Robin Hood?

GISBORNE

They were woodsmen, dressed in green.

NOTTINGHAM

Robin Hood.

He places a hand reassuringly on his cousin's shoulder.

NOTTINGHAM

Cousin, we must be strong.
We cannot allow this outlaw
to make fools of us.

Without warning, he drives the blade into Gisborne's belly.

NOTTINGHAM

And I cannot allow a lieutenant
to fail me.
(turning to the horrified smithy)
It is indeed fine steel.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

A small procession. Tuck drives his cart, Bull the tax wagon. Both vehicles laden with supplies. Wulf and Hal pass out flour, chickens, blankets, clothing to the VILLAGERS. Their weapons are prominently displayed. Tuck swigs from a jar, passes it to an OLD VILLAGER.

TUCK

God bless you, sir.

VILLAGER

An' Go' bless Robin 'Ood, friar.
They says as 'ow none o' the
Sheriff's cronies dare go within
miles o' Sherwood for fear o'
havin' their pockets pinched.

TUCK

Ah, the good Lord giveth and the
good Lord taketh away.

OLD WOMAN
Unless Robin Hood takes it first!

LAUGHTER. The procession passes two of the Sheriff's mounted
SOLDIERS. They glumly watch as Tuck raises his jug in greeting.

TUCK
Good morrow, brothers.

EXT. FOREST POOL - DAY

Water, sparkling with sunlight. BURSTS, as Robin dives in naked.
He luxuriates in the cool water. ...HOOFBEATS. He attempts to
hide... too late. Four horses emerge from the trees. Bull and
Hal, with Marian and her servant Sarah sandwiched between them.
Bull has a black eye. Marian jumps down.

MARIAN (to Robin)
How dare you!

ROBIN
Good morning, Lady Marian.

In response, she starts pelting him with stones.

MARIAN
You send men to drag me from my home
in the middle of the night, like
some slave girl? Is this the way
the famous Robin Hood treats a lady?

ROBIN
Ah well... er, let me finish this
bath you wished me to take. Then
I'll explain.

MARIAN
I demand an explanation right now!

ROBIN
If you will be patient, I could
spare your propriety by...

MARIAN
I will decide when my propriety
is compromised.

ROBIN
As you wish.

He wades bare-ass naked out of the water towards her. She casts
a contemptuous look over his muscled body, glistening with water.

MARIAN

How dare you expose yourself to me?!

She slugs him. Robin stumbles backwards into the water. Bull grins, gesturing to Sarah and pointing to his own black eye.

BULL

The big 'un did the same to me.

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP - DAY

An arrow flies into a bull's eye, crudely marked on a tree. Little John lowers his crossbow, delighted at his shot.

LITTLE JOHN (to Wulf)

Right, m'lad. Let's see how close you can git to that bugger.

Wulf takes aim. His arrow slices clear through his father's arrow, splitting it in two. Little John slaps Wulf on the back and beckons everyone over.

LITTLE JOHN

Take a gander at this 'un, mates. Never seen nuthin' like it in my bloomin' life.

Robin leads Marian through the camp... the beginnings of a village-women doing laundry, kids playing, men practising archery and swordplay, others working on defenses, camouflaging a giant pit. Marian is impressed, but not about to admit it.

MARIAN

This better be damned important.

Robin leads her into a hut. Inside is a trove of captured loot - purses, jewelry, weaponry, fancy coats and... the treasure chest. At Robin's nod, Bull throws back the lid. Marian is speechless.

ROBIN

Nottingham robs the poor. We rob Nottingham and give back to the poor.

MARIAN

Do you think he's going to let you get away with all this? The man is without mercy. He will annihilate you.

ROBIN

Somebody has to take a stand.

MARIAN

You're taking a stand with the lives of these people. These young ones.

A beat. She checks the faces. Her eyes meet Robin's. Is there a hint of concern for him also?

MARIAN

What do you want from me?

ROBIN

Nottingham was sending this gold to buy reinforcements from the Celtic tribesmen. We need to warn King Richard.

MARIAN

Nottingham would not dare challenge the King.

ROBIN

The King is not in England to be challenged, is he? While he is away, he may lose his country.

(Marian masks her concern.)

You are Richard's cousin. You can get word to him. He would believe you.

MARIAN

Now you want me to participate in your folly?

A little girl approaches, holding a bouquet of wild flowers. Touched, Marian kneels to accept the offering.

CUT TO:

The bouquet protrudes from Marian's saddle. She is mounted, ready to go. Sarah giggles as she takes her leave of Bull.

ROBIN (to Marian)

I am sending Duncan with you. Give him some warm food and a real bed. I grow tired of his bellyaching.

DUNCAN

Hah! I have endured more hardship in my lifetime than any man here.

Robin laughs and speaks to Marian in a stage whisper.

ROBIN

Don't tell him I told you, but he may be useful to you. There is no one to whom I would rather entrust your safety.

MARIAN

Duncan, you are most welcome.

Taking the lead rein from Duncan's horse, she rides away.

ROBIN (calls after her)
Will you send word to the King?

MARIAN
I'll think about it.

INT. DUBOIS MANSION - DAY

A globule of red liquid. A signet ring. Marian seals a letter.

INT. BISHOP'S CASTLE - DAY

The letter is held in the pudgy, jeweled fingers of the Bishop of Hereford. A lavish office.

MARIAN
It is a personal matter, my lord,
but one of vital importance.

BISHOP
I understand, my dear lady.
This is my most trusted emissary.

He hands the letter to a solemn COURIER.

MARIAN
You will travel to France immediately.
You must give this directly into
the hands of the King, and him alone.

The courier bows in acknowledgement. Marian indicates Sarah.

MARIAN
My lady-in-waiting will accompany you.

Surprised, the courier glances at the Bishop.

BISHOP
My dear, I could not vouch for her
safety. The journey is fraught
with danger.

MARIAN
I appreciate your concern, my lord,
but Sarah is an accomplished rider.
I must insist that she goes along.

BISHOP (a beat)
As you wish.

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP -DAY

An informal council of war. Robin uses a stick in the dirt.

ROBIN

We have to be ready to move camp at any time. The only way we can be attacked is from the Nottingham Road. We hide lookouts in the trees, here and here. If they see soldiers, they shoot warning arrows. Whistles by day, fire by night.

Wulf runs up to Little John in panic.

WULF

Father! Come quick. Mother's dying.

INT. WOODSMEN'S HUT - DAY

Fanny Little writhes in agony. John rushes in. Tuck looks up from Fanny's side.

FRIAR

The child comes early.

Fanny SCREAMS. John kneels beside her, taking her head.

LITTLE JOHN

Hush, m'lass. Ya'll be fine.

FANNY

'S not like t'others, John.
Oh god, it pains me so.

LITTLE JOHN (angrily, to Tuck)

Ya're sittin' thar like a fat
sow. Help her, man, help her!

FRIAR

I am doing all I can.

Aslan appears in the doorway, with Robin. Whips back the blanket. Fanny's chest is covered with black squirming creatures.

ASLAN

By Allah, leeches!

He starts to pull the parasites off. Tuck jumps at him.

FRIAR

Get away from her!

Aslan pushes him away, continuing his work.

ASLAN
Blood is like air. If she loses
blood, she and the child will die.

John is paralyzed with confusion. Tuck appeals to Robin.

FRIAR
He lies. He is the devil's seed,
sent to lead us astray.

ASLAN
Fool, both the Bible and the Koran
instruct us to preserve life.

Tuck raises an arm to strike Aslan. Robin blocks the blow.
Aslan gently touches the mother's stomach.

ASLAN (soothing)
Your baby has not turned. It
cannot be born without help.

FRIAR
What do you know, you damned savage?

ASLAN (to John)
If you will allow me, I can help
her. It will not be without danger.

FRIAR
Do not listen to him! He will
kill her.

ASLAN
If you do not listen to me, she will
certainly die. And the child, too.

Fanny CRIES OUT. John looks to Robin, pleading for advice.

ROBIN
The good Friar has done all he
can. I suggest you let the Arab try.
(John is still undecided.)
If I am wrong, and they die, then
you may take my life.

John's eyes meet his wife's. She nods.

LITTLE JOHN
So be it.

FRIAR
Then it will be on your head.
I have warned you.

He storms out. All business, Aslan speaks to Wulf.

ASLAN
Bring me a needle, thread, water,
a skinning knife, and burning ashes.

Wulf runs to obey. John looks horrified. Robin eases him outside, then returns to Aslan's side. They whisper.

ROBIN
What are you going to do?

ASLAN
The child must be taken out by
the knife.

ROBIN
The knife?

ASLAN
I have seen it many times with horses.

ROBIN
Horses? By the Lord, what
are her chances?

ASLAN
After wasting so much blood...
not good.

ROBIN
Now you tell me!

Wulf runs back in. Aslan holds up a piece of wood.

ASLAN (to Fanny)
Are you ready? ...Bite down
on this... Robin, hold her steady.

He lifts the red-hot knife from the ashes..

OUTSIDE - Little John paces. Wulf comes out of the hut. Families hover and wait. From inside, muffled GROANS.

FRIAR
I tell you, the barbarian is
killing her.

John moves to the hut. Wulf restrains him.

INSIDE - The mother heaves, then drops.

ROBIN
Is she gone?

Aslan ignores him, keeps working over Fanny's body. Robin cannot watch... a WAIL! Aslan mutters something in awed Arabic.

ROBIN
What did you say?

Aslan holds up a bloody struggling infant.

ASLAN
It is a boy.

The mother revives. Aslan places the child on her breast.

ASLAN
Your son, my lady... Robin, hold her skin together while I sew her up.

He picks up the needle and thread. Robin's eyes turn to the woman's abdomen... He faints.

CUT TO:

Little John marches among the cheering families, holding his newborn child high for all to see. Tuck sits miserably to one side. Bloody and exhausted, Aslan appears at the hut door. Tuck jumps to his feet, drawing his knife.

Heads turn. Tense silence. Robin appears, unsteadily, behind Aslan. Watches, ready to intervene. Tuck stares at Aslan. Raises his blade... and slices down across his own wrist.

FRIAR
This day God has taught me
a fine lesson.

He hands Aslan the knife and extends his bloodied wrist.

FRIAR
I would be honored.

Aslan slices his own wrist. The two wrists clasp together in the universal sign of brotherhood. Everyone CHEERS.

FRIAR
You are a good man, my barbarian friend. We shall open a barrel together and I shall do my damndest to save your heathen soul..

ASLAN
Alas, I am not permitted...

FRIAR
Our God made this brew, brother.
I merely combined the ingredients.
Do you dare to insult his works?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

HOOVES fly along a track. Sarah and the courier. The courier reins in, Sarah draws alongside.

SARAH
What is wrong?

COURIER
My horse seems to be favoring
a foreleg.

Sarah leans down to look and the courier cudgels her across the neck. She falls from the saddle, unconscious.

INT. DUBOIS MANSION - MARIAN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Flickering candlelight. Marian is alone, reading. A sudden GUST extinguishes her candle. HAMMERING and SHOUTING from a distant part of the house. Unnerved, she calls out.

MARIAN
Who is there? Duncan!

INT. DUBOIS MANSION. KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Marian enters stealthily. A candle in one hand, a drawn dagger in the other. SOMETHING LEAPS AT HER! ...A cat, looking for scraps on the kitchen table. She SHOOS him down.

MARIAN
Off, Nicodemus. Go find mice.

She sighs with relief.. is GRABBED FROM BEHIND. A MASKED SOLDIER.

SOLDIER
We meet again.

He reveals a large scar on his wrist - removes his mask - the man who attacked her earlier. He prods her with his sword.

SOLDIER
Drop your blade.

MARIAN
You are still overmatched, soldier.

She drops the sword. He hurls her against the table. Lays his blade against her chest.

SOLDIER

You owe me favors, wench. Bare your breasts... or I will do it for you.

Resignedly, she raises a hand to loosen the string on her dress. With the other hand she reaches behind her, grabs a pepper bowl. Flips the contents into his face.

Screaming, he grabs his face. She reaches for her dagger. He slashes with his sword. She backs to the fireplace, grabs a spit of roasted chickens... DRIVES THE POINT CLEAN THROUGH HIS CHEST.

He stares in shock at his own blood pouring from the cooked fowls pinned to his breast... FOOTSTEPS... MASKED SOLDIERS converge from both sides of the house, dragging the SERVANTS. Duncan is shoved through the door.

DUNCAN

I am sorry, my lady. There were too many.

She stares at the invaders with studied calm.

MARIAN

Is there something you need, gentlemen?
I remember no masked ball on my calendar.

CUT TO:

An aerial shot. Flying low over treetops, over an expanse of green, intersected by brown roads and tracks. We are looking at a detailed scale model of Sherwood Forest in...

INT. CASTLE CHAMBER - NIGHT

The Sheriff and six BARONS are gathered around the model. These are the men who revealed their faces to Lord Locksley in the Druid ceremony. Nottingham toys with a white rat on his arm.

RED-HEAD BARON

Forget about Locksley. He is no threat.

NOTTINGHAM

How can we control all England if we cannot control our own county? The people are turning him into a hero.

GREYBEARD BARON

It is impossible to attack him in the forest. We have tried everything. He is cunning.

NOTTINGHAM

Then we will be more cunning.
I must be rid of him. We may not
be able to intercept his next
warning to the King.

Sounds of commotion outside. The door swings open. Framed in
the doorway is a colossus in black armor. His helmet is the head
of a dragon. He slowly raises the visor. Deep tribal scars on
his cheeks. Implacable ferocity in his eyes.

CELTIC CHIEFTAIN

I want the heads of the men who
stole my gold.

NOTTINGHAM

Welcome, sir. We were discussing
how to rid ourselves of those very
men. The outlaws who band with
Robin Hood.

REDHEAD BARON

My Lord Nottingham, I must protest.
It is a mistake to ally ourselves
with foreigners.

GREYBEARD BARON

What can these Celts do that
we cannot?

The Chieftain strides across to the fire. Grabs a burning log.
The baron backs away in fear. The log spits sparks as the
Chieftain raises it above his head... and drives it into his own
palm. He stares unblinking at the baron, holding the log to his
hand for a full three seconds.

An awed silence. Nottingham grins, delighted with the
demonstration. He deposits his white rat onto the model.

NOTTINGHAM

This rat Hood has hidden out
in the forest. He resists all our
assaults with traps and devices,
while he robs us blind. We must
bring him out and destroy him.

The rat has scurried into the shelter of the model trees. The
Chieftain watches impassively, then calmly touches the log to the
model. The trees ignite... the rat squeals in terror and runs.
The Chieftain cuts off its escape, setting fire to more trees...
again... and again. The Sheriff watches the flames, fascinated.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP - NIGHT

The campfire. Aslan SHRIEKS a war cry. Dervishes round the fire, swigging from a jug. Equally drunk, the Friar follows, HOWLING, mimicking him. Robin and the others watch in amusement. Tuck scoops another jug and hands it to Aslan.

FRIAR

Come you son of Saladin. A toast
to all of Jehovah's children.
The saved and the damned.

ASLAN

This must be a truly evil potion,
to make the soul feel this good.

He downs the entire jug in one long draught. Refills it.

ASLAN

Come, holy man. A toast to all
of Allah's children. The true
believers and the fat infidels.

Tuck laughs and drinks. Aslan sways and topples at the Friar's feet. Heaves up all over the holy sandals. Tuck looks at Robin.

FRIAR

How can these Arabs hold Jerusalem
when they can't even hold their brew?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST LANE - DAWN

A MASKED SOLDIER gallops along. Hurls a bundle to the ground.

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP - DAWN

The Friar and the Saracen lie head to head on the dewy grass. Tuck snores. Robin shakes Aslan, who grabs for his weapon. The hangover hits him like a mallet. He clutches his temples.

ROBIN

The dancing demon! Good morning.

ASLAN (wincing)

If it was Jehovah who created this
brew, he is truly wise. He built the
punishment into the crime.

An arrow WHISTLES into a tree. Robin reacts.

ROBIN

They need help.

EXT. FOREST LANE - DAY

Bull and Hal are crouched in the roadway, over a body. Robin runs up with Aslan. He kneels beside them. The body is Duncan. Robin clasps a dead hand... Silence. Fighting his emotions.

BULL

A bloke wearin' a mask o' the
druids rode by. Tossed 'im down.

ROBIN

Are you sure it was a druid mask?
(Bull nods.)
Damn them to hell! They must have
Marian. Do you know where they meet?

BULL

The Gregor Caves, I 'eard tell.

ASLAN

We will go there.

ROBIN

No! You stay here, dammit!
I will go alone.

ASLAN

You forget yourself. I am not
your servant.

ROBIN

Then be my friend. There are women
and children here in greater need
of your courage.

ASLAN (considers)

Take my eyes, then.

He hands Robin his telescope.

CUT TO:

SQUAWKING ominously, crows burst from the trees. Robin rides up the path to the caves that his father took. Checks the ground. Horse tracks. He dismounts, moves cautiously forward.

P.O.V. through the scope - the circle of stones. No one visible. Debris. Smoke rises from ashes. Remnants of a recent ceremony.

Robin climbs silently down the rocks into the stone circle. There is blood on the sacrificial altar. Through the opening of the cave, he spies a woman's form, lying face down.

ROBIN (under his breath)

Marian!

He runs forward. Turns the body over. Skin chalk-white from loss of blood... Sarah! A shadow falls across Robin. Before he can react, a cudgel stuns him into blackness.

INT. CAVE - DAY

ROBIN'S EYES - he wakes. Squints around him, the dark smoke-filled recesses of the caves. The walls weave. Eerie watery sounds, like the CRIES of drowning men. He tries to stand.

VOICE (O/S)
Robin!... Robin!

A figure in a flowing white robe. Angelic. Floating towards him... Marian. He tries to speak her name. Reaches out his hand.

MARIAN
Death is not to be feared, Robin.
Embrace it.

Her laugh ECHOES around the cave, as if hundreds of lost souls are laughing with her. Robin crawls away, covering his ears. Marian lifts his face to hers.

MARIAN
Drink this.

Weakly, Robin tries to push away the cup. Her hand grips his chin, forcing his mouth open.

MARIAN
Drink.

The liquid trickles over his lips. He tries to focus. Her features are blurred, her voice hypnotic.

MARIAN
Look at me. Listen to me.
You belong to me. Your soul
is mine. You will obey my
every word. Do you understand?

Her face is inches from his. He tries to pull away, his subconscious sounding alarms.

ROBIN
Why, Marian?

MARIAN
Because you love me. Say it. You love me.
(Robin struggles.)
Say it!

ROBIN (Sinking)
I love you.

MARIAN
Kiss me.

He gives himself to her. Their lips meet... something changes in his vision. Her eyes glow red. Her face starts to shrivel - HE IS KISSING THE WRINKLED LIPS OF MORTIANNA.

He pulls away... strong arms grab him. He shakes his head, trying to make sense. Through his blurred vision, we see he is surrounded by MASKED MEN.

ROBIN (slurred)
Where is Marian?

MORTIANNA
She is with friends.
(She CACKLES.)
Your resistance is strong, but
useless. Sign this.
(A quill is forced into his hand.)
You are a druid like your father.
You consort with the devil. Your
confession will be witnessed by the
Bishop of Hereford.

A guard forces Robin's hand across the page... then CRIES OUT, clutching his back... An arrow lodged between his shoulders.

In the cave mouth are Wulf, bow in hand, Bull kneeling beside Sarah's corpse, and Aslan.

MORTIANNA (horror)
The painted man!

Aslan's WAR-CRY ricochets off the cave walls. A curved scimitar in one hand, a straight English sword in the other, his arms are lethal windmills. The masked guards are cut down left and right. Mortianna retreats, scurrying into the depths of the cave.

Bull joins the fray, charging like his namesake, HOWLING in rage, flailing at heads with his quarterstaff. Wulf stays in the mouth, picking off men with deadly accuracy.

A furious melee. Bull and Aslan mow down the enemy like hay, battling far superior odds. Soon they are the only two left standing. Bull peers cautiously into the darkness. Behind him, one of his victims crawls back to his feet... and lunges.

ASLAN
Behind you!

Too late. A sword is driven through Bull's gut. Aslan grabs the attacker by the neck and piledrives him into the cave wall. The man's skull CRACKS against the rocks.

Aslan runs to Robin's side, as Wulf hurries to Bull's. Robin is slumped against a rock.

ROBIN (groggy)

Marian?

Aslan runs to the back of the cave, searching.
Wulf is crouched beside Bull, who murmurs his dying words.

BULL

Ya be sure Sarah gits a Christian
burial. Promise me, boy.

WULF

I promise.

Aslan stumbles at the edge of a deep crevasse. Far below he sees Mortianna, clambering down the steep rock. For a second their eyes meet. She HISSES - venom, hatred, fear - then is gone.

EXT. GREGOR CAVES - DAY

Aslan carries Robin outside. Robin is staggering, glassy-eyed, mumbling incoherently. His arm blocks the light from his eyes.

ASLAN

They have poisoned you. There are
herbs that can alter a man's brain.
I know of only one cure.

He drops to one knee, slams Robin violently across the other. Slaps him on the back and forces his fingers down his throat.

ASLAN

It worked for me this very morning.
(Robin heaves.)
You will thank me for this later.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

Distant thunder. Three horses. First Wulf's, leading another with the bodies of Bull and Sarah draped across its back. Aslan rides the third, with Robin propped up in front of him.

ROBIN

You have fulfilled your vow. Now
you can leave.

ASLAN
Your gratitude warms my heart.

ROBIN
You ignored my request.

ASLAN
It is fortunate that I did.

ROBIN
Because of you, another good man
is dead.

ASLAN
He urged me to bring him. He was a
brave man and I grieve for him. Praise
be to Allah that I do not grieve
for you also. Or for my broken vow.

ROBIN
To Hell with your damn vow.

ASLAN
I am glad you are feeling
better.

Ahead of them, Wulf SHOUTS and-reins in. He points into the
distance. A huge cloud of smoke is darkening the sky.

ROBIN
The forest! Ride!

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - DAY

Fire. Blazing rampant.

Along a hillside are hundreds of crossbowmen with fire arrows. At
a SHOUTED ORDER, another wave of flaming arrows ignites the trees.

Behind the crossbowmen are two figures on horseback. One is the
Sheriff, in full armor. The other is the black-clad Celtic
Chieftain. He sits as still as a rock.

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP - DAY

Chaos. Acrid black smoke pours across the clearing. Disarray.
COUGHING, SCREAMING, confusion. Little John vainly attempts to
instill calm.

LITTLE JOHN
Ya'll be jus' fine. Lil'
smoke ain't gonna kill ya.

Scared and injured WOODSMEN careen out of the trees. Full retreat.

WILL SCARLET (running up)
It's burning for miles, John.
It's hotter than Hades, and them
damn screens ain't worth nothing.

TWO WOODSMEN, blinded and CHOKING, stumble into one of their own camouflaged pits. Hideous SCREAMS as they're impaled on hidden stakes. John tries to gather the able-bodied men to his side.

LITTLE JOHN
'Ere, lads... Over 'ere! We must
make a stand.
(Most of them keep on running.)
Damn y'all! Ya're no more use
than a load o' wet farts.

WILL SCARLET
Where's that damn Locksley?
I'll swear he betrayed us.

LITTLE JOHN
Bollocks, Will. Quit yer bloody
bellyachin'.

Hal runs to join them, stuttering.

HAL
C...cccc....

LITTLE JOHN
C...ccc? What the bloody hell ya
sayin'? Cows?...Cowards?...

HAL
Cccc...elts!

WILL SCARLET
Celts? Where?

HAL (pointing behind him.)
Gggg...God help us.

EXT HILLSIDE - DAY

CELTS, arrayed behind their Chieftain. An awesome sight. Clad in hides and skins, painted arms and faces, headpieces the faces of wild animals. Standing in eerie silence. A loud clap of THUNDER. Nottingham rides up to the Chieftain.

NOTTINGHAM
I want prisoners.

The Chieftain does not turn his head.

CHIEFTAIN
We came to fight.

NOTTINGHAM
Nevertheless, I need prisoners.

With only a short flick of his head, the Chieftain spits. Nottingham waves his arm, signaling his own footsoldiers to advance. The Chieftain raises his sword. Instantly a tumultuous chilling ROAR from his warriors. They charge forward.

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - DAY

The blood-curdling cry fills the sky. Amidst the smoke and chaos, Little John's small band is gathered at the edge of the clearing.

WILL SCARLET
What are we gonna do, John?

LITTLE JOHN
Stop 'ere and flippin' well fight
'em, that's what. Whadya say, lads?

Half-hearted support from about a dozen men, including Tuck.

LITTLE JOHN
Nay, reveren'. Ya' best be goin'
wi' the wenches.

FRIAR
This holy man believes in doing
God's work with his hands.

He snatches a quarterstaff. John slaps him on the back. The men are encouraged.

LITTLE JOHN
Let's give 'em a bloody good
wallopin' an' all, lads.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Aslan reins in. In the valley below, the forest is ablaze. The Sheriff's armed hordes swarm over the embattled woodsmen.

ROBIN
Wulf, stay here. I need your horse.

He climbs onto Wulf's horse, steers it right at the heart of the enemy... Aslan blocks his way, grabbing his reins.

ROBIN
What are you doing? Out of
my way!

ASLAN
I saved your life. I will not let
you give it away for no purpose.

ROBIN
Out of my way, damn you!

ASLAN
Does the witch still have possession
of your senses? If we meet up with
the survivors we may yet give them
some help. And do some damage to the enemy.

Robin debates. Relents. They urge their horses into a gallop.

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - DAY

The Sheriff's men stomp through the burning forest. From the
other side of the flaming trees, Little John's men pick off shots
with their longbows. They retreat, turn and fire again.

They back into a clearing... The Celtic mercenaries charge at
them across the open ground. The woodsmen drop their bows.
Hand to hand combat. Woodsmen are being decimated.

Little John storms and shouts, cutting down the enemy, inspiring
his men. The scotsmen are awed by this giant. Tuck is
confronted by a wild-eyed Celt.

FRIAR
Surely you would not harm a man
of the cloth?
(The man swings, Tuck sidesteps.)
You would? Then to hellfire
with you.

He pummels the man to the ground with his staff.

The woodsmen are broken into two groups. One group, including
Will, is surrounded and surrenders. The others fight on.

Bleeding from several wounds, Little John is surrounded by four
Celts. He spins, challenging them, spitting out expletives.
Defiant to the last... suddenly his attackers are hurled aside.
Robin rides right through them, slashing with his sword.

LITTLE JOHN
'Bout bleedin' time, mush.

Tuck is driven to the ground... his assailant is delivering the lethal blow, when Aslan cuts him down. Tuck glances heavenwards.

FRIAR
Thank you, Lord.
(an afterthought)
And thank you, Allah.

Aslan is a wild man. Steering his horse with just legs and knees, he strikes out with both swords to left and right. The momentum is turning. Wulf appears at the edge of the clearing. Starts picking off stragglers. His father spots him.

LITTLE JOHN
Git the bleedin' 'ell outa
there, ya li'l bugger.

Distracted, he doesn't see a Celt swing at his back... but Wulf's arrow pierces the man's adam's apple. He freezes in mid-air, before toppling at John's feet.

When John turns back, Wulf is being dragged away by three of the Sheriff's men. He attempts to pursue, but is intercepted by two more Celts... and struck down.

Aslan charges between the two Celts. Slashes down with both swords. Both men topple to the ground simultaneously.

Suddenly all is quiet. The smoking clearing is a mass of fallen bodies. Only four men seem to be alive. Robin, Aslan, Tuck, who is slouched against a tree gasping for breath, and Hal, who kneels clutching his wounded shoulder.

Robin dismounts and runs to Little John. Overwhelmed and exhausted, he slumps over the giant's unmoving form.

LITTLE JOHN
Don't 'ee start bleedin' blubberin',
or ya'll make me bloody vomit.

Robin manages a relieved smile. Aslan strides over. All around them lie slain Celts and woodsmen.

ASLAN
It was a fiendish mind that
planned this campaign.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - DUSK

A shovel breaks dirt. Beyond exhaustion, Robin digs a grave. The clearing is transformed into a cemetery. Tuck blesses the bodies of Bull and Sarah. Aslan drags a Celt's corpse into a grave. Throws the man's armor and weapons into a growing pile.

ROBIN

You were an honor to your countrymen
today, Aslan. You fought better
than twenty English knights.

ASLAN

This war is the God of Abraham
against the forces of evil.

ROBIN

Well, the war is over.

He stares across the desolate clearing.

ROBIN

There is too much blood
on my hands.

INT. CASTLE DUNGEONS - NIGHT

A heavy key turns in a lock. Bolts drawn back. Followed by guards, Nottingham enters the torture-chamber where the captured woodsmen are chained, among them Wulf and Will Scarlet. Putrid ankle-deep water on the floor, walls encrusted with dried blood and grime. Nottingham walks up to the first man. Wry smile.

NOTTINGHAM (wry smile)

Would you prefer pain or death?

FIRST WOODSMAN

Death.

Dignity masking his terror. Nottingham appears to consider.

NOTTINGHAM

Torture him.

The man is dragged away by guards. The next prisoner -

NOTTINGHAM

And you? Pain or death?

SECOND WOODSMAN (pure terror)

....er.... pain.

NOTTINGHAM

Torture him... you see, it makes
no difference. You will all be
tortured. You will all tell me all
you know about Robin Hood, and then
you will all be hanged. Then we will
catch your beloved Robin Hood and do
the same to him.

WILL SCARLET

I will kill him for you.

WULF

Will, no!

Nottingham strides up to Will, drawing his sword.

NOTTINGHAM

Why would I need you?

WILL SCARLET

All your attempts to kill him
have failed. Your army failed.
Your Celtic mercenaries failed.

Nottingham places his swordpoint against Will's throat.

NOTTINGHAM

And you can succeed?

WILL SCARLET

I am one of his men. He would
never suspect me.

WULF

He knows you always hated him, traitor.

WILL SCARLET

He is a trusting fool. He will
believe me. If he doesn't, he
will kill me and you have lost nothing.

Nottingham slides his blade between Will's teeth.

NOTTINGHAM

If you fail, I will personally cut
out your lying tongue.

He withdraws the blade. Will tries to smile.

WILL SCARLET

And if I succeed?

NOTTINGHAM
His friends will...
(to a guard)
...Torture him!

He turns back to Will. A smile of mock apology.

NOTTINGHAM
It will look better.

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - NIGHT

A winter's night. Bitterly cold. Sad figures huddled around a small fire. Fanny tends to John's wounds, their little ones asleep by their feet. John drinks and passes the jug to Tuck, who numbly shakes his head. Too depressed even to drink.

Aslan folds his prayer rug and walks over to Robin, who sits alone, staring vacantly into the darkness.

ROBIN
My pride brought us to this.

ASLAN
No, friend. It was you who gave
these men pride.

ROBIN
I gave them nothing but false hope.
Tomorrow we will disperse. These people
can move south and start over. You
must go home and win your Jasmina.

ASLAN
And you?

ROBIN
I am no longer your responsibility.

ASLAN
That is for me to decide.

ROBIN (raging)
Damn you, Arab. I want you out of my
life. Can't you understand that?
Go home. Go back to your own kind.

Aslan stares at him, then turns away. Not the time for argument. Robin fingers his father's medallion... rips it from his neck.

ROBIN
Damn you too, father. You reared
a coward and a fool.

He hurls the medallion... it catches on a low-hanging branch.

CUT TO:

A November moon. Watery, full. The focus shifts to the medallion, dangling in its center... the last thing Robin sees before his eyes close into troubled sleep. The white moon against the black sky...

DISSOLVE TO:

...its negative image - a black circle against a white sky. An executioner. The round medallion has become a noose.

In the noose appears Wulf's face. The executioner hauls on the rope and Wulf's features contort in the agony of death. Another noose, another face... Duncan. Another - Bull. Another - Marian.

MARIAN

Kiss me, Robin.

The noose tightens on her neck. As she dies, her face shrivels into the CACKLING features of Mortiana.

Next, Robin's father. He stares accusingly right at us.

LOCKSLEY

Why have you betrayed me? Why?

Before he pulls the rope, the executioner peels back his hood.

...It is Robin. Gloating, he hauls on the rope. His laughter blends with that of Mortiana in a hideous CACOPHONY.

DISSOLVE TO:

Robin's face distorted in water. The LAUGHTER becomes the sound of a running river. Robin is washing, trying to drive away the horror. The first streaks of light fight their way through a thick morning mist. Out of the mist steps a figure, at first indecipherable. Aware of his presence, Robin looks up.

ROBIN

Will! I thought you were taken.

WILL SCARLET

I was.

ROBIN

How did you escape?

WILL SCARLET

I promised to kill you.

ROBIN

And will you?

Before Will can answer, Little John runs up. Grabs Will's throat.

LITTLE JOHN
I'll wring yer scrawny neck,
Will Scarlet. I'd be doin' yer a
bloody favor an' all.

Quickly others arrive. Aslan, Tuck, Hal, Fanny, with kids
clinging to her skirts.

FANNY
Afore ya kill 'im, John, ask 'im
if Wulf be still alive.

Will is choking, unable to speak. John loosens his hold just
enough for Will to splutter out...

WILL SCARLET
Y... e...

LITTLE JOHN
Git us a rope, Hal, and we'll
put the bleedin' weasel outa
'is misery.

ROBIN
John, wait. Let us hear what
he has to say.

LITTLE JOHN
No bugger 'scapes the Sheriff, 'nless
'e's linin' 'is bloomin' pockets.

ROBIN
A traitor sneaks in and out under
cover of darkness. Will walked
in and announced himself.

LITTLE JOHN (dismissive)
Aye. 'E always did 'ave balls
o' brass.

HAL
Let's sss... string 'im up.

ROBIN
Let him speak.

John reluctantly moves his hold from Will's neck to his shoulders.

LITTLE JOHN
Search 'im, Hal. 'E'll 'ave
a bloody blade on 'im somewheres.

Will eyes the accusing faces. Hal searches, lifts Will's shirt. His whole skin is lacerated with deep gashes and fresh burns.

LITTLE JOHN

Bugger me.

He steps back. Ready to listen.

WILL SCARLET

I bring a message from Nottingham.
Our men are to be hung in the square
on Saturday. At high noon.

FANNY

What about my boy?

WILL SCARLET

The boy too. Ten men in all.

Fanny drops her head on John's shoulder.

WILL SCARLET

Their deaths are a warning. Anyone
who associates with the outlaw Hood
is to suffer the same fate. Man, woman,
or child. Even anyone who so much
as utters his name.

FRIAR

Robin Hood! Robin Hood! Robin Hood!
(he chuckles)
May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb.

WILL SCARLET

The hangings are to be part of the
celebration for the Sheriff's marriage.

LITTLE JOHN

Marriage, eh? What lucky wench gits
to play with the Sheriff's codpiece?

Will turns his gaze directly on Robin.

WILL SCARLET

Lady Marian.

FRIAR

He takes a bride of royal blood?

LITTLE JOHN

Aye, and then with King Richard gone,
he takes the bloody throne.

Everyone reacts with shock. Only Robin appears unsurprised.

ROBIN
You were to use this news to get close
to me, and then kill me? Right, Will?

WILL SCARLET (sly grin)
Not straightway, of course.

ROBIN
What is your intention, Will?

WILL SCARLET
That depends on you, Locksley.

ROBIN
How so?

WILL SCARLET
I've never trusted you, that's no
secret. What I wanna know is, are
you gonna finish what you started?

Robin is on the spot. All eyes on him. Will presses his point.

WILL SCARLET
Will ya stay and keep us fightin' till
every man jack of us is dead? Or will
you run like the spoiled little rich
boy I always took you for?

ROBIN
You present quite a choice. What would
you have me do, Will?

WILL SCARLET
If you run, I will kill you.

ROBIN
And if I stay, will you all stay with me?

Robin checks the other faces.

ASLAN
To the end, friend.

FRIAR
If my heathen brother stays, I stay.

HAL
Mmmm...meeee... tttt....

He can't get it out. Little John covers Hal's mouth.

LITTLE JOHN
'E's in. We'rè all bloody in.
Daft buggers.

ROBIN
There's your answer, Will. We
finish it.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM TOWN SQUARE - DUSK

Ten gallows, silhouetted against the setting sun. The black-armored Celt tests a gallows, springing the hatch. A heavy sack dangles from the rope. Grim-faced peasants watch. Among them - Fanny Little.

INT. DUNGEON - DUSK

The sound of the gallows echoes inside the damp stone walls. Wulf and the other woodsmen are chained to rings in the floor. Wulf lifts his eyes to a chink of light high in the wall. The purple sky is turning black. He fingers his wooden crucifix.

WULF
If it be your biddin' that this be my
last night o' life, Lord, gimme the
pluck to die proud. An' look 'ee kindly
on my folks an' the young 'uns.

The light in the cell melts to total darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

Sunlight glistens on frost-laden branches. A cock robin chirps.

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - DAWN

In the troubled human realm, Tuck says his morning prayer.

FRIAR
Lord, grant us the courage to endure,
and if you're as smart as I believe you
are, grant us victory... and the victuals
to celebrate it with.

Aslan is crushing charcoal into a mixture of yellow powder, which is turning black. Tuck approaches.

FRIAR
Will you pray with me, son of Allah?

ASLAN
I have prayed for you, often, my
brother. But, let us put prayer aside
and help our Gods in a more practical
manner. I must reveal to you the
mysteries of the Black Powder.

Tuck takes a bowl of the powder close to the fire to examine it. Aslan snatches it back... Before Tuck can react, Robin walks up.

ROBIN

Will it work?

Aslan throws a handful of powder into the fire. A fireball rips ten feet in the air... Tuck falls on his ass in terror.

ROBIN (impressed)

You are truly a wizard.

ASLAN

There is no such thing. But
if there was...

(he chuckles)

...I would surely be one.

Robin reaches out and shakes Aslan's hand. A moment of bonding. He moves on to the others, clasping each man's hand as he speaks.

ROBIN

We have no armored knights,
no glorious banners. But I am
honored to be going to battle in
this company. Today we fight not
just for the lives of our friends,
but to save all England.

A moment of tension before Will takes the proffered hand.

ROBIN

We may be only six men, but...

FANNY

Seven!

She strides towards them from the trees.

LITTLE JOHN

What in blazes ya doin', woman?
Where's the little 'uns?

FANNY

Them's safe, wi' my mother.
(she pushes past Little John)
Robin, I been to town an' seen
the scaffold and the guard towers.

LITTLE JOHN

Ya gone bleedin' cracked, girl?

FANNY

You go an' birth eight babies and
then you can come an' tell me 'bout
hurtin', ya big ox. I ain't gonna sit
aroun' an' let one o' 'em die neither.

LITTLE JOHN

Ya should be bloody well mindin'
the other seven. Tell 'er, Rob.

Robin starts to draw a diagram on the ground with a stick.

ROBIN

Fanny, show me the exact location of
the scaffold.

Little John double-takes.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM - DAY

The gallows. Swathed in a pink glow. A brilliant wintry
morning. Breath billows from the mouths of the sentries.

INT. NOTTINGHAM CASTLE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Boots clack confidently down a stone corridor. The Sheriff,
decked in wedding finery. He enters...

INT. CASTLE CHAMBER - DAY

...Mortianna's apothecary. Dark, smoke filled. Foul things in
jars. Animals in cages waiting to meet unspeakable ends. Marian
is strapped in a chair, flanked by two armed guards.

NOTTINGHAM

How is my bride?

Marian smiles as he leans toward her... and SPITS in his face.

NOTTINGHAM

Ah... You are overwhelmed with happiness.

He slowly wipes off the spittle... and SLAPS her hard.

MARIAN (calm, uncowed)

I will never marry you.

Mortianna emerges from a dark corner, bearing the goblet she used
at the Druid ceremony.

MORTIANNA

Hold her!

Marian struggles against her bonds.

MARIAN

Get away from me, you disgusting
hag. I will not... augh!

The guards viciously restrain her, forcing her mouth open.
Mortianna pours the blood-red liquid down her throat. Marian
fights, gagging and choking... until the drug takes its effect.
She slumps forward. Nottingham watches with amusement.

NOTTINGHAM (to Mortiana)

When we are married, thirty of the
Northern barons will pledge me their
support as King. As you predicted.

Mortianna squats on the floor besides a platter of blood. Clasps
the dice-like runes.

NOTTINGHAM

What do you see in the portents?

Mortianna rocks on her heels, clutching her taloned hands to her
sides. She chants, fingering the bloody stones.

MORTIANNA

The union. The blood of the lion
and the house of Nottingham.
New faith. New power. New souls.

She stares at Nottingham, her red eyes demented.

MORTIANNA

If there is no union, there will
be darkness, despair, death. Ours!

NOTTINGHAM

Do not give me riddles, woman.
We are to be married within hours.
How can we be in danger?

MORTIANNA

The blood does not lie.

NOTTINGHAM (shouting)

Tell me how it will result.

MORTIANNA

I have told you what I know.

NOTTINGHAM

Confound you, crone. Without my
protection the people would hunt
you down, rip out your black heart
and burn it.

Mortianna runs at him. Points her bony finger at his heart.

MORTIANNA

Without me, you are nothing.
You are straw, a fleabite, a speck.

(Nottingham laughs.)

Laugh, fool. I birthed you from this
body. I stole a babe in this very castle,
and killed it so that you might rise in
its place. You are my son.

(Nottingham is too shocked to react.)

Together we are strong. Now is not
the time to doubt. Now is the time to
believe, to be bold. The bold will prevail.

EXT. CITY GATE - DAY

Masses stream in. They give wide berth to a Celtic warrior in
a boar's head helmet. Soldiers prod and harrass the passing
peasants. Tuck drives a cartload of barrels. A guard stops him.

GUARD

What you got there, father?

- FRIAR

The Lord's finest brew for the good
Nottingham's fighting men. It has a
mighty kick.

GUARD (smiling)

I'll warrant. Pass.

EXT. DUNGEON GATE - DAY

Wulf blinks at the sunlight as the prisoners are led out. Holds
his head high. Soldiers hurl abuse, the people are too cowed to
show support. Fanny glances at her son, crosses herself and
scurries into the castle, unnoticed.

On horseback, encircled by guards, the Sheriff and his baron
cronies watch the outlaws progress with cruel amusement.
A yell attracts Nottingham. Will is being shoved back by guards.

WILL SCARLET

Sheriff! My lord Sheriff! I have word
for you! Of Robin Hood!

Nottingham shouts to one of his mounted guards, who rides over,
grabs Will by the collar, and drags him to his side.

NOTTINGHAM

Ah, the turncoat. Did you succeed?

WILL SCARLET

I found his lair, but alas he still lives.

The Sheriff strikes down with his armored hand. Will crumples.

NOTTINGHAM

Stretch his neck with the others.

Hands yank Will to his feet. Dazed, he tries to speak. Disinterested, Nottingham turns away, until he catches...

WILL SCARLET

...He... He... is here!

NOTTINGHAM

Locksley, here? Where?

Will struggles to get free of his holders.

WILL SCARLET

Call off your dogs.

NOTTINGHAM

Release him!... Now, where is he?

WILL SCARLET

I want your word, in front of these witnesses. If I tell you, I will go free.

NOTTINGHAM (scoffs)

We will find him.

WILL SCARLET

He is concealed. He is going to free the prisoners and stop the wedding.

Nottingham's jaw tightens. Eyes the prisoners, the scaffold.

NOTTINGHAM

Put Hood in my hands, you go free.

WILL SCARLET

With the reward. Ten thousand crowns.

NOTTINGHAM

Damn your worthless hide! Just tell me where he is.

WILL SCARLET

The reward!

The parade of prisoners reaches them. Seeing Will, Wulf charges at him, screaming in blind rage. Soldiers grab Wulf. Throw him down, kicking and beating. Voices in the crowd plead to let him be. Someone tries to intervene, gets hurled down.

NOTTINGHAM (to Will)
You'll get your reward. Where is he?

CUT TO:

Tuck urges his ancient nag towards the scaffold with his cargo of barrels. The crowd parts unwillingly.

FRIAR
Out of the way. Make way for
the Lord's business.

Across the square, Will points urgently in Tuck's direction.

EXT. CITY WALL - DAY

A massive oak stands near the Southern wall. A large figure climbs to its uppermost branches. Little John. He scrambles from the tree, starts to climb the wall itself. He slips frequently.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

The prisoners are led to the scaffold, where the hooded EXECUTIONER waits, along with the Chieftain. Wulf staggers, from his beating.

Nottingham's men encircle Tuck's cart. He watches them nervously.

EXT. CITY PARAPET - DAY

Fanny lowers a knotted rope over the battlement. Far below, John clings to the outer wall. Above him it's sheer, without footholds. The rope doesn't reach his fingertips. He stretches, loses balance. Falls... desperately grabbing at the rope. He swings, clinging by one arm, his body smashing into the wall.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

Will leads the Sheriff to Tuck's cart.

NOTTINGHAM
Step down, friar.

FRIAR
As you wish, sire. Is there
something amiss?

NOTTINGHAM

This man claims you have outlaws
concealed in these barrels. Among
them the cursed Robin Hood.

Tuck glares at Will with unconcealed hatred.

FRIAR

This man will rot in hell as a
knave and a liar. These are
libations for the celebration
of your lordship's nuptials.

NOTTINGHAM

Break one open!

FRIAR (nervous)

Why waste fine vintage, my lord?

A cask is shattered... wine torrents out.

WILL SCARLET

Try another. There are many barrels,
only a few outlaws.

A drum roll. The Sheriff's attention turns to the scaffold,
where the first victim is escorted up the steps - Wulf.

Tense, Tuck pulls a tinder box from his robes, strikes a flame.

EXT. CITY PARAPET - DAY

John strains, heaving his giant frame up the rope. He nears the
top, just as a sentry approaches. Fanny blocks the man's view.

SENTRY

What is your business, woman?

FANNY

Ain't doin' no 'arm, m'dear. Likes
a good 'angin', I do. Luvly view
up 'ere, ain't it?

She gestures below. The sentry looks, then turns back to her...
notices the rope. With all her might, Fanny rams his head into
the stone battlement. Twice. Three times. He slumps unconscious.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

Wulf crosses himself as the Executioner steers him to the noose. A hush falls... except for a rotund old woman who is barging to the front. And a wounded soldier, his head bandaged, who eases her path, striking out with his tree-branch crutch.

WOUNDED SOLDIER

Give room for a fightin' man and
his ma. Step aside, or I'll make ya.
I wanna see the bastards walk on air.

EXT. CITY PARAPET - DAY

John struggles over the battlement. Collapses.

FANNY

'Bout time, ya gurt lug.

She wrenches the longbow from his back, fumbles for an arrow.

FANNY

We be too late.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

The scaffold is impregnable. Celts and their Chieftain guard the platform itself. The Sheriff's men surround the base.

THE EXECUTIONER encircles Wulf's neck with the noose.

SPARKS! Tuck ignites a fuse-cord leading to one of the barrels.

A HAND tightens the noose... Another grasps an arrow.

THE EXECUTIONER'S EYES glint through the slits.

NOTTINGHAM intently watches Wulf.

THE CHIEFTAIN stands, impassive.

FINGERS close on a bowstring... the FUSE-CORD burns.

WULF steps to the trap, ready to plunge. His eyes close.

AN ARROW flies... SLICES THROUGH THE EXECUTIONER'S EYE SLIT.

THE EXECUTIONER falls. Little John celebrates... but
THE CHIEFTAIN leaps forward... releases the trap.

WULF'S BODY PLUNGES. The rope snaps tight.

LITTLE JOHN yells. FANNY screams.

A figure leaps onto the platform... the WOUNDED SOLDIER...
throws aside his crutch... ROBIN!

WULF dangles, strangling. His hands wrench at the choking cord.

The burning fuse-cord reaches the barrel. Tuck hurls the smoking
barrel thundering towards the sheriff... Spotting it, Nottingham
urges his horse over his own men in his effort to escape.

The Chieftain smites at Robin... his blow is blocked... by the
Celt with the boar's head.

KAABOOM! The gunpowder in the barrel explodes. Spewing smoke and
wood. SCREAMS of panic. Soldiers fly. Mass confusion.

Amidst the smoke... ROBIN'S SWORD slashes through Wulf's rope.
He hauls him onto the platform.

Another figure on the platform... the old woman. Slashes the
ropes of the other prisoners. Whips off her wig... IT'S HAL.
He passes out weapons from a bundle under his arm.

HAL

Here... By God... Let's fight 'em!

WOODSMAN

Hal! What happened to your stutter?

HAL

It's gg...ggg...g..oh ,crap!

A guard attacks, Hal fells him.

HAL

Take that, ya mug.

No stutter this time! The woodsmen join battle with the guards.

The Chieftain cudgels his Celt attacker across the head. The
boar's head helmet tumbles... revealing Aslan.

CHIEFTAIN

Impostor! You dishonor the clan.

Aslan retreats, fending off the Chieftain's shattering blows.

FROM THE PARAPET. John and Fanny peer down as the smoke clears.
They watch Wulf struggle to his feet. A Celt sneaks up behind him.

LITTLE JOHN

Fight fair...

He aims. Grits his teeth... picks off the Celt with a shaft.

LITTLE JOHN
...Or don't fight at all.

ROBIN leaps and swings from gallows to gallows, kicking out, slashing down. Sends two Celts hurtling down the trap hole.

WILL battles the SHERIFF. A reprise of his own fight with Robin, the roles reversed. The Sheriff, armed and mounted, flails at Will, who, unarmed, dodges in and around the horse's legs.

ASLAN and THE CHIEFTAIN are locked in mortal combat. Aslan stumbles back and falls. The Chieftain swipes at his head. Aslan rolls aside. The sword smashes wood.

TUCK surrounded, rolls another smoking barrel... IT EXPLODES.

The Greybeard Baron spots Little John and Fanny on the parapet.

GREYBEARD BARON
Up there! No mercy, shoot them!

Crossbowmen on the opposite parapet fire. Bolts ricochet all around Little John and Fanny.

ON THE SCAFFOLD. WULF guards the steps, beating back all comers. .

ASLAN evades the charging CHIEFTAIN. Drop-kicks a soldier, takes his sword, and whirls back at the Chieftain. His blows have no effect on the Scot's black armor.

THE SHERIFF rears his horse... hooves flail... knocking WILL to his knees. The Sheriff lunges... Desperate, Will grasps the sword, ignoring the pain... a tug of war. Blood pours from Will's hands, where the blade cuts in. He suddenly lets go.... Nottingham topples from his horse. Will leaps on him.

WILL SCARLET
Pain or death, you butcher?

The Sheriff's men drag Will off before he can choke him. Raging, Nottingham climbs to his feet. Will is held by four men.

NOTTINGHAM
Here's another message to Robin
Hood, written in your blood.

He drives his sword repeatedly, insanely, into Will's belly.

WILL SCARLET
It's over, fool. You can kill my body,
but you cannot kill our spirit.

He finally drops... Nottingham heads for the castle.

Robin attempts to follow. He swings from the noose, using the rope to vault over the surrounding soldiers. As he lands, he is waylaid by one of the barons and his men.

RED HEAD BARON
It's Hood! Get him!

THE CHIEFTAIN knocks Aslan down. ASLAN loses his sword.

CHIEFTAIN
I am iron. I am rock. I am your death.

Aslan spots one of John's arrows protruding from a dead Celt's back. Scrambles over and tears it out.

ASLAN
You talk too much!

He leaps... rams the arrow through the Chieftain's mouthpiece... out the back of his neck. The Chieftain grabs his helmet, trying to rip it off. He topples, his life's blood gushing from both sides of his neck. Aslan plants a foot on the slain warrior.

ASLAN
Englishmen! I am not one of you,
yet I fight for you. Against a
tyrant. Join me now. Join Robin Hood.

The onlookers are inspired. Grabbing weapons from fallen soldiers, many join the fray.

Nottingham runs through the castle gate. Angry PEASANTS pursue.

NOTTINGHAM
Lower the portcullis! Now!

A GUARD winds down the giant gate. Nottingham hurls him aside.

NOTTINGHAM
Too slow, fool!

He hacks at the ropes. The gate slices down like a guillotine, pinning soldiers and peasants alike.

Fighting his way towards the gate, Robin sees with dismay that the portcullis is closed. Weakening, he staves off the red-head baron's vicious assault. Suddenly peasants are swarming over his attacker. The baron is dragged off and trampled down.

ROBIN
Friends! We must raise the gate.

EXT. CASTLE PARAPET - DAY

Crossbow bolts fly. Little John ducks and weaves, while spinning and firing at the men advancing at him from both sides.

LITTLE JOHN

Come on, ya chicken-'earted buggers.
Ya milksops, ya bleedin' pansies.

He can't shoot fast enough. As they descend on him, he leaps from the battlements onto a soldier's back. Grabs his sword.

LITTLE JOHN

Excuse me, m' old cock. Ya mind
if I borrow this?

He's backed up against a battlement, outnumbered five to one.

EXT. CASTLE GATE - DAY

Robin and the others try in vain to lift the portcullis.

INT. CASTLE MAIN CORRIDOR - DAY

The Sheriff marches through, issuing orders.

NOTTINGHAM

Seal the entrance. Guard it with
your lives. ...Bring the bishop
to my chapel.

INT. CASTLE CHAMBER - DAY

Surrounded by flickering candles, Marian sits before a mirror. In a white wedding gown. Her eyes faraway, lifeless, in deep trance. Mortianna sensuously combs the bride's hair with her taloned fingers. The Sheriff's face appears in the reflection.

NOTTINGHAM

Come! It is time for the union.

The guards roughly haul Marian to her feet. She is oblivious.

INT. CASTLE CHAPEL - DAY

Once Christian, now blasphemously transformed to the practice of black magic. The crucifix on the altar is upside down. Marian stands before it, between the Sheriff and Mortianna. The Bishop is dragged in. Frightened. The battle sounds echo.

BISHOP

They are rebelling. We must escape.

NOTTINGHAM

Marry us. When I am declared king,
that rabble will not dare go against us.

BISHOP

It is madness to delay.

Mortianna screams and slashes her talons across the Bishop's
outstretched hands. Blood flows.

MORTIANNA

Face them, or face me.

EXT. CASTLE GATE - DAY

Robin leaps onto Tuck's cart.

ROBIN

Light all the barrels, Tuck.

Robin snaps the reins, steering the rumbling cart across the yard.
Bouncing in the back, Tuck lights barrels. Fuses smoke and crackle.

ROBIN

Jump!

Tuck jumps. Robin steers the wagon at the gate. At the last
second, he slashes the reins and leaps onto the horse's back....
THE BARRELS EXPLODE! The portcullis is blown to kingdom come.

Out of the smoke, Robin rides the old nag like a charger.
Leads his cheering, ragged fighters through the open gate.

INT. CASTLE KITCHENS - DAY

Fanny is chased into the Kitchens by a vengeful soldier.
He grabs her and pushes her into the open cooking fire.
Desperate, she grabs a poker and smashes him over the head. The
servants stare in shock... A chef comes at Fanny with a knife.

EXT. CASTLE FORECOURT - DAY

Hal and the others battle against huge odds. More peasants join
them, daring to take on the Sheriff's hated men. Aslan's a
whirlwind, striking out in all directions. Each blow for a cause.

ASLAN

For Allah!... For Jehovah!
For Brotherhood!... For Justice!

INT. CASTLE HALLWAYS - DAY

A door SLAMS back. Robin bursts through. Alone, against three attackers. He swings a soldier around. Holds him as a shield, using the man's own sword against his companions. In seconds, all three are down and Robin is off and running.

Down corridors, searching. Soldiers and armed servants converge to block his way. Robin strikes, kicks, vaults, flings statues. Up the stairs... topples a suit of armor down on his pursuers.

ROBIN (grabbing a servant)
Where is she? Where is Lady Marian?

The man refuses to speak. Robin looks up the corridor, sees six men guarding the private chapel's arched doorway.

ROBIN
Ah! There is my answer.

He hurls the man aside.... The armed guards charge him.

INT. DUNGEONS - DAY

Carrying a flaming torch, Tuck runs down the dark passageways. Before him, an awesome sight... dozens of pitiful men in cages. Suddenly he is confronted by the jailer. A cruel behemoth of a man, carrying a spiked club.

FRIAR (pious)
My son, there is a holy war being waged outside. Release all these wretches and God shall surely find you a place in heaven.

JAILER
I'd rather go to hell!

WHAM! Tuck takes the lethal cudgel full in the chest. Flies back.

INT. CASTLE CHAPEL - DAY

Sweating, fearful, the Bishop rushes through the service.

BISHOP
... your bodies to be bound in immortal wedlock. Do you, Marian Dubois, take...

THE CHAPEL DOORS SHATTER INWARD.

Robin backs in, bloodied, fencing with four remaining soldiers. He smashes one by swinging the heavy door into him, hurtles a pew at another. He springs off another pew, taking down a third.

ROBIN

Marian, run! It's me, Robin. Run!

Marian remains immobile. Mortianna moves to her side. Robin is struck in the thigh. Like a vulture, the Sheriff waits. Tiring, blood pouring from his leg, Robin prepares to fight him.

ROBIN

I warned you, I would find you
no matter what.

NOTTINGHAM

No companions? No army? You rush to
your death for the sake of a woman.
Lust has turned you into a fool.
...Recognize this, Locksley?

He raises his sword to reveal its handle. A crucifix sculpted into the hilt... Robin's father's sword.

NOTTINGHAM

Appropriate I should use it to
kill you with, don't you think?

He lunges. A savage, accomplished swordsman, with fire in his eyes. Exhausted, Robin is driven back, parrying desperately.

INT. DUNGEONS - DAY

Tuck picks himself up from the floor. The jailer is amazed.

FRIAR

The Lord helps those who help
themselves.

Grinning, he pulls open his robes, revealing chest armor... and a miniature powder keg. He holds it to his flaming torch and tosses it to the jailer... Stupefied, the man catches the smoking bomb.

FRIAR

Give my regards to the devil.

The keg ERUPTS, blowing the jailer through a wall.

EXT. PARAPET - DAY

John is in deep trouble, but undaunted.

LITTLE JOHN
Ya gutless bloody sissies.

Someone attacks his assailants from the rear. The tide turns.

LITTLE JOHN
Wulf! I told ya to keep outa the fightin'.

WULF
Sorry, father. Couldn't help myself.

LITTLE JOHN
Well, ya'll get a bloody good wallop in'
if we get 'ome... For now, let's see
how well I taught ya.

Wulf sends an attacker plummeting off the parapet.

EXT. CASTLE FORECOURT - DAY

A crossbow bolt strikes Hal between his shoulder blades.
He falls. The Sheriff's soldiers are regaining the advantage.
The peasants are giving up, dropping their weapons.

HAL
No! Fight on. Fight!

He sees a familiar pair of holy sandals marching towards him.
Tuck leading a barefoot army. Dozens of ragged prisoners, armed
with chains and torture implements.

FRIAR
Sinners, beware! God's avengers are at hand.

Dying, Hal manages a weak smile.

HAL
Go' bless ya, Tuck.

Tuck flails a chain at a Celt.

FRIAR
Repent, heathen!

The man spins to strike back... freezes... grinning... Aslan!

INT. CASTLE KITCHENS - DAY

The chef raises his knife. Fanny appeals to the whole room.

FANNY

Listen! Outside, your countrymen rise
against the Sheriff. Is there one man
or woman here who does not hate him?
Who has not suffered at his hand?

(to the chef)

Turn that on the Sheriff and
his bullies.

A deadly pause. A woman cook dumps the giant wedding cake right
over the Chef. Suddenly it's havoc. Flying food and cutlery.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

A full-scale riot. The populace has turned. Into the fray comes
Fanny Little, leading a rabble of servants and kitchen staff,
fighting with pots, pans, brooms, knives, hooks, and bedpans.

INT. CASTLE CHAPEL - DAY

Nottingham slashes maniacally. Robin is cornered, weakening.

NOTTINGHAM

You should have stayed away, Locksley.
Fools like you never learn.

A blow slices Robin's arm. His sword flies from his grasp.
Nottingham gloats. Two of his men scramble back to their feet.
Robin is beat... A WAR CRY! Aslan, followed by Tuck.

ASLAN

Ali akbar!

FRIAR

Amen!

MORTIANNA (seeing Aslan)

Agh.. the painted one!

Nottingham glances over... a split second opportunity! ...Robin
lashes out. Kicks the Sheriff in the gut, chops down on his sword
hand. His father's sword CLATTERS to the floor.

Whirling swords in each hand, Aslan attacks the other men. Robin
pile drives Nottingham into the wall.

The bishop makes his escape. Tuck blocks his path.

FRIAR
So! You sold your soul to the devil?

BISHOP
No, I swear it, in God's name.

FRIAR
Blasphemer! You accuse innocent
men of Druid worship while you
practice the black arts yourself.

The bishop surreptitiously draws a dagger from his robes.
A taloned hand grips a spear... Mortianna creeps up on Aslan.

ROBIN (glimpsing her)
Watch out!

Aslan spins... too late. SCREECHING, Mortianna drives the spear
into Aslan's side. He cries out and slides to the floor.

Nottingham uses Robin's distraction to regain his sword.
Back on the defensive, Robin tries to evade the blows.

Mortianna drags Marian out onto a balcony. Robin cannot pursue.
In acute pain, Aslan struggles to his feet. Grasping the spear
where it enters his side, he pulls with all his strength.

The bishop, concealed dagger in hand, approaches Tuck.

BISHOP (innocently)
I am sure you would not strike
a man of the cloth.

FRIAR
Think again!

Without an eyeblink's pause, Tuck punches the bishop so hard he
flies back through a stained-glass window.

EXT. CASTLE BALCONY - DAY

Mortianna hauls Marian against the battlements. Peers down at
the battle. She spins in shock at Aslan's voice.

ASLAN
What you fear is not below.

He charges at her with the bloody spear. She SCREAMS hideously as
he thrusts it right through her chest.

Her madness is superhuman. With strength beyond all reason, she crawls up the spear's shaft, forcing it further through her body in her effort to get at him. Clutching, SCREECHING, HISSING.

Her talons groping at his face, Aslan strains to the last ounce of his will and heaves her over the battlements. WITH AN EAR-SPLITTING SHRIEK, SHE PLUMMETS TO THE GROUND.

INT. CASTLE CHAPEL - DAY

Sword raised, Nottingham has Robin backed against the altar.

NOTTINGHAM

What can your puny God do
for you now?

The blade comes whirring down... CLANG!
It's blocked. Robin has the altar's crucifix in his hand.

He swings it again, slamming Nottingham across the temple.
The Sheriff hits the floor. Robin grabs his father's sword.
Raises it two-fisted. Nottingham tries to squirm away.

ROBIN

This is for my father.

HE DRIVES THE SWORD DOWN, LIKE A STAKE, RIGHT THROUGH
NOTTINGHAM'S HEART. The man shudders, and is still.

Robin stands over him. Drained. Tuck rushes outside. Kneels at
Aslan's side. Robin spots Marian swaying on the edge of the
steep parapet.

EXT. CASTLE BALCONY - DAY

Robin grabs Marian, pulling her back. Carefully lifts her face.
Her lifeless eyes suddenly flash. She lashes out. A spitfire.

MARIAN

Let me go! Who are you?

ROBIN (restraining her)

I'm your sworn protector.
Any way I see fit.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

Robin emerges from the castle. Draped over his shoulder, Marian is kicking and beating at him. He reaches the fountain in the center of the square and tosses her into the freezing water.

She leaps to her feet, yelling. Slips and tumbles back. Water streams from her bridal gown. A crowd gathers, enjoying the show..

MARIAN

Robin? Oh God, is that you?

She stumbles out of the fountain... and storms at him, pounding her fists on his chest.

MARIAN

How dare you?!

Robin grins at the crowd.

ROBIN

I think she's feeling better.

Marian looks about her... the chaotic aftermath of battle. Reality gradually sinks in. She folds against Robin's chest.

Little John arrives, his huge arms enfolding Wulf and Fanny.

LITTLE JOHN

We done it, mate. We clobbered the buggers.

FANNY

Are you 'urt?

ROBIN

It will mend.

He spots a group kneeling beside the fallen body of Aslan. His smile fades. He runs over. Cradles Aslan's head.

ROBIN

Aslan, my friend.

ASLAN

I'm going home the easy way, Robin.

FRIAR (shaking Aslan)

You die on me, you son of Satan, and I swear I'll bury you as a Christian in St. Catherine's cathedral with a thousand monks chanting prayers for your miserable soul. You hear me?

ASLAN (weakly)
I have no strength, Brother Tuck.

FRIAR (kicking him)
A fine friend you are! By the grace of
Allah and Jehovah we have won the day,
and you want to give up the ghost. I'll
pickle your remains in mead, lay you
in your grave with a pig for a companion,
and mark it with a cross as big as this castle.

ASLAN
Please! It hurts when I laugh.

FRIAR
See. There's life in the heathen dog yet.

ROBIN (laughs)
Here, Tuck. Look after him.
You deserve each other.

Robin stands, Marian joins him. Around them CHEERING grows, till
the whole crowd is in unison.

CROWD
Robin Hood! Robin Hood!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

A voice echoes from the vaulted roof. A wedding is in progress.

FRIAR (O/C)
By the power vested in me by
God's holy church, I now
pronounce you husband and wife.

Tuck is performing the ceremony before the happy couple.

FRIAR
You may kiss the bride.

The husband draws back the bride's veil. Robin and Marian.
They kiss... long.

FRIAR (whispers)
Hurry. We waste good celebration time.

They break the embrace, turn to the congregation and start down the aisle. They pause at the front pew, where King Richard and members of his court are sitting. Robin bows, Marian curtsies.

KING RICHARD
May I kiss the bride?

ROBIN
Who would dare refuse his king's request?

KING RICHARD (kissing Marian's cheek)
You look radiant, cousin.

ROBIN
We are deeply honored by your majesty's presence.

KING RICHARD
It is I who am honored, Lord Locksley.
Thanks to you I still have a throne.

They continue down the aisle, past the smiling congregation. Waiting by the door is Aslan. He and Robin embrace.

ASLAN (whispers)
My friend, a word of advice...
Ride her better than your horse.

Robin laughs.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM CATHEDRAL - DAY

WEDDING BELLS peal. Robin and Marian step out into the sunlight. The crowd CHEERS. At a signal from Little John, the ex-outlaws shoot flaming arrows into the sky. Fireworks.

FADE OUT: