

PRINCE OF THIEVES

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PRINCE OF THIEVES

FADE IN:

SUNSET

The glowing orb ripples like a blood-red eye.

BLACK, ROBED FIGURE

A face of the ages. Dark, wrinkled skin. Wizedened, 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.

EXT. TWELFTH-CENTURY ARAB CITY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

INT. DUNGEONS - SUNSET

Pervasive blackness. Moans of men in pain. Dripping water. Rats. Filth. The nadir of human degradation.

Bedraggled white men, POWs 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 rat-faced 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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
unlash 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
fast 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 on to 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.

DESERTED ALLEY - LATER

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:

EXT. LOCKSLEY CASTLE (NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, ENGLAND)

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.

SUPERIMPOSE: 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. O.S. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KENNETH
They've taken my Gwen. My
daughter.

LOCKSLEY
Who has taken her?

KENNETH
Men on horses. In masks.
(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:

EXT. WOODED TRAIL

Kenneth checks the ground. Locksley waits.

KENNETH
They came this way, my Lord.

LOCKSLEY
Onward then. What is this place?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

LOCKSELY

God help us.

NOTTINGHAM

One day all England will worship
with us.

LOCKSLEY

Never.

The crone spits venom in his face.

DEMON

I am Mortiana. 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 (SARACEN)

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 (BOY)

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
some pleasure before you die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 clammers 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 fulfill 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 - 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. Mortiana 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 capitol to Nottingham?
Excellent. How?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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
numgers.

NOTTINGHAM
And victory?

MORTIANNA
Much blood will be spilled.

NOTTINGHAM
Whose?

CLOSE SHOT

A dice splashes blood. Lands -- a death's head symbol.
Mortianna hammers the platter. The dice spins and lands
again. Again the grinning skull.

BACK TO SCENE

The tray smashes to the ground. The hag runs at
Gisborne.

MORTIANNA
Who have you seen?!

She shakes him. Screams spittle in his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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, Mortiana. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Draws it to his mouth, as if to kiss it... and bites down viciously, drawing blood. The girl screams.

NOTTINGHAM

Now, my child, Mortiana's kisses
will seem soft, like an angel's.

(to Mortiana)

Take her. You have earned her.

Mortiana 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.

(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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

GRAVE SIDE - LATER

Pouring rain. Robin stands drenched at the grave side. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNCAN

Lord, no!

He chokes in shock. Spitting bread.

ASLAN

Lord, yes. But eat in peace. I take no offense.

(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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The sword is jabbed into his back. Robins faces the man -- clad in back, 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 deer head at the mask. Gaining advantage, he charges. Grabs the dagger hand, smashes it into the wall. The knife drops. 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:

INT. KITCHEN

Liquid tumbles into a goblet. The three men at a table in the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

The 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

EXT. STREAM

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 short cut, 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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 riverbed.

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

SCOPE POV

Through the scope we see the movement on the hill behind
them.

BACK TO SCENE

ASLAN

Here they come. Look.

Robin puts the device to his eye...

SCOPE POV

The soldiers are close!

BACK TO SCENE

He reacts in shock. Prepares to defend himself. Then
realizes they are still in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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
What 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 tree. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 call i'm 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 to answer
to me.

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARIOUS

1. Alms!
2. Have mercy, milady.
3. Pity, fine sir.
4. For my baby.
5. 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(as 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.

(as she tries to
hide her shock)

My cousin tells me the knave deprived you of some horses.

MARIAN

(recovering)

Yes. A most disagreeable experience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

(Robin)

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 through 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP - DAY (LATER)

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

Come on, you little piss pot.
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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

ASLAN
Here they come.

ROBIN
How many?

ASLAN
Two wagons. Twenty escort.

ROBIN
Twenty? They usually have five.

He grabs the telescope.

SCOPE POV

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.

BACK TO SCENE

ROBIN
This is no ordinary convoy.

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

BULL
'ow many?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

COUNTRYSIDE

Sparks. An axe pounds into the lock of a strongbox. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. Whoomf!

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN
You will not regret it.

FRIAR
Aye, but you may.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODSMEN'S CAMP

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 son, 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:

CAPTAIN OF 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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (CONT'D)

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 God's sake, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 country working in his 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. It's 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

FRIAR

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.

FRIAR

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

OLD WOMAN

Unless Robin Hood takes it first!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

FRIAR
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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 practicing 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

BOUQUET

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(as John is 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRIAR (CONT'D)

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

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.

REDHEAD 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 dewey 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?

(as Bull nods)

Damn them to hell! They must have
Marian. Do you know where they
meet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

EXT. CAVES

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.

POV THROUGH SCOPE - CIRCLE OF STONES

No one visible. Debris. Smoke rises from ashes. Remnants of a recent ceremony.

BACK TO SCENE

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!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIAN

Because you love me. Say it.
You love me.
(as 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 Mortiana.

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.
(cackles)
Your resistance is strong, but
useless. Sign this.
(as 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 RICHOCHETS 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. Mortiana retreats, scurry-
ing into the depths of the cave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 pile-drives 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 Mortiana, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASLAN

It worked for me this very morning.

(as 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.

LITTLE JOHN
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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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, head-pieces 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, signalling his own foot soldiers to advance. The Chieftain raises his sword. Instantly a tumultuous chilling roar from his warriors. They charge forward.

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - DAY

The bloodcurdling 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

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

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

FRIAR

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 Sherrif'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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 (PRISONER)

(pure terror)

... Er... pain.

NOTTINGHAM

Torture him... you see, it makes no difference.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NOTTINGHAM (CONT'D)

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 sword point 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRIAR

Robin Hood! Robin Hood! Robin Hood!

(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 gets 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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... meee... tttt...

He can't get it out. Little John covers Hal's mouth.

LITTLE JOHN

'E's in. We're 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:

BRANCHES

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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...

(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.
(pushes past Little
John)

Robin, I been to town an' seen the
scaffold and the guard towers.

LITTLE JOHN

Ya gone bleedin' cracked, girl?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

... Mortiana'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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. Mortiana 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
 Di not give me riddles, woman. We
 are to be married within hours.
 How can we be in danger?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(as 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 harness 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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:

EXT. SCAFFOLD

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 Sherriff'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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He aims. Grits his teeth... picks off the Celt with a shaft.

LITTLE JOHN
...Or don't fight at all.

ON SCENE

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 SCAFFOLD

Wulf guards the steps, beating back all comers.

ON SCENE

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

REDHEAD 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 redhead 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 ckicken-'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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. Mortiana 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 Mortiana. 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.

Mortiana screams and slashes her talons across the Bishop's outstretched hands. Blood flows.

MORTIANA

Face them, or face me.

EXT. CASTLE GATE - DAY

Robin leaps onto Tuck's cart.

ROBIN

Light all the barrels, Tuck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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, 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 passages. 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. Mortiana 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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... Stupified, 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'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WULF

Sorry, Father. Couldn't help myself.

LITTLE JOHN

Well, ya'll get a bloody good wallopin' 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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FANNY (CONT'D)

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 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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... Mortiana creeps up on Aslan.

ROBIN

(glimpsing her)

Watch out!

Aslan spins... too late. Screeching, Mortiana 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.

Mortiana 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

Mortiana hauls Marian against the battlements. Peers down at the battle. She spins in shock at Aslan's voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRIAR (O.S.)
 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.

THE END