

MEDIEVAL

by

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Once Upon A Time In Medieval Europe...

BLACK.

GYPSY (V.O.)
Shut and listen. I will tell you a story. Our story. The names are not important. History will not remember us. Only the consequences of our actions. It is the story of the greatest heist ever pulled. The story of how our world died, and yours was born. The truth. You know how it ended. This is how it began.

INT. JAIL CELL - DUSK

Fetid would be an understatement. Vile's close, but doesn't quite do it justice. Our not so Magnificent Seven -- A GYPSY, A ZULU, A SHAOLIN MONK, A VIKING, A SAMURAI, AN ARAB and a KNIGHT, strangers with nothing in common save for a communal date with the executioner -- await the inevitable.

Dying sun casts crooked shadows on the dirt floor. They spell

CHAPTER I: THE GATHERING

Gypsy's feet trample the words, erasing them from screen. 20s, tall, dark, but not handsome. You don't stay pretty for long in his world.

GYPSY
Hey! I'm innocent! Hey! Hey! I was judge-fucked! Hey!

Zulu stands by the window, looking out at the fading light. Viking, back against a far wall, stares at nothing, lost in a sea of memories. Arab sits in one corner, Monk in another, prayer beads passing through his fingers. Knight is asleep. Samurai is trying to scratch his name into the stone with a piece of wood. It SNAPS like the proverbial last straw.

SAMURAI
Are you going to whine all night?!

GYPSY
Careful, friend, or the good people of this city may not have the opportunity to hang your proper.

SAMURAI
Any time, gyppo.

PUSH IN ON GYPSY.

GYPSY
When you call me that... smile.

INT. TENEMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

WHAM, a door EXPLODES off its hinges, revealing our Gypsy, running as if his life depends on speed. At the moment, it does.

Because behind him, hauling ass in pursuit, are four THUGS with truncheons in their hands and murder in their eyes.

Reality is a blur, smeared into staccato impressions.

Gypsy parkours around the corner, more bad guys incoming, shit, he jumps up, grabs an overhead pipe, slides over their heads. Bodychecks the last thug into the wall. A closed window looms; he dives through it straight into-

EXT. ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

A medieval metropolis lies before us like a human anthill. It's nameless and vast, instantly assaulting our senses with a battery of sounds, sights and smells. Think New York for the Middle Ages. But the scenic tour will have to wait cause-

Gypsy plummets to the ground, a thug hot on his heels. Both in free fall. Gypsy grabs a laundry line, breaks it, SNAP. Swings along the side of the building, swashbuckler style. Rolls onto the roof. Yep, he's that good.

The thug isn't. Wilhelm SCREAM. THUD. Gravity's a bitch.

Gypsy sprints for the edge, arms pumping like pistons. Soars over the gap. The rest of the posse follow, matching him jump for jump. One. Two. Three. The fourth one slips, CRUNCH, gets a broken ankle for his efforts.

Rapidly approaching the end of the block. A sheer drop yawns ahead. Gypsy powers toward it.

LEAD THUG

Give it up!!!

He doesn't seem to know the meaning of the word. Launches--

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sails through the air from four stories up. Hits the canvas top of a moving ox drawn cart. RIPS through it. Tumbles out of the back. And he's off again.

Knives between pedestrians, vendors and horsemen, over, under and around, leaving a mess in his wake, cuts into an alley--

WHAM, Gypsy's JACKED UPWARD as if plucked by an invisible hand. The world rotates 180 degrees. What the-?

That's because he's hanging upside down in a heavy net. Hunters converge. Everyone is too drained to speak. Until,

GYPSY

I swear to God, it wasn't me.

LEAD THUG

Then why were you running, boyo?

GYPSY

Habit.

They cut him down. Shove him against the wall none too gently. The leader produces a nasty looking blade. And just as we expect him to carve our hero like a Christmas turkey...

He slices Gypsy's jacket open. A purse falls out.

GYPSY

Mine, Constable.

That's right. The thugs are actually cops. The good guys. The afore-mentioned Constable extracts another purse.

GYPSY

It's been a good year. (beat; more purses) A very good year.

A string of pearls follows.

GYPSY

For my sweetheart.

And a diamond encrusted cross.

GYPSY

I'm a deeply religious man.

CONSTABLE

So is the Bishop from whom this was stolen. You're wanted, gyppo. Top of the list.

GYPSY

Gentlemen, gentlemen, this is all a misunderstanding. A coincidence, I assure you. Here, allow me prove it.

He delivers a swift kick to the guy's nuts. One of the cops swings a sap. SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING (RESUME PRESENT)

Gypsy vs. Samurai. Fight in 5-4-3-2-

KNIGHT

(eyes still closed)

Let it go.

Guess he's not quite as asleep as we figured. Samurai shifts his attention toward Knight, contemplating the variety of ways in which he can slaughter this man. Chuckles ruefully.

PUSH IN ON SAMURAI. He's young. Cruelly handsome. A rock star.

SAMURAI

You're right. He's not worth killing.
No one will know about it anyway.

INT. BROTHEL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

WHAM, a PUNCH lands. Another. Blood spurts. Two men, their hands wrapped in resin studded with shards of broken glass, tear into one another like wild dogs. All around them pimps, whores, pushers, and other assorted scum CHEER and make bets. We rise up, above the arena, through the ceiling and over the bed where we conclude our journey on-

INT. ROOM - DAY

Samurai's face, as he listens to the CLAMOR of the crowd below. A thin smirk dances on his lips, never reaching the vacant eyes.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Remember our arrangement.

He shifts his attention toward a semi-naked woman. This isn't post-coital bliss. More like disgust. Grabs her by the wrist, drawing her into a rough kiss.

SAMURAI

Remind me again.

She SLAPS him. He SLAPS her back. Then kisses her again. She resists. Then surrenders. Reminds him.

INT. BROTHEL - DAY

Back in the arena attendants mop off blood and broken teeth. The mob is hungry for more. A Spanish swordsman, covered in glory and scars, steps into the ring. A volley of wagers,

SPECTATOR #1

Japanese, six moves!

SPECTATOR #2

Spaniard, seven!

SPECTATOR #3

Japanese, nine!

Spaniard doesn't allow himself to be distracted. He's as sharp as the fabled Toledo steel he wields. Waits for his opponent...

Finally Samurai swaggers into the ring. Ali minus the gloves.

SAMURAI

(tosses a purse to a bookie)
One move.

Bettors freeze for a beat, processing this. Then a renewed frenzy of activity, as everyone jumps in on the action.

Spaniard nods, ready to rumble. Samurai doesn't return the favor. Scratches. Stretches. Then, just as we brace ourselves for the greatest duel in the history of modern cinema...

SAMURAI

Before we begin, you should know that your wife came to me. She offered herself in exchange for sparing your life. So I took her offer. Twice.

On Spaniard. Can't, won't believe it. But then he sees his wife's face in the crowd. Her secret. Her shame.

He ROARS with blind rage and charges.

Samurai cuts him down with one casual stroke, flicks the blood off the blade and slides it back into the scabbard before the body hits the ground.

The SHRIEK of the widow is drowned by the CHEER of the mob. Right on cue a battering ram SPLINTERS the door. It's a-

BOOKIE

RAID!!!

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING (RESUME PRESENT)

Samurai takes in the surroundings. The filth. The company.

SAMURAI

Never thought it would end like this...

ZULU

How did you think it would end?

His stare remains fixed on the world beyond the bars.

SAMURAI

With a sword in my hand. In battle against men. Not with a noose around my neck, next to a slave.

PUSH IN ON ZULU. His bare back is a mesh of scars. Some ancient. Some fresh. A roadmap of pain.

ZULU

I was born in chains. Tomorrow I die in them next to an ass. So I guess neither one of us gets what he wants.

EXT. SLAVE MARKET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The DIN of the auction. Buyers argue with sellers as they poke, prod and fondle the merchandize.

Zulu sits under the scorching sun. Awaits his turn.

Unlike those who bid on them, the slaves are silent. Men. Women. Children. Young. Old. Rich. Poor. All races, classes and creeds mixed together, now equal in their inequality.

A pack of exotic animals are caged across from their human counterparts. Lions. Panthers. Zebras. A giraffe peers curiously at the commotion.

Zulu's gaze settles on a mangy tiger. Flies crawl over his once magnificent hide. It doesn't bother to shoo them away.

Their eyes connect. Each recognizing something in the other...

VOICE (O.S.)

That one.

Zulu looks up at the MAN looming over him. A BEDUIN TRADER sidelines, working his greasy charm.

TRADER

Ah, you don't want him, my friend.
This one is rotten. *Foonta*. Come
now, I have a sweet supple-

MAN

Him. (to Zulu) Get up.

Trader reinforces the request with a kick. Slowly Zulu complies. The man inspects his powerful frame.

MAN

Open your mouth. (no reaction) Is he
deaf? Open your mouth!

Zulu doesn't budge. The buyer tries to pry his jaws open.

TRADER

I told you he's trouble. If it was
anyone but your master, I'd be glad
to be rid of him. But I don't cross
my customers. At least not the ones
who can cross me back.

MAN

You're a credit to your profession.
But taming a wild beast is half the
fun.

He swings a cane. Punctuates each word with a savage BLOW.

MAN

Open. Your. Mouth.

Zulu staggers to remain upright. Swallows the pain. And then his chapped lips finally move, albeit not quite in the intended fashion. A promise, not a threat:

ZULU

If you touch me again, I'll kill you.

The man grins. Since Zulu's hands are chained behind his back, he can afford to.

MAN

You see, he's improving already.
Now I know he can speak. And that
he has a sense of humor.

The cane RISES again. Descends--

Zulu HEADBUTTS its owner mid-stroke. Breaks his nose, driving it into the brain. A bloody CRUNCH.

The man stands there. Blinks once. Then pitches over, dead.

The entire market stops for a split second. And for that one second every slave in it feels free.

But only for a second...

Trader's whip slashes across Zulu's face. Others rush to help. A rain of blows. Vicious. Relentless. Brutal. Zulu refuses to go down. Finally does.

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING (RESUME PRESENT)

Samurai readies a retort. Another voice preempts his.

VIKING

Would be a shame if it rained tomorrow.
My bones always ache when it rains.

SAMURAI

You're going to die, and all you're
worried about is the weather?!

VIKING

If I'm going to meet my maker, I'd
rather do it dry. And with dignity.

SAMURAI

Ahh, a philosopher. Tell me, oh wise
one, what grave manner of sin have
you committed to earn your place
here? Stealing chickens? Sticking it
into another man's wife?

PUSH IN ON VIKING. He's big and heavy, like a chipped chunk of concrete, with arms too long in sleeves too short.

VIKING

Murder.

INT. FORGE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Viking's hammer POUNDS red hot steel, shaping a horseshoe. His SON, 14, fair haired like his father, helps. They work as one. Comfortable in each other's silence.

VOICE (O.S.)

I still say you're better off making swords instead of plowshares.

They call him HUGH OF THE HAND. Life's been good, and he's got the threads, the tan and the fake jewelry to show for it. The boy glares at the intruder. Viking keeps swinging.

VIKING

I paid you three weeks ago.

HUGH

True. But as of this moment rent's going up. Someone leans on me, I have to lean on you. Shite rolls down. And unfortunately for you, I got the runs.

The kid's had enough, about to jump in--

VIKING

Stay out of this, Einar.

HUGH

Listen to your father, boy. He's smarter than he looks.

Viking tightens his grip on the hammer. Hugh takes note.

HUGH

There's that too. But somehow I don't think you have the stones. Or do you?

A pregnant pause.

VIKING

Bottom shelf. Behind the tongs.

Hugh digs out a jar of coins. Viking's life savings. Shakes out half into his own purse. Then more than half.

HUGH

I don't get you, Northman. Your kind are supposed to be fierce bastards who'd skull-fuck a man just for sport.

(MORE)

HUGH(cont'd)
 But not you. You always turn the other
 cheek. Either you are Christ. Or a
 coward. Either way, it's a pleasure
 doing business with you.

He walks out. Einar stares at his father. Disgusted. Ashamed.

EINAR

Why?

Viking doesn't look him in eye. Keeps POUNDING the steel, as if trying to take out his frustration on it.

VIKING

Some day you'll understand.

Beat. He turns around. But his son is already gone.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Hugh strolls away. Einar catches up, armed with a chisel.

EINAR

Give me back the money!

HUGH BACKHANDS him without looking. Dangles the purse.

HUGH

You got some grit there, boy.

Einar rushes him again. Gets knocked back into the dirt. Blood on his lips. Tears in his eyes. Hugh is enjoying this.

HUGH

Look on the bright side. At least
 you are nothing like your father.
 If he is your father. Personally, I
 doubt he was even man enough to
 knock up your whore of a mother.

He senses movement. Flicks his eyes off the boy toward Viking running toward them. Grins, prepares...

Which is when Einar lunges--

VIKING

Einar!!! Don't!!!

Too late. The chisel sinks into Hugh's chest. Red and wet.

Hugh stares at Einar in disbelief, seeing his own terror reflected in the boy's eyes. It's as if for one haunting heartbeat time freezes, searing the image into their respective retinas, before--

Hugh collapses. Viking kneels beside him, trying to staunch the wound. Hugh whimpers. Not so tough anymore.

HUGH
Don't... let me die... Please...

Blood seeps through the fingers.

VIKING
I am sorry.

Hugh's fading fast. A weak smirk. And a whisper,

HUGH
Tell it to your son... when they
hang him.

He dies as he lived - poorly.

Viking rises to his feet. Looks at the gathering mob. At his son, shaking with panic and desperation. Wishing he could make it all go away. Wishing he could wake up. Wishing...

VIKING
Go home. I'll take care of this.

EINAR
Father...

VIKING
(a sudden roar)
I said go!!!

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING (RESUME PRESENT)

Gypsy stretches, bored.

GYPSY
I'd give my left testicle for a
drink. Or a decent meal. Or a woman.
Or a guard with the key, so I could
go get myself a drink, a decent meal
and a woman.

KNIGHT
You ever think about anything other than
drinking, eating, whoring or stealing?

GYPSY
It's what I do best. (beat) So what
are you in for?

KNIGHT
Being a good Samaritan.

GYPSY
Serves you right. It's a dog eat
dog world, old man. Should have
learned it by now.

Knight, eyes still closed, smiles to himself.

GYPSY

Did I say something funny?

KNIGHT

What do you know of the world? You've never set foot outside this city. Think you're special? There's a hundred of you in every shithole town from here to Damascus. You're nothing but a petty thief who'll die just as you lived - broke, ignorant and alone. And for your information, boy, dogs don't eat dogs. Unlike us, they have enough intelligence not to destroy their own kind.

On Gypsy. First flicker of emotion in those dusky eyes.

GYPSY

And yet tomorrow you hang with the rest of us. What does that say about you?

PUSH IN ON KNIGHT, as he finally looks at his cellmate. It's not the years, it's the mileage. Nothing but the truth,

KNIGHT

That I'm as big of a fool as you. The only difference is I know it.

INT. TAVERN - SUNSET (FLASHBACK)

Dice rolls. Another loss, the latest in a long line.

DEALER

Tough luck. Wanna try again?

KNIGHT

Not my day.

He slams down a drink. Rises unsteadily to his feet.

KNIGHT

Which way to the harbor?

DEALER

North. Where you headed?

Knight shrugs. Like he cares.

DEALER

Stick around. Word is, the king and his brother are calling for another Crusade. They are raising an army to liberate the Holy Land.

KNIGHT

I've been there. There's nothing holy about it. And nothing worth liberating.

DEALER

Bullshit. I hear the Pope himself-

KNIGHT

I hear we're all dead, and this is hell. I hear the meek shall inherit the earth. I even hear the world is round. Perhaps all of it is true. Perhaps none. Either way, I just don't give a damn any more.

EXT. TAVERN - SUNSET

Knight unties his horse. Walks away. Passes by,

EXT. ALLEY - SUNSET

A wolfpack of mercs surround a young woman. A girl practically. They are about to... well, you figure it out.

MERC

What's the matter, sweetheart? You don't fancy us no more?

GIRL

Help!!! Help!!!

Nobody's coming. Nobody ever comes.

Knight watches without expression. One of the soon to be rapists becomes aware of his presence. Grins.

MERC

You got three choices, mate. Fuck her when we're finished. Fuck off. Or get fucked.

The girl pleads silently, eyes filled with tears, with hope...

Knight turns away. Resumes his journey. What's one more injustice in a world defined by injustice.

Merc grabs the girl. Mouth at her ear.

MERC

Go ahead. Scream. (a sick smile)
Scream for daddy.

Her eyes widen. But not because of Merc. Because-

Knight is back.

SNAPS Merc's neck. Cleaves his buddy's skull. Splits a torso. Eviscerates the third.

The last Merc hides behind the girl. Dagger at her throat.

LAST MERC
Move, and she-

Knight throws the sword. It PLOWS through the guy's head mid-ultimatum, pins him against the wall like a butterfly. The afore-mentioned dagger falls out of his lifeless hand, CLANKS harmlessly on the cobblestones.

The girl stares. Not sure if she should be grateful for her rescue. Or terrified of the man who brought it about.

KNIGHT
Next time don't cry for help. Yell
"Fire!" Everyone comes running.

Speaking of which, FOOTFALLS approach. He turns, ready for more.

Here comes the local law. Their CAPTAIN eyes the carnage. The guy with a sword through his noggin, still twitching in the afterlife. Then the blood-splattered Knight. Judging by his unfazed expression, for him, this is Tuesday.

CAPTAIN
Let me guess. Self defence.

KNIGHT
We had a difference of opinion on
the subject of carnal relations.

CAPTAIN
Cute. Got a witness?

KNIGHT
Sure. Ask the girl.

CAPTAIN
Girl? What girl?

Knight looks around. She's already gone. A tired mantra,

KNIGHT
Not my day.

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING (RESUME PRESENT)

Darkness falls. Arab begins to sing softly in his native tongue. It's a quiet lament, haunting and otherworldly, like an exotic bird flapping wings in its cage.

ZULU
Sounds pretty.

KNIGHT
Don't let him fool you. He's
Hashshashin. A killer.

GYPSY
Like you?

KNIGHT
No. Not like me. When I kill a man,
I look him in the eye.

PUSH IN ON ARAB. His delicate features are that of a poet or scholar, rather than a member of the dreaded sect of assassins, which gave birth to the word itself. SMASH TO:

EXT. BAZAAR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A carnival of spices, silk, cobras, camels, chickens, chilled monkey brain, pots, relics, beggars, bargains, exotic, loud, raw, all of it tossed at us at dizzying pitch and pace.

Suddenly it's quiet. Dead quiet.

EXT. ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

Tight on Arab's eye, as it studies the three ring circus below with the aid of a rudimentary spyglass. His POV:

A roll of fabric sways gently in the afternoon breeze.

Sun glitters off jewels and glass works.

A WELL DRESSED MAN, clearly someone of importance, wades through the crowd, surrounded by his five man escort.

Back to Arab. We widen the shot to reveal that the aforementioned spyglass is attached to the frame of a compound Mongol bow. And then its owner lets go of the string...

We are the arrow that travels 400 yards -- past a stray pigeon, between hanging rugs, through the spokes of a wheel -- gleaming as it comes out of the sun, thanks to tiny fragments of glass embedded in its shaft -- blinding the bodyguards for a split second and hitting the target

Dead Fucking Center.

Bodyguards recover. Cluster around the corpse, trying to process what the hell just happened. We leave them to it.

Back to the rooftop. It's already empty.

EXT. ADJACENT STREET - DAY

Arab melts into the foot traffic. Moves with the herd, hiding in plain sight. Just another lowly merchant.

Up ahead guards are blocking off the street. Too late to turn back. Too crowded to run. He keeps moving. Approaches the roadblock. Closer... Closer... Almost through...

GUARD (O.S.)
You there! Halt!!

Arab is a pro. Had to end sometime. Everything does.

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING (RESUME PRESENT)

SAMURAI
One idiot shuts up. Another takes his place. (to Arab) Silence! Quiet! Shh! Do you understand me???

Apparently not. What we have here is failure to communicate.

ZULU
I wonder what he's singing about.

MONK (O.S.)
Home.

He's been so quiet we've almost forgotten he's there.

MONK
The song is a story. A story of a man far away from his land, longing to return. Somewhere, across oceans and mountains, there is a place filled with beauty and promise. A home of his ancestors. A woman who's waiting for him. Sometimes they are so close he can almost touch them. (beat) But he knows he will never see them again. Because he can't go back. Because he's not what he once was. Because he's lost. And so all that is left is the road and a dream of what can never be.

VIKING
Where did you learn his language?

PUSH IN ON MONK. An aura of detached calm wrapped around him like his worn robes.

MONK
I didn't.

INT. TEMPLE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The light of a candle, reflected in Monk's eyes.

Incense fumes spiral toward the heavens. Enormous statue of Buddha towers over the lone worshipper.

Monk searches his serene, inscrutable face. Looking for answers. Finding none.

ABBOT (O.S.)
You should eat.

An old ABBOT holds a meager bowl of rice. Without turning,

MONK
I'm not hungry.

ABBOT
You've been praying for hours. And in my experience, enlightenment is rarely attained on an empty stomach.

MONK
I don't want enlightenment.

ABBOT
Then what is it you want?

The flame of the candle moves almost imperceptibly, caught by the tiniest of drafts. Monk's eyes find Abbot's.

MONK
You already know what I want.

Slowly Abbot nods.

ABBOT
Yes. A man... came to me. He said you boarded a ship bound for this place. That sooner or later you'd come here. That I could be a rich man if I told him when. Or a dead one if I didn't. (beat) I am sorry.

Soldiers emerge from the shadows. Dozens of them. Monk makes no attempt to resist. To Abbot,

MONK
...Pray for me. I cannot.

Temple bell TOLLS. Perhaps it tolls for Monk.

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING (RESUME PRESENT)

SAMURAI
Well, that settles it. I'm in hell.

VOICE (O.S.)
Not yet. But soon enough, I imagine.

Heads turn to face a short, well groomed man, standing by the bars. It's as if he materialized out of thin air.

MAN

Good evening, gentlemen. I am your attorney.

KNIGHT

Seeing how we've already been tried, convicted and sentenced, I'd say you either lost or late.

LAWYER

Neither. However, as time is of the essence, I'll come straight to the point. I am here to offer you an opportunity.

GYPSY

Hmmm. Last time I heard those words, I believe I lost money.

LAWYER

This time you will gain your freedom.

That gets everyone's attention.

ZULU

I didn't catch your name, friend.

LAWYER

My name is not nearly as relevant as your current predicament or my proposal. Suffice it to say, I represent a person of considerable influence who is willing to broker your release in return for the completion of a small and simple task.

VIKING

Define "small."

LAWYER

One job. One night's work. Break into the royal palace. Retrieve a certain item. Return it to me.

KNIGHT

And those of us who might survive this "simple" task?...

LAWYER

Will be rich beyond measure.

We PAN over the faces of the men, as they study the lawyer, processing the deal, weighing the risks, working the angles...

GYPSY

...Why us?

LAWYER
 (nods toward Arab)
 Ask your cellmate. He already knows.

Arab's voice has no accent. So much for the language barrier.

ARAB
 Because none but the mad or the
 desperate would undertake this action.
 (beat) We, apparently, are both.

They digest it, grim. Off that,

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Last Supper. Gypsy piles enough to feed a small village on a
 plate, joins the others. As they eat,

LAWYER
 His Majesty is quite protective of his
 person and his treasure. In order to
 thwart those who may desire to claim
 either, he has commissioned an
 extensive array of security measures.
 Good news is, we know what and where
 they are. At least most of them.

ARAB
 And the bad?

LAWYER
 The man who designed them was a
 genius. One of your people, I believe.

KNIGHT
 Can he be found?

LAWYER
 Yes. In the graveyard. Our king found
 it prudent to dispose of not only the
 keep's plans, but also its planner.
 Here's what we do know...

EXT. CITY/INT. PALACE - NIGHT

The following happens in one continuous shot.

PULL BACK, fast and furious, flying through the window and over
 the city, toward the palace, seeing firsthand what he describes.

LAWYER (V.O.)
 The wall is the height of ten men.
 Sentries are Varangian Guard.
 King's elite mercenary corps.
 Double patrols at night, plus dogs.
 That's the easy part.
 (MORE)

LAWYER(cont'd)
 Beyond it, on the far side of the
 Great Hall, is the sole means of
 entry into the king's quarters.
 Which is where things get tricky...

We melt through the walls of the palace, tracking alongside a
 comely chamber maid, as she walks toward-

LAWYER (V.O.)
 First, there is an archway of rather
 unique design. No metal object -- no
 matter how small or carefully
 concealed -- can pass through it.

The maid's earrings levitate as if pulled toward the ceiling
 by some invisible force. She hands them to a guard, standing
 by the mouth of the passage. More loom on the other side.
 Their armor is made out of leather. Iron bolt tips have been
 replaced by flint. Ivory spears. Obsidian swords.

LAWYER (V.O.)
 Which means you'll not be able to use
 your weapons to get past the guards.
 But they will be able to use theirs.

Moving further...

LAWYER (V.O.)
 Beyond it is a corridor. They call it
 "The Nightingale Floor." Even the
 slightest step will produce a distinct
 chirping sound, which will alert the
 guards. It will also activate a
 mechanism hidden within its walls.

We sink below the surface, following a web of silver wires
 toward a battery of crossbows lined along the length of the
 hallway. An understatement of the century,

LAWYER (V.O.)
 I suggest you do not trigger it.

We streak past the razor sharp arrowheads, through the walls
 and back inside the corridor, zeroing in on-

LAWYER (V.O.)
 At the end of the passage there is a
 door, the only key to which the king
 keeps on his person at all times. Once
 the lock is touched, you will have thirty
 beats of a resting heart to open it.

Through the keyhole, inside the lock itself... an elaborate maze
 of springs and wheels topped by an hourglass, connected to-

GYPSY (V.O.)
 And if we don't?

Spikes. Long, gleaming...

LAWYER (V.O.)

You die.

Spikes release right into our face. BLACK.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Silence speaks volumes. Then,

VIKING

It can't be done.

LAWYER

For your sake, I hope you're wrong. Once through the door, you'll be inside the treasury. Its riches are as grand as the means employed to defend them. Feel free to take as much as you can carry. All my master desires is the crown.

ARAB

Every job needs a getaway plan. Timing. Precision. Patience. We'll need a week-

LAWYER

Tonight. Non-negotiable.

Gypsy is the first one to rise.

GYPSY

Well, it's been fun.

He heads for the door. Others follow. The attorney is unfazed.

LAWYER

I take it, it's your intention not to honor our agreement.

SAMURAI

If I decide to commit suicide, I'll do it my way. Not yours.

ZULU

As much as I hate to agree...

GYPSY

But thanks for the free meal.

He grabs an apple. Takes a bite--

LAWYER

What makes you think it was free?

Gypsy stops mid chomp, as it dawns on them...

LAWYER
That's right. Poison. Tasteless.
Odorless. And utterly deadly.

Arab moves. Hand on Lawyer's throat, fingers like a vise.

ARAB
Antidote. You have three seconds.

His target may be about to lose his life, but not his cool.

LAWYER
You disappoint me. Do you actually believe I would be foolish enough to carry it on my person? Besides, any harm you intend to do me pales in comparison to the wrath of my employer should I fail in my task. So...?

Arab weighs the man and the moment. Releases.

LAWYER
The poison is activated by sunlight. I'm told the effects are rather... unpleasant. I expect to see you here tomorrow before the sun crests the horizon. You will give me the crown. And I will give you the cure.

Pauses on the threshold. A small smile,

LAWYER
Good night. And good luck.

And he's out. A silent beat like calm before the storm.

GYPSY
Ah fuck...

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - LATER

They get ready. Sharpening blades. Checking and re-checking their gear. The mood is... well, how would you feel if you were about to go on a suicide mission? Yeah. Kinda like that.

Each wields a signature weapon. Longsword for Knight. Bow for Arab. Spears for Zulu. Throwing knives and short sword for Gypsy. Battle axe for Viking. Katana and Wakizashi for Samurai. Last but not least,

GYPSY
What about him?

Monk sits quietly in the corner, deep in meditation.

KNIGHT

He's a Shaolin monk. (off Gypsy's look)
He doesn't need a weapon. He is one.
Can you pick a lock?

GYPSY

Do I look like a common thief?

KNIGHT

Yes.

GYPSY

Then I can pick a lock.

Samurai runs a whetting stone along the edge of the katana.
Listens to the vibration, a musician fine-tuning his
instrument. Zulu approaches.

SAMURAI

Don't.

Zulu ignores him, sits across, tests spears for balance.

SAMURAI

I heard your kind are savages who
dance naked around the fire and eat
human flesh. Is that true?

ZULU

I heard yours were honorable and
polite. Apparently we were both
misinformed.

Samurai rises slowly. Zulu doesn't. Then,

SAMURAI

I won't soil my sword on you.

He strides away, settles near Viking. Resumes the ritual.

VIKING

A fine blade.

SAMURAI

What would you know of fine blades?

VIKING

I know that it took fourteen days and
three men to forge it. I know that its
steel was folded twelve times, forming
over four thousand layers, to burn off
its impurities and increase its
strength. And I know that you're two
stone strokes off on the left side.

Samurai nods, surprised. Impressed even.

SAMURAI

It belonged to my father. And his father before him. (beat) They lived, and they died, and no one remembers them. The blade endures. Glory endures. I will not be like them, blacksmith. I will be remembered.

He lets it sink in.

VIKING

It is a fine blade. And yet when all is said and done, it kills just like any other piece of steel. (beat) It's easy to make a sword. To take a life. Much harder to create one. To raise it. To make it into a man.

He takes Samurai's place across from Zulu.

ZULU

...My name is-

VIKING

I don't need to know it.

Zulu nods, accepting the terms. To each his own.

EXT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - PATIO - NIGHT

Knight gazes out toward the palace. Without turning,

KNIGHT

We are fucked as the day is long, are we not, Arab?

The latter approaches from behind.

ARAB

Yes. (beat) What you said about me back in the cell. About my kind. I know yours, Crusader. I've seen what you've done. I've smelled it. Thousands of rotting corpses littering the streets of our cities. The ashes of our mosques. The charred bodies of my wife and children.

Knight says nothing. Just stares into the night. Then,

KNIGHT

We all have something to atone for.

ARAB

Yes. (beat) If we live through this, I will kill you.

Knight nods, accepting the challenge.

KNIGHT
If we live.

EXT. PALACE WALL - NIGHT

Flames pass into view. A platoon of GUARDS march past, the light of their torches illuminating words etched into stone.

CHAPTER II: THE HEIST

Gypsy, spiderlike, hands coated with chalk, climbs across the title. No safety lines. Moving purely by touch. Twenty feet up.

The rest of the group. Tense. Watching.

Thirty. Forty. Almost there... Pulls himself upward-

A score of BATS, nestled in the crack, EXPLODE into his face!

Guards run up, alerted by the noise. Look upward.

The sheer surface of the wall disappears into darkness. We move within it to find-

Gypsy dangles above, beyond the range of their torches. Off balance, teetering, his entire body battling the inevitable...

GUARD
...Bats?

Gypsy's grip gives. He plummets-

Zulu is a blur. Cocks and hurls a spear in one fluid motion.

It sails through the air, digs into the stone. Gypsy grabs the shaft, breaking the fall. The tips of his feet hover just inches outside of Guard's light.

CORPORAL reacts to the WHOOSH, peers into the night. Nothing.

CORPORAL
...Aye, bats. Move 'em out.

They resume their patrol. Zulu's eyes open, white on black -- Corporal was close enough to smell him.

Gypsy re-establishes his hold. Resumes the climb.

INT. PALACE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Two GUARDS loiter by a small, heavily barred gate. One of them yawns. WHAM, Gypsy drops from above, cushioning the fall with their bodies.

CLICK, the gate's lock disengages. Knight's last through, catches Gypsy rifling through the guards' pockets. Hand in the cookie jar,

GYPSY

Habit.

INT. ARCHWAY - PALACE - NIGHT

A large detachment of guards, armed with non-metallic weapons, polices the other side. Look and mean business.

FOOTSTEPS. As in someone's coming toward them through the arch. That's right, folks, it's-

Monk.

SERGEANT

Halt!

Prayer beads running between his fingers. Keeps coming.

SERGEANT

I said, halt!!!

Bowmen take aim. Cut loose. Ivory tipped shafts WHISTLE toward-

At the last moment Monk tilts his head to the side, an almost lackadaisical gesture. Arrows rip through the space occupied by it, missing him by millimeters.

Guards react. Still, it's only one man. They charge.

Monk's palms thrust outward. Air seems to snap. A dozen torches blow out in quick succession. Pitch black

SERGEANT

...What the --?

CRUNCH. A shadow -- one of his own men -- smashes into him. All around, motion, a blur of robes, a face, there one instant, gone the next, bodies falling, weapons slicing into flesh.

Finally a torch breathes to life. Sergeant holds it with an unsteady hand. Finds himself face to face with Monk.

MONK

(calm personified)

How do you turn it off?

Sergeant gulps. Considers his options. Then,

SERGEANT

The arch is powered by a stone.
They say it fell from the sky. Roll
it away, and the charge will fail.
(beat) Who...what are you?

The answer arrives in the form of Monk's fist. WHAM, Sergeant joins his men. Monk grabs the torch before it falls even an inch.

INT. ARCHWAY - PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Monk greets the crew with a simple nod. Gypsy eyes the bodies, impressed. Knight gives him the "I told you so" look.

INT. NIGHTINGALE FLOOR - PALACE - NIGHT

They approach the floor. It looks about as harmless as a minefield filled with Bouncing Betties. Arab primes an arrow, steel cable attached to its tail.

KNIGHT

Hold it.

He digs into Gypsy's pouch. Throws a handful of chalk into the air. A miniature White Christmas. The powder swirls, settling on-

A labyrinth of silver wires stretches from the floor to the ceiling like a giant spiderweb. Medieval infra red beams.

Zulu says something in his native tongue. No translation required.

VIKING

Now what?

They trade glances. Come up empty.

SAMURAI

We go back. Torture the son of a bitch until he coughs up the cure.

Close on Arab, mind racing...

ARAB

No. (beat) There's another way.

He rips a strip from his garment. Dips it in oil. Wraps it around an arrow shaft. To Monk, still wielding the torch.

ARAB

Light it.

He does. WHOOSH, Arab's arrow sings through the wires, sticks harmlessly into a brass panel running along the glass top of the corridor. Sits there. Burns.

GYPSY

A noble effort. Now if we can please-

ARAB

Wait.

Beat. Another. And then-

We hear the GRINDING of machine wheels. Slowly the wires retreat into the walls. All eyes on Arab. Water into wine.

ARAB

There had to be an off-switch. A way to shut down the traps during the day. And then to arm them again at night. The king seems to trust machines more than men. He wouldn't leave the switch in the hands of his servants. And that panel is lined up exactly with the direction and the angle of-

KNIGHT

(getting it)

The heat of the rising sun.

ARAB

Or that of the flame, for as long as it burns. Shall we?

INT. NIGHTINGALE FLOOR - PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Cable stretches above the floor. Monk and Arab shimmy along, hand over hand. Viking lands on the other side, light for a big man. Gypsy is at the door, picks laid out like a set of surgical instruments. Studies the lock. Deep breath. And-

GYPSY

Here we go.

He slides in the pick. We SLIDE in with it.

INT. LOCK

Instantly the mechanism comes to life. The hourglass drains.

INT. HALLWAY

Gypsy digs around. No joy. Samurai is counting heartbeats.

SAMURAI

Twenty.

Gypsy frantically scans his tools. Grabs a different pick.

Its hook finally catches the pin. Lifts it, CLICK.

Gypsy yanks on the door handle. Nothing.

GYPSY

Double action.

SAMURAI

Fifteen.

Gypsy strains. The tip of the pick, millimeters away from a lever, protected by a series of bends and protrusions.

KNIGHT
I thought you were a common thief.

GYPSY
It's not a common lock.

SAMURAI
Ten.

KNIGHT
Then I should hope I was wrong about
you.

Inside the lock, the hourglass is almost completely empty now...
And Gypsy is getting nowhere. Pressure mounting with each count.

SAMURAI
Eight... seven... six...

KNIGHT
Take your time, boy.

The pick... makes contact with the lever and... slides off.

SAMURAI (V.O.)
Five... Four... Three...

The last of the sand swirls around the opening...

SAMURAI (V.O.)
Two...

The pick... catches again... and...

SAMURAI
One...

CLICK. No, it wasn't the spikes. The lever being pulled. The mechanism WHIRS. Bolts slide out.

The hourglass. One grain left.

GYPSY
Told you. Piece of cake.

He pulls on the handle. The door swings open-

Breaking a trip wire on the other end. Fuck.

Instantly alarms WAIL. Double fuck. Knight reacts before anyone else. A born leader. To Zulu, Arab, Samurai and Monk,

KNIGHT

Get back across. Hold them off as long as you can. The rest with me.

INT. TREASURY - NIGHT

They dash inside. Corridor. Corner.

KNIGHT

Find the crown! Quick!!!

Another door. They crash through it--

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A mortally wounded MAN lies on the bed. A PAGEBOY, late teens, covered in blood, is kneeling over him, protecting the master's body with his own. An ASSASSIN, gleaming sword raised over his head, readies a killing blow.

In other words, it's NOT the treasury.

Assassin's blade swings toward the boy, stops cold with a CLANG. Our Knight's sword is there. WHAM, he SLICES the killer shoulder to thigh. Viking moves to the man, checks his vitals.

VIKING

Dead.

Knight leans over. Blanches.

KNIGHT

So are we.

GYPSY

What the hell are you talking about?

Knight tosses him a coin. Gypsy catches, stares...

Close on the coin. The dead man's visage engraved in its surface.

KNIGHT

Your king. This wasn't a heist. It was a goddamn assassination. Inside man here does the deed. We take the fall.

Blood pools on the floor, giving birth to red letters.

CHAPTER III: THE SET-UP

Right on cue, four stone doors drop in succession from the ceiling, sealing the intruders -- one, two, three --

Viking slides his axe in the path of the forth, stopping the last slab with inches to spare.

VIKING

Move.

Gypsy doesn't have to be told twice. Rolls under and out.

PAGEBOY

Please, sir! Take me with you!
They'll kill me if they find me here!

Knight ignores the plea. The boy seizes his arm, desperate.

PAGEBOY

I am the only one who knows of your
innocence! I can help you!

Knight pushes him back, hard.

VIKING

He's a witness. And we can't just-

KNIGHT

He's dead weight. No one will believe
him. Even if they do, we broke into
the palace. Think you'll have better
luck with the judge this time around?

Viking knows he's right. The axe shaft cracks along its axis.

KNIGHT

The boy stays.

Viking nods, grim. Slides under. Knight is about to follow.

PAGEBOY

I know a way out! A secret passage!
I swear on my life, sir!

On Knight. Split second decision. Trust him or...?

KNIGHT

You just did.

He shoves the boy down and under, tearing off his cape in the
process, follows him through, as the axe SHATTERS, and the
stone drops with a THUD.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Rejoin Viking and Gypsy. Viking notes the boy, shoots a look.

KNIGHT

Change of plans.

At that moment, things that shouldn't move start to. Fast.
Walls shift. Corridor closes. Another appears. A jigsaw
puzzle realigning itself. They're forced right, then left.

Doors open. GUARDS spill out. Rush toward them.

Gypsy throws two knives at the same time, a blur of hands and steel, each finding its target. Follows it up with a fistful of chalk powder to the eyes. Knight extends his sword like a scythe, runs straight through a throng of temporarily blinded opponents. Blood spatters. Viking, empty handed, grabs a shield, bashes the rest with it. All without breaking stride.

The ceiling starts to descend.

PAGEBOY

This way!

INT. NIGHTINGALE FLOOR

The rest of the crew can only watch, as, across the floor, lockdown continues. Then they hear it -- hard leather and polished steel moving towards them at speed.

On instinct, they spread out. Beat...

Guards. About two dozen of them. Charge.

Arab fires, so quick the second arrow is still in the air before the first hits its mark. One, two, three, four guards drop.

Zulu steps in, spear spinning. An incoming guard gets run through. Shaft SNAPS. Zulu drives its jagged end into the next guard's throat.

Monk punches through a metal chest plate. Ribs CRACK. Kneecaps SHATTER. WHAM, WHAM, WHAM, three rapid kicks drop as many men, Monk's foot never bothering to land in between.

Samurai just stands there, arms crossed. Watches the enemy rush toward him.

And then he moves.

His blade is a flash. Seven guards are cut down with equal number of strokes, dying before they succumb to gravity.

A sound behind them. They spin, ready for more.

On the far side of the floor, a panel slides open. Arab draws-

On Pageboy, as he emerges out of the passage, followed by Viking, Gypsy and Knight. All of them running hard, a HORDE of guards on their tail. To Arab,

KNIGHT

The flame!!!

Arab instantly shifts his aim and releases, shearing the shaft of the flaming arrow he fired earlier.

ARAB

It needs time to cool!!!

Knight halts. Grabs the shield from Viking.

KNIGHT

Go!!!

Faces the armada. Knocks out someone's front teeth, borrows his shield, one in each hand now. Uses them like armored fists. SLAMS soldiers into walls. Crushes wind pipes. Fractures bones. Desperately trying to buy precious seconds, as behind him the others pull themselves across.

It's a losing battle. He's about to be overwhelmed...

Arab launches two shafts at the same time, dropping a pair.

Zulu kicks up a fallen spear, catches and hurls it. It skewers the guard about to decapitate Knight, catapults him backward, impaling him on the swords of his buddies.

Knight turns and runs, the horde on his heels.

Close on the panel, as it turns cold, resetting the system.

Which is when Knight RIP SLIDES in glorious slow motion, a hair under the incoming razor-sharp trip wire, as it slashes into the feet of the lead guard, chopping them off at the ankles. The floor CHIRPS. Multiple vibrations travelling along the wires toward-

THE MACHINE we glimpsed earlier. As in dozens of arrows fired by automated chain-fed-spring-loaded crossbows hidden in the walls.

The incoming guards are annihilated -- nay, erased -- by a bloody fusillade of steel tipped death.

INT. HALLWAY

Knight rejoins the rest of the crew. On the run,

ARAB

The crown?

KNIGHT

He didn't want the crown. He wanted the man who wears it. It appears the king had a reason to be paranoid.

ARAB

Then there is no antidote.

KNIGHT

We'll see. He won't be expecting us to return, that's for sure. Either way, if we live through this, he won't.

ARAB

If we live.

INT. ARCHWAY - NIGHT

The crew hurtles down the stairs, heading for the arch. Monk peels off, waits in deep shadow for the others to pass. More guards close in, rush past Monk without noticing him, into the passage.

Monk shoves the meteor back into place. The positively charged stone pushes up against the negatively charged arch, reactivating the magnet. Physics 101.

The guards -- all clad in mail and armor -- are jerked upward into the spikes. In an instant twenty men reduced to gore.

And below them, Monk just walks on through, blood spattering the floor like red rain.

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

The crew sprints for the main doors, stops cold. Troops are pouring in from every angle. Nowhere to run. They get ready...

PAGEBOY

Here!

He pulls a lever. A door appears. They dash inside. Gypsy gives pursuers the finger as the door seals shut.

INT. TUNNELS - PALACE - NIGHT

Pageboy holds a torch. Behind him the crew hauls ass.

KNIGHT

You know the palace well.

PAGEBOY

I was born and raised within its walls. (beat) Back in the bedroom. You saved my life. Why?

KNIGHT

Why were you willing to sacrifice yourself for your master?

PAGEBOY

(point taken)

The man you killed. He was one of the king's most trusted bodyguards. I never thought he was capable-

KNIGHT

You want to know how to stay alive? Take a good man and imagine the worst thing it would never cross his mind to do.

(MORE)

KNIGHT(cont'd)
 Then assume he's already done it twice.
 Besides, your dead friend was just the
 knife. Someone else is the hand. Do you
 know who?

PAGEBOY
 (shakes his head)
 Do you?

KNIGHT
 Not yet. But I have a pretty good
 idea who might.

A door looms ahead. They go through it-

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

To find themselves outside the walls. Behind them the palace
 is alive with light, sound and motion.

KNIGHT
 How long until sunrise?

ZULU
 Not long enough.

They sprint off into the dissolving darkness.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAWN

Door's thrown open. The crew, soaked in sweat, rush in-

The place is empty. Not a single piece of furniture. No
 lawyer. No antidote. Just blank walls.

GYPSY
 Fuck. Fuck! FUCK!!!!

Knight sinks to the floor, spent. To Arab,

KNIGHT
 If you still intend to kill me, I
 suggest you hurry up.

ARAB
 ...I think there's been enough
 blood for one night.

Gypsy desperately searches for something, anything to cover
 up the windows.

GYPSY
 We could hide! Stay out of the sun!

SAMURAI
 Live in a cellar? Hide in the
 shadows for the rest of our lives?

ZULU

I will not trade one cage for another.

The sun crests the horizon.

KNIGHT

Get out of here, boy. You don't need to see this.

PAGEBOY

...I'll stay.

Gypsy backs up. Others stand their ground, waiting for the inevitable. Zulu begins to chant. Arab and Knight lock eyes.

ARAB

I will see you in hell, Crusader.

KNIGHT

I'll be there.

Sunlight sweeps toward them like a tsunami. Monk steps out on the balcony, palms out, accepting his fate. Perhaps even welcoming it. The sun crashes over him...

Nothing happens.

The rest join Monk. Light cascades over them. To no effect.

SAMURAI

Another trick. Damn, I'm actually starting to admire the bastard.

VIKING

Now what?

ZULU

We leave town.

ARAB

They'll be expecting that. There will be roadblocks all over the city.

Gypsy heads for the door. Samurai blocks his path.

GYPSY

Get out of my way.

SAMURAI

Why? So you can crawl to the first soldier you see and sell the rest of us out, gyppo?

GYPSY

(hand falling on his knives)
When you call me that...

Samurai, cold as ice, smiles. Two gunslingers, ready to draw.

ZULU

Fools. There are ten thousand men
out there, ready to kill you both,
and you'd save them the trouble?

SAMURAI

Keep out of this, slave, or you'll
be next.

Zulu snaps up his spear, tensing. The room is like a
gunpowder keg. All you need is a match.

ARAB

So this is how it ends? We kill
each other like caged animals.

GYPSY

Why not? Beats dying out there.

KNIGHT

How about living?

He's got their attention.

GYPSY

Seven of us. Against an army.

KNIGHT

Yes. And alone we will surely die.
But together we might have a chance.

MONK

How?

KNIGHT

By doing the unexpected. By working
as one. We go to ground. Lay low.
Eventually they'll have to loosen
their hold. That's when we move.

Beat. They all know he's right.

GYPSY

...I know someone who might help.

INT. NIGHTINGALE FLOOR - PALACE - MORNING

The hallway resembles a slaughter house. SERVANTS scrub off
blood and drag corpses out of the way. All bow as we pass.

EDWARD (O.S.)

I always thought red was a more
fitting color for this place.

Another angle reveals the object of their veneration -- EDWARD THE BLACK, 40's, the younger brother to the slain monarch. This man is handsome, smart, powerful and, above all, dangerous. Trailing him are BROTHER GREGORY, a Celestine Monk and Edward's Consigliere, and CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS. The latter isn't happy.

CAPTAIN

We lost a lot of good men.

EDWARD

If they were any good, they wouldn't be lying on the floor. What of Amelia?

CAPTAIN

Still looking, Your Grace.

EDWARD

Well, fucking look harder.

Two soldiers guard the door to King's chambers. Edward enters.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - PALACE - MORNING

Two more stand vigil over the crime scene.

CAPTAIN

We sealed the room, just as you ordered, Your Grace.

Edward stares at his brother's body. To soldiers,

EDWARD

Leave us. Speak to no one of this.

They exit. Softly,

EDWARD

Two minutes. That's how far apart we were born. 120 seconds later the world would have been a different place. (beat) He was weak. He didn't belong on that throne. But he was still my brother. And I loved him.

He closes his sibling's eyes. Ashes to ashes.

CAPTAIN

Who would do this, Your Grace?

EDWARD

It doesn't matter. It's done. Who else has seen this?

CAPTAIN

Just those four, Your Grace. I can vouch for their loyalty and discretion.

EDWARD

Good. Loyalty is good. As is discretion. We can't have too much discretion, can we, Gregory?

GREGORY

No, Your Grace.

EDWARD

May I have your sword, Captain?

CAPTAIN

Sir?

EDWARD

Your sword.

Captain draws the item in question, offers it to Edward, pommel first. Edward accepts it and promptly drives it into the man's chest. He drops to his knees, gurgling blood. Edward casually returns the blade to the owner's scabbard.

EDWARD

You'll take care of the rest, won't you, Gregory?

Gregory, utterly unfazed by the murder, bows his head.

GREGORY

And the intruders?

EDWARD

They killed a king. Worse, they killed my brother. I can't very well allow such men to walk the streets, can I?

GREGORY

Naturally. Shall I summon the Captain's replacement?

Edward's eyes land on Pageboy's cape, balled up on the floor. He picks it up, examines it, as he contemplates the next move.

EDWARD

No. These men are criminals. Seal the gates, triple the patrols, and they'll scurry off to hide among their own.

GREGORY

Our friends in the city, then.
(beat) And what of--?

EDWARD

There were no survivors here, Gregory. And there will be none out there. Fortune favors the bold.

INT. TAVERN - MORNING

Laughter, rich and deep, echoes through what could kindly be called a cave. Flashes of Mos Eisley cantina. Light streams in from the shuttered ceiling, illuminating the bare walls, dozens of hardened KILLERS and THIEVES as well as a few SERVING WENCHES/WHORES navigating between tables.

Presiding over one is the source of the baritone laugh. He is FREDERICK (50), a bear of a man and as close to the king of the gypsies as you're going to get.

FREDERICK

You really screwed the pooch this time, didn't you, nephew? They're turning this shithole of a city upside down looking for you.

(savoring the word)

Regicide.

(to Gypsy, almost proud)

Didn't know you had it in you.

(to the rest of our crew)

You'd think I was the one who fucked his mother.

GYPSY

I'm telling you it wasn't-

FREDERICK

Sure, sure. You're innocent. You were framed. The judge fucked you. Ask any man here, you'll hear the same.

GYPSY

Believe what you want. Can you help us?

FREDERICK

Can? Yes. Should? That's a different matter. I'm not in the habit of risking my neck for anything other than a purse or a pussy. But you are Roma. And you're blood. And in my house that still counts for something.

He motions to a passing wench. She fills their goblets. Frederick cops a feel. She giggles. Knight rises to his feet.

KNIGHT

Which way is-?

FREDERICK

Left. Just follow the stench.

INT. TAVERN - ELSEWHERE

Knight pushes through patrons. He's not headed for the privy.

He's tracking one of the whores. We never get a good look, only fleeting glimpses of her figure.

INT. TAVERN - TABLE

Frederick raises his wine.

FREDERICK
To His Majesty! May he rest in
peace or burn in hell! Either way,
good riddance! He was a lousy king!

INT. TAVERN - ELSEWHERE

The woman disappears into a passageway. Knight follows...

INT. TAVERN - TABLE

Everyone else lifts up their cups... about to partake...

INT. TAVERN - ELSEWHERE

Knight rounds the corner, right into a slashing dagger. He dodges, traps the hand of the attacker-

It's none other than the girl he saved from the rapists on pg.13.

KNIGHT
...You.

INT. TAVERN - TABLE

Gypsy's lips are about to touch the edge of the goblet...

Arab's steel slides between them.

ARAB
Poison. For real this time.

Silence. Then motion. A lot of it.

The entire tavern, seemingly oblivious of our heroes' existence a moment ago, is now brimming with weapons, trained on our crew, who instantly turn theirs on Frederick and his entourage. A John Woo moment with swords.

FREDERICK
The odds are not in your favor, nephew.
Any one of these men will kill for me.

Samurai slashes at the closest opponent.

For a moment the poor schmuck just stands there. His sword SNAPS. Then his helmet slides off in two pieces. Then the skull itself splits open in a geyser of red. The dead man collapses on the floor. Both halves of him.

SAMURAI

How many of them will die for you?

The weapons lower. One man heads for the door. Another. An exodus.

FREDERICK

Cowards!!! Come back!!!

GYPSY

Apparently they are also not in the habit of risking their necks for anything other than a purse or a pussy. (beat) Why?

FREDERICK

Why do you think, boy?

KNIGHT (O.S.)

It's not why. It's who. And when. In our case, from the very beginning.

Holding the captured girl,

KNIGHT

Think about it. How all of us ended up in that cell. Seven strangers, each of whom just happened to have the skills to break into an impregnable palace. To pick a timed lock. To defeat armed guards with his bare hands. To figure out a way past the traps. They chose us. Because we were the only ones who could do the job.

We PAN along their faces, as they piece it together...

FLASH. Street.

CONSTABLE

You're wanted, gyppo. Top of the list.

FLASH. Slave market. Man standing over Zulu.

MAN

Him.

FLASH. Temple.

ABBOT

He said you boarded a ship bound for this place.

FLASH. Forge.

HUGH

Someone leans on me, I have to lean on you.

FLASH. Guards scanning faces.

GUARD
You there! Halt!!

FLASH. Brothel. Right on cue a battering ram SPLINTERS the door.

BOOKIE
RAID!!!

FLASH. Knight walking past-

MERC
What's the matter, sweetheart? You
don't fancy us no more?

Back to our crew, as the extent of the scheme sinks in. To Girl,

KNIGHT
Who hired you? Who?

She glares back. Not so helpless any more.

GIRL
Go ahead. Kill me. You'll do it
anyway. Maybe you'll even fuck me
before you do. Or after.

It takes an effort for Knight not to slap her.

KNIGHT
I should have let them rape you.

GIRL
But you didn't. You saw what you
wanted to see. Just like he said.

KNIGHT
The attorney again.

VIKING
Yes. But who does he work for? Who
is behind all this? The Devil?

FREDERICK (O.S.)
Worse. Edward The Black.

He tosses a purse on the table. Heavy with gold.

FREDERICK
He paid me for your lives. Not my own.

PAGEBOY
No! You're lying! He is the king's
own brother! He wouldn't-

FREDERICK

Of course, he did. After the princess, he's next in line for the throne. And, unlike her, he's got the muscle to hold it. End of story. (beat) You will find no shelter anywhere in this city. You can't run, and you can't fight. Let me live, and I will tell him that you're dead. That's your only option.

Silence. Heavy. Defeated. They all know that Frederick is going to cross them at the first opportunity. Then,

PAGEBOY

There's another way.

All eyes on him.

PAGEBOY

My master, fearing a plot against his life, hired a merchant ship to smuggle him out of the country. It will sail at sundown today, with or without the king.

VIKING

You know the name of this ship?

PAGEBOY

If you get me to the harbor, I will get you on it. I'm not stupid. If I didn't know a way out of the palace, you would have left me behind to die. The moment I tell you the ship's name, I become useless. You need me. And I need you. So let's keep it that way.

Not that they have much choice in the matter. So...

KNIGHT

...All right. You have my word. (to Gypsy) Can you get us to the docks?

GYPSY

Seven miles on foot, against the clock and ten thousand men? One helluva gamble.

KNIGHT

Life's a gamble. Can you do it?

Gypsy squats on the dirt floor, draws a crude map of the city.

GYPSY

We make our way to this bridge. Cross it in one piece, if we're lucky. Get to a cemetery over here.

(MORE)

GYPSY(cont'd)

Inside it is an entrance to the catacombs. My people use it for smuggling. From there the docks are a mile, maybe less. Assuming we make it that far. Or the ship is still there. Or is even there in the first place.

PAGEBOY

Just get me there on time. And alive.

Knight traces a more direct route.

KNIGHT

Why not this way?

GYPSY

Gang territories here and here. Let's just say between them and Edward's army, I prefer the army.

They take it all in. The map. The obstacles. The 1000 to 1 odds...

KNIGHT

We'd better get moving.

ZULU

What about-?

He motions toward the prisoners. No one is looking forward to it. But they don't have a choice. Arab draws a knife.

ARAB

I'll do it.

Gypsy blocks his way. Hand on his own dagger.

GYPSY

No one touches him.

FREDERICK

(relieved)

My nephew. I knew you wouldn't let-

GYPSY

Like you said, we're Roma. We're blood. And in my house that still counts for something. (beat) You'll drink to my health, won't you uncle?

He picks up the poisoned cup. His blade pushes up against Frederick's neck. Blood appears at the tip. Frederick bellows.

FREDERICK

You bastard!!! Fuck y--

Gypsy forcibly pours wine down his throat. Frederick convulses, as he literally drowns in his own poison.

GYPSY

I know. You'd think you were the
one who fucked my mother.

Finally Frederick expires. Gypsy tosses the goblet away in
disgust -- at his uncle, at himself -- turns to Knight.

GYPSY

The girl's all yours.

Knight nods. Walks up to the prostitute. Eerie calm.

GIRL

I won't beg.

KNIGHT

I know.

He raises his sword. Her eyes bore into his.

An agonizing moment feels like an eternity. Finally,

KNIGHT

Go.

He lowers the blade. She searches his face. Then,

GIRL

For what's worth...I hope you make it.

She takes a step and... collapses, Arab's dagger in her back.
On Knight. If looks could kill, the girl would have company.

ARAB

She knew about the ship. She knew
the route. She sold you out once.
She would have done so again.

KNIGHT

You don't know that.

ARAB

Neither do you. The difference is I
don't gamble with other people's
lives for the sake of my honor.

KNIGHT

If we live through this.

ARAB

If we live. Like you said, we'd
better get moving.

And as our crew heads out into the unknown, we rise above
them, melting through the ceiling, higher and higher toward
the bird's eye view of the city until it becomes-

INT. PALACE - DAY

An enormous, finely detailed map decorating Edward's chambers.

EDWARD
Frederick?

GREGORY
Dead. His own poison, I believe.

EDWARD
Hmmm. Shame. No matter.

He grabs Pageboy's cape, strides toward the balcony.

GREGORY
The people grow restless, your Grace.

EDWARD
Which people would those be?

GREGORY
People who matter. They wish to know about the succession.

EDWARD
Tell these people who think they matter that I shall make an announcement before the day's end. Have them wait in the sun, preferably near the latrines. I want them... compliant.

Gregory bows his head, as we follow Edward outside. Wish we didn't.

EXT. BALCONY - PALACE - DAY

Because the balcony opens up into a courtyard, filled with Edward's personal bodyguards. His dogs of war.

Four massive, mounted TEUTONIC KNIGHTS. Black armor. Faces obscured by atavistic horned helmets. When the Apocalypse comes, these guys will be leading the charge.

Behind them, arrayed around a campfire, are MOUNTAIN MEN. Tribal tattoos. Desiccated fingers and bones of their victims worn as trophies around their necks. Scalphunters. Roasting something on the flame. We don't even want to guess.

SUMO. Built like a tank. Probably just as hard to stop. Baoding balls flicker between his fingers with lightning swiftness.

And finally BOWMAN, a tall and lean Englishman, carefully sharpening the steel head of a three foot arrow shaft. He sits apart from everyone else. Even Mountain Men stay away.

Edward tosses the cape off the balcony. MOUNTAIN MAN CHIEF picks it up, smells it, a bloodhound picking up the scent, passes it to his second. Eyes on the master.

EDWARD

Fetch.

Chief grins, exposing teeth filed to fangs. And then he and his are off, Teutons THUNDERING behind them.

Sumo squeezes his fist. Crushing the steel balls. Off that,

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Words reflect in the water, floating like dead fish.

CHAPTER IV: THE GETAWAY

A boat pushes through them. Crane up along the pylons.

We are in the middle of a crowded precession moving at a snail's pace across a long bridge spanning the local river, dotted with boats and barges. Penitents and pilgrims compete for right of way with drovers, baggage trains and merchant wagons. Think rush hour on the Brooklyn Bridge.

At the far end is the source of the bottleneck: a checkpoint manned by some forty SOLDIERS. Oh-oh...

Knight shuffles along, a hood obscuring his features. Pageboy, by his side, eyes the looming roadblock, visibly nervous. The rest of the crew are spread out in a loose semi-circle.

KNIGHT

Stay calm. Follow my lead. If I say jump, you say-

PAGEBOY

How high?

KNIGHT

No. You keep your mouth shut and jump like I told you to. (beat) Scared?

PAGEBOY

Aren't you?

KNIGHT

Has to end sometime. Today is as good a day as any.

Pageboy gives him a look.

KNIGHT

What?

PAGEBOY

...Nothing. It's just... right now
I wish I had your strength.

KNIGHT

Don't. A man who isn't scared of
dying has nothing to live for.

Pageboy wants to say something else. He never gets the chance.

Mountain Men lope into view. Spread out, searching for their
prey. They don't bother with faces. They go by scent.

KNIGHT

Aghori.(off Pageboy's look) Savages
from the Hindu Kush mountains. If it
goes bad, don't let them take you
alive. They like their meat warm and
wet.

Mountain Men close in, crowd rippling, as they gradually push
through toward our heroes... inexorable, unstoppable...

Knight. Arab. A look between them. Arab makes his way toward
a cart laden with spices. Slits one of the sacks.

Close on the tear, leaking its contents into the breeze...

We fly with the wind, through and over the crowd, until we
hit the nostrils of the closest Mountain Man. The effect is
akin to that of cayenne pepper shoved into the nose of a
bloodhound. He writhes in pain. His buddies are next. Eyes
watering. Sinuses on fire. The hunt grinds to a halt.

Point for our guys. They keep inching forward.

Mountain Man Chief covers his face with a wet cloth, yells at his
underlings in a harsh, guttural tongue. Strides toward our crew.

Closer... closer... Pageboy trembles. Knight puts a steadying
hand on his shoulder. And...

Chief brushes past. Hones in on the cart. Inspects the cut
sack. He knows.

Slowly his eyes pan... finally settling on our crew.

He approaches. Smells the spices on Arab. Studies him like a
bug under a microscope. Arab doesn't flinch.

Chief shifts his attention to Zulu. Then Samurai. Then
Knight. And finally the boy...

His gnarled finger topped with a long, black, talon-like nail
reaches for Page's carotid artery. Measures his heart rate. It
BEATS rapidly, like a rabbit flushed out of hiding.

Chief grins, opens his mouth...

Nothing comes out. Because Knight's just driven a dagger into his throat, severing the vocal cords. The other hand catches the nail before it punctures the boy's artery.

They stand there, locked in silent struggle. Eyes burrowing into one another. The rest of the crew instantly tighten around them, blocking the view from the rest of the crowd, which keeps moving forward, oblivious of the drama.

Chief leans into the blade, driving its bloody tip out of the back of his neck. Suddenly lunges for Knight's face!

Knight holds his ground. Chief's fangs snap, an inch away.

Knight twists the dagger. The light in Chief's eyes begins to dim. Except he knows something our hero doesn't. He pounces again. Not at Knight. At Pageboy. Who SCREAMS.

It's the scream of a woman.

Heads turn, people react, surging away from the disturbance, leaving our heroes exposed. Mountain Men lock onto them. Onto their dead leader. A BATTLE CRY, primal and chilling, rips from their collective mouths like an ancient curse.

In response, something RUMBLES in the distance, SHAKING the bridge. No, it's not an earthquake or a T-Rex. It's the Teutons.

Horses and riders, 3000 lbs of armored mean, THUNDER toward us, trampling the slow and the infirm. Panic. People shout, shriek, stampede, abandoning their possessions. The checkpoint soldiers charge from the other end, struggling against the flood of refugees. And our guys are trapped right in the fucking middle.

Knight grabs the terrified Pageboy. Hell hath no fury.

KNIGHT

He was after you! He had your scent! He knew you were a woman!!!

PAGEBOY

I...

KNIGHT

No more lies!!! We are all about to die! Because of you!

PAGEBOY

...No. Because of my father. I am Amelia.

Gypsy hears it, knows. On Knight. It dawns...

KNIGHT

The princess. (fuck me) Not my day.

And how right he is....

Arab rapid fires at the Lead Teuton. One, two, three shafts ricochet off the black armor. It's like shooting at a Panzer tank with a '45. They just keep coming... enormous, indestructible, the tremor rising rhythmically, as they draw closer.

Mountain Men scatter out of their way, then follow to feast on the survivors. If there are any... To Amelia,

KNIGHT

Stay close.

Samurai unsheathes his katana. Steps forward, sword held high, gleaming in the afternoon sun. And...

A split second before impact he whirls aside, slashing at the only exposed part of the Lead Teuton - his horse's legs.

BOOM, both the rider and the beast become a pile of scrap metal, sparks flying, as it cartwheels toward our crew.

Monk jumps over the rolling wreck into a spectacular flying kick aimed at the next Teuton... only to bounce off.

GYPSY

Fuck m..

And then the three Teutons are upon them...

Zulu SMASHES into the railing. Viking barely blocks a war hammer, the blow so powerful it dislocates his shoulder.

Knight hacks at a Teuton. The rider pulls on the reigns, the horse rears... then CRASHES DOWN against Knight's shield. He goes sprawling, covering Amelia's body with his own.

Gypsy dives under a wagon loaded with barrels. A Teuton RIPS through it as if it was made out of matchsticks. CRACK, the axle shatters, dropping the thing on top of Gypsy.

The tornado passes, as swiftly as it descended.

Knight climbs wobbly to his feet. Blood welling from a cut bisecting his brow. Still, his first thought,

KNIGHT

You whole?

AMELIA

I think...

Knight doesn't wait for her to finish. Takes in the situation. Let's see, we got bad news... and worse news.

Bad news - our crew is mangled. Worse news - the Teutons are coming around for another pass. They've also cleared the way for the soldiers, who are now following, like infantry behind tanks. And, as a cherry on top, Mountain Men are approaching from the other end. Outlook--

VIKING

We're dead.

Gypsy is pinned under the wreckage. Something drips from above. He tastes it.

GYPSY

Rum!!!

They have no time to think. Only act.

Viking ROARS, SLAMS his shoulder against the wagon, pops it back in. Grabs one of the barrels and THROWS.

It flies toward the enemy in lazy slow motion.

Zulu -- ribs cracked -- tracks, hurls a spear.

It is, once again, on target. The steel tip of the projectile sparks off the metal band of the barrel, as it splits it open.

KABOOM. Medieval napalm.

Soldiers on fire, screaming, dying, breathing flames. Horses neigh, buck, careen out of control. Two Teutons COLLIDE in a spray of metal. In a word, "clusterfuck".

Zulu turns -- straight into a bolo flying toward him. It wraps around his legs, felling him.

A second later a Mountain Man, cruelly curved blade in each hand, lands on top. Zulu shifts, steel digging into stone. The two roll away, locked in a death grip.

Knight passes Amelia to Viking.

KNIGHT

Watch her!

Rushes to help Zulu -- motion to the left, ducks as a heavy blade SINGS overhead -- spins to face--

The Lead Teuton. Rising from the ground like a fucking Terminator post the tanker explosion.

Knight -- oh shit -- hacks once, twice. No effect. Raises his shield. Teuton cleaves it in two.

Sumo strides through the fray. A heat seeking missile locked on Amelia.

Samurai rushes to intercept. Sumo picks up a nearby Mountain Man and tosses him at the opponent like a bowling ball. Strike!

Arab looses an arrow. Sumo catches it offhandedly, blink, and he's right by Arab's side, stabs him with his own shaft. Keeps going. A juggernaut.

Viking -- last line of defence -- swings a sword. Sumo crushes the descending steel with his bare hand. Swats Viking out of the way, hurling him fifteen feet away.

Now it's just him and the girl. She holds out a small dagger.

SUMO

Go ahead. Take your best shot.

She trembles... and...

Her hand is suddenly steady, as she plunges the blade into Sumo's eye socket!

Beat. We wait for the Goliath to fall...

He reaches for the dagger. Pulls it out. Gross.

SUMO

My turn.

His fist EXPLODES toward Amelia's face with the force of a freight train--

Grinds into Monk's palm. Looks medium rare. But alive.

MONK

Run.

She does. Sumo vs. Monk. Speed vs. Power. Bruce Lee vs. Odd Job.

Monk unleashes a volley of kicks and punches that would kill any ordinary man. Sumo shrugs them off. Charges. SLAMS Monk against a parapet, WHAM.

Monk barely dodges a blow that spiderwebbs the stone, chips exploding like shrapnel. Sumo rips out a chunk of masonry, HEAVES it. Monk Iron Palms the thing, shattering it into a pollen cloud of dust. Whiteout.

When it clears a second later, the space occupied by Sumo is empty. That's because he's already behind Monk.

A chop brings our hero down to his knees. Sumo towers over.

SUMO

You are not the better man.

He grabs Monk and throws him into the river.

Gypsy, soaked in rum, strains to crawl from under the wreck.

Zulu and Mountain Man grapple, brutal, primal, hot breath scorching each other's faces. Zulu bashes his opponent's knife hand against the pavement. The blade flies loose. Mountain sinks his teeth into Zulu's arm. Zulu retaliates by RIPPING out the guy's nose ring.

The fucker SHRIEKS, plunges his other knife toward Zulu's throat. Zulu holds it back, tip hovering two inches above the skin, while strangling the Aghori with his bone necklace. The only question is who will kill the other first.

Back to Amelia, running, a prey. Here comes another hunter...

CAMERA slingshots to the far side of the bridge where Bowman stands alone, tracking the princess. Slowly, as if he's got all the time in the world, he draws--

Zulu sees it coming. Pulls up his bolo-bound feet...

Gypsy...one more push... almost got it...

Bowman fires. The shaft sails towards Amelia.

Zulu catapults Mountain Man into the path of the arrow. WHAM, it shishkabobbs him to the side of the rum wagon. The added weight almost crushes Gypsy. Fuck!

Amelia reacts -- Zulu just saved her life -- grabs the fallen dagger, saws through the bolo.

Arab -- arrow through the shoulder -- ignores the pain, tracks the shot's trajectory, zeroes in on Bowman, lets loose four shafts in quick succession.

Bowman -- a true marksman -- senses them coming, shifts, fires.

Arrows collide mid-air, tearing each other apart. One, two, three--

The fourth slide by one another, Arab's shaft slicing Bowman's cheek the same instant his cuts Arab's. The two men lock eyes, sensing an equal. The corners of Bowman's mouth curl upward ever so slightly...

Knight backs away under the Teuton's relentless barrage. He's better and faster, but the other guy is just an unstoppable machine. Knight throws it all in one desperate strike...

His sword finally DENTS the armor... and breaks in two.

The Teuton -- probably grinning under that horned helmet -- readies the killing blow.

Knight grabs the Teuton, pushes him against the railing and over it.

They freefall, still locked in furious combat, as we plummet with them, and-

EXT. UNDER WATER

WHAM, SMASH into the river below.

Teuton's armor has now become his Achilles' heel. He sinks fast. Knight, the lighter of the two, swims for the surface, but the Teuton grabs him, holds tight.

A shadow passes overhead, eclipsing the sun. It's a barge gliding under the bridge.

EXT. BRIDGE

Bowman notches a black arrow, an ominous looking vial attached to its business end. WHOOSH, it arcs through the air--

Hits one of the rum barrels. The vial shatters. Chemicals sizzle, as they mix with alcohol. Mountain Men smell it and scatter, rats fleeing the ship. Even Sumo retreats.

Arab -- whatever it is, it ain't good -- casts about, frantic.

The scorched Teutons are regrouping on one end. Reinforcements are arriving at the other. Which leaves-

ARAB

The barge! Now!!!

He leaps over, firing arrows as he goes. Zulu grabs Amelia, follows. Samurai is next. Viking picks himself up, about to bail--

Gypsy -- still trapped, forgotten in the scuffle.

GYPSY

HEY!!!

Viking -- torn for a split second -- then runs toward the wagon, both men pushing with everything they've got. The barrel heats up quick, chain reaction nearing critical mass.

Gypsy finally wrenches loose, tearing cloth and flesh, dripping rum like a wet dog. They haul ass toward the edge, as--

The barrel BLOWS SKY HIGH, detonating the rest of the load with it. Makes the first explosion look like Jiffy Pop. The shockwave catches our duo, tosses them into space. Flames vomit in their wake, chase Gypsy's vapor trail, missing him by this much.

They hit the water, hard. We glide under it toward-

EXT. UNDER WATER

Knight still wrestles with the Teuton, trying to pull away.

Can't. Lungs screaming, hands wrapped around each other, as they inexorably descend toward their doom.

Knight rips off his opponent's helmet, recoils at the face beneath. Bald head, no nose, no ears, just blue eyes and hate.

He drives the helmet's horn into the freakish features. Blood plumes. Teuton clutches the wound. Knight kicks off and up.

EXT. BARGE

Explodes out of the water, gasping for breath. Arab pulls him up onto the deck. The owner of the vessel, a distant ancestor to a Pakistani cab driver, YELLS angrily in a language no one can understand. They are way past caring anyway.

ARAB

You all right?

Knight nods, coughing water. Notes the arrow through the shoulder.

KNIGHT

Better than you.

Wraps his hand around the shaft.

ARAB

We are fucked as the day is long,
are we not, Crusader?

Knight yanks out the arrow.

KNIGHT

And then some...

EXT. BRIDGE

Bowman stands alone, silhouetted against the raging inferno. Looks after Arab. This isn't over. Not by a long shot.

EXT. BARGE

A hand grips the side of the boat. Monk pulls himself over, collapses on deck, more dead than alive. The rest of the crew are not far behind.

ZULU

Now what?

GYPSY

I dunno. Ask Her Majesty.

The others react. Cat's out of the bag.

KNIGHT

This changes nothing. The ship-

SAMURAI

How do you even know there is one?!
She's lied about everything else!

AMELIA

There's a ship, I swear! My father
wanted me to leave the city. To keep
me safe. That is why I was wearing
these clothes when you found me.

VIKING

Why didn't you tell us?

AMELIA

Would you?

Point taken. Still,

GYPSY

They want her more than they want us.
We can use that. Buy our lives back.
Maybe even with a little extra on top.

AMELIA

Do you actually believe my uncle
will honor any deal he's made with
you, once he gets what he wants?

Takes in their faces.

AMELIA

You don't trust me, fine. I don't
trust you either. I have no illusions
about what kind of men you are. I
don't expect you to give a damn about
my murdered father. My people. Or
myself, for that matter. But you still
need me. And I need you.

Before anyone has a chance to respond.

GYPSY

Oh shit.

They are headed toward another bridge, bristling with
soldiers. Some lower heavy chains and grappling hooks. Others
ready a trebuchet. Mountain Men and Teutons race along both
banks, eager for Round Two. Here we go again...

AMELIA

They seem like sensible men. I'm sure
they'll be open to compromise.

Gypsy shoots her a look, summoning to mind the word that
women didn't like even back in those days.

KNIGHT
(to Viking)
Can you get us to the far shore?

EXT. SECOND BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Soldiers watch, as the barge angles to the left.

SERGEANT
Fire!

EXT. BARGE

A WHOOSHING sound, getting louder, fast. A huge boulder is coming straight at us like a fist of God.

Amelia hits the deck. Pure instinct. And then she notices--

Everyone else remains standing.

Slowly, trembling, she climbs to her feet. Willing every muscle of her body, every ounce of her being to stand upright. Knight gives her the slightest of nods.

WHAM, the projectile slams into the river, about two feet off, splashing H2O all over them.

EXT. SECOND BRIDGE

The trebuchet crew reloads.

SERGEANT
Fire!!!

EXT. BARGE

The WHOOSH again... and impact! Fortunately it's not from the boulder. Rather, it's the barge hitting the shore.

Instantly they are over the side and onto the beach, scrambling like hell toward the city street level, as-

WHAM, the barge gets OBLITERATED behind them. The owner continues to yell. We still can't understand a word.

EXT. STREETS/INT. TENEMENTS - CONTINUOUS

And we are running. Seven men and a young woman, hunted by an army of professional killers, dash through the urban maze. The only way to stay alive is to keep moving. Stop and you die. Handheld, frenetic, jarring, "Black Hawk Down" time.

Alley, alley, footsteps POUNDING behind, turn the corner, Monk kicks open a door, up the stairs, corridor, another, Mountain Men sniping at them through the windows, poisoned darts ricocheting all around.

Dead end looms, shit. Viking -- berserker mode -- "Odin!!!" -- BARRELS through the shoddy construction.

Into the breach, Arab's last, laying cover fire. A blur of sounds and lives, people ducking, SHOUTING, cursing, Mountain Men moving fast down a parallel corridor, a dog SNARLING, frothing at the mouth, tearing at the leash to get to the intruders. It's as if the entire world is against them.

A pike stabs, stabs through a wall, Samurai stabs back, the wood bleeds. Door, Mountain Man behind it, Zulu shoves him face first into a boiling pot, ruining someone's lunch, he SCREAMS, thrashes, a fucking mess, out, left or right, they go left, another door, Monk senses a presence behind it, PUNCHES through, no hesitation, THUD, he rushes in-

The world SLAMS on the breaks.

That's because the body on the floor is that of a young boy. Gasping. Struggling to breathe through a crushed windpipe.

Monk's face. His eyes. And then--

REALITY RETURNS WITH A VENGEANCE

They react. Monk grabs the child, frantic, at this moment he'd do anything to save this stranger.

SAMURAI

Come on!!!

The boy looks at Monk, trying to form words that never come. Blood seeps through the cloth. Red on white. Footfalls.

SAMURAI

He's gone! Come on, damn it!

Mountain Man on the threshold, Gypsy drops him at point blank range, SLAMS the door, wedges it shut. Blades rip through it, hungry for our heroes' flesh.

ARAB

Brother.

Monk looks at him without seeing. A thousand miles away.

ARAB

We should go.

Monk studies the blood on his hands. Realizes he's holding a corpse. It takes a supreme effort for him to let go.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

They rush outside. Multiple exits. Sounds of pursuers closing in.

KNIGHT

Split up. Meet at the cemetery one hour before sundown. (to Gypsy and Amelia) You. And you. With me.

No one needs to be told twice. Zulu cuts one way. Viking and Samurai another. Arab grabs the still catatonic Monk, leads him away. We CRANE UP as they're swallowed by the city.

INT. PALACE - DAY

War room. Flags on the map denote the bridge, the landing area and the likely escape routs. Edward studies it closely, a master chess player contemplating the next move.

EDWARD

So she found herself an army...

GREGORY

Seven men, your Grace?

EDWARD

Seven good men.

GREGORY

Why would they divide their forces?

EDWARD

They didn't. They divided mine... They'll head for the gang territories.

GREGORY

How can Your Grace be certain?

EDWARD

Because that's what My Grace would do.

GREGORY

Then we needn't worry. Few venture there. None come out.

EDWARD

Perhaps. But I believe in being thorough. The weight of their heads in gold. Spread the word. (beat) And twice that for my beloved niece.

EXT. GANG TERRITORY - STREET - DAY

Two Mountain Men lead a platoon of heavily armed soldiers along a deserted street. Ominous silence promises nothing but trouble. If we started out in Manhattan, this is the Bronx. Pull up to,

INT. LOFT - DAY

Knight looks down at the passing troops. Gypsy paces.

GYPSY
We shouldn't be here.

KNIGHT
Enemy of my enemy.

GYPSY
That doesn't make them friends.

KNIGHT
No. But it might slow down ours.

Gypsy shifts his attention to Amelia, curled up in the corner, a scared rich girl.

GYPSY
As long as she's with us, they can track us. Think she wouldn't leave you if the situation was reversed?

KNIGHT
I gave her my word.

GYPSY
What's that worth? Your life? Mine?... I won't die for her. Or your honor. If it comes to it, I'll do you both.

AMELIA
Spoken like a true gypsy.

Gypsy locks onto her. Approaches slowly. Every word, every syllable of the following bought and paid for in full.

GYPSY
You ever been hungry, princess? And I don't mean ready for supper. Ever watch your loved ones die for lack of a blanket or medicine or hope? Ever been beaten within an inch of your life? You don't know a thing about me.

AMELIA
I know you're a thief and a murderer.

GYPSY
That's right. I am. Just like you. You and your kind kill and rob more in a day than I will in a lifetime. The only difference is you do it from a palace and with titles.

AMELIA
That palace is a cage, and my titles are chains. Besides, today I have neither. Today I'm a fugitive.

(MORE)

AMELIA(cont'd)
 Just like you. And if you ever
 threaten me again, I will kill you.

Gypsy looks down. The tip of Amelia's dagger is pressed
 against the crotch of his trousers. He doesn't flinch.

GYPSY
 Spoken like your father's daughter.

AMELIA
 My father--

GYPSY
 Was a fool who never gave a damn
 about anything outside the walls of
 his castle. And now he's dead,
 which makes him twice the fool.
 But you go ahead, sweetheart. You
 can trim a few inches. I got extra.

She is flustered. Then,

KNIGHT
 I know you can use a dagger. What
 do you know of swords?

AMELIA
 ...I know my father didn't approve
 of women using them.

KNIGHT
 Your father is gone.

Knight tosses her a sword. It digs into the floor, pommel swaying.

KNIGHT
 Pick it up.

Beat. She pushes past Gypsy. Pulls the blade out with some
 difficulty, raises it with one hand. WHOOSH, Knight's sword
 clears its scabbard, disarming the girl in a flash.

KNIGHT
 Both hands.

She picks up the weapon, as he raises his -- a high guard.

KNIGHT
 Like this.

She does her best to mimic Knight. As he circles,

KNIGHT
 Left leg back. Knees bent. Killing a
 man's more chess than brute force.
 It's either you or him.
 (MORE)

KNIGHT(cont'd)
 So you think ahead, you play the odds,
 you create opportunity, and when you
 have the advantage, you strike without
 mercy and to kill. (motions to her
 neck and heart) Here and here.

GYPSY
 You're wasting your time.

AMELIA
 (glancing at Gypsy)
 And how will I know when to kill?

He feints. She swings. His blade CLANGS against her's, sends
 it straight up into the ceiling. It hangs there.

KNIGHT
 You'll know. And when you do, try to
 hold onto the sword. It helps. Again.

INT. STREET - DAY

Teutons and soldiers clatter by. We melt through the wall into-

INT. SHOP - DAY

Small and empty save for Viking and Samurai. The latter is a
 kettle on slow boil. Sliding katana from its scabbard,

SAMURAI
 I'm tired of running from these tin
 men.

Viking's heavy hand lands atop his, stopping it mid-draw.

VIKING
 You have nothing to live for. I do. I
 will get to that ship. I will see my
 son again. And I'll be damned if I let
 anything or anyone get in the way.

SAMURAI
 So you'd rather run like a coward
 than fight like a man?

VIKING
 Yes.

SAMURAI
 Live out the rest of your days, as
 nothing, less than nothing, working
 like a mule for a few meager coins?!
 Pounding steel that other men use to
 carve their names into eternity?! Grow
 decrepid and old, die in bed and turn
 to dust, as though you never existed?!
 Is that what you want?!!!

VIKING

Yes.

SAMURAI

Then I pity your son.

VIKING

No. You pity yourself. You are no more a Samurai than I. What was your father? A farmer? A blacksmith? (off Samurai's reaction) This sword. He was the one who made it, was he not?

On Samurai. Viking's words need no confirmation. For the first time the cocky facade drops exposing the man beneath.

He seems unarmed. Scared. Human. Viking lets go.

VIKING

We're all running from something.

SAMURAI

Yes. And you keep running. Like a dog chasing its own tail. I'm done.

With that, he strides out. Viking looks after. Then exits the other way, through the back door. To each his own...

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Arab kneels towards the Holy Places, performing his midday salat. Lips move to the words only he and God can hear. Monk leans against the far wall, staring into nothingness. Then,

MONK

What do you pray for?

ARAB

For you. For me. For the boy. For those who died this day. For those who will die before it is over.

MONK

Even if they deserved it?

ARAB

They may have deserved to die. But they also deserve this. After all, they must have believed in something. We all do. Even the worst of us. Perhaps the worst most of all. (beat) You're welcome to pray with me.

MONK

Why? To erase what I have done? So that God will forgive me?

ARAB

No. So that you will forgive yourself.
God has already done so. You should
know. You wear the robes of his
servant.

Monk takes in his clothes as if noticing them for the first time.

MONK

Yes. (beat) I have prayed. As hard as
I could. For as long as I could. But
my God doesn't answer. Does yours?

ARAB

No. But I'm told he's a very good
listener. (beat) The boy. You
couldn't have known...

Monk doesn't respond. When he finally speaks, there's a hint
of something in his voice, glimpsed previously at the Buddhist
temple. Something dangerous.

MONK

I'm not talking about the boy.

EXT. ALLEY _ DAY

A figure leaps into frame. It's Zulu. Running hard. Breathing
harder.

Beat. Three Mountain Men cut in, following his trail. The
chase has been going on for hours, and nobody is letting up.

INT. LOFT - DAY

Blades strike.

KNIGHT

Better.

AMELIA

Why didn't you kill that woman?

KNIGHT

Did you want me to?

AMELIA

(a confession)

Yes.

KNIGHT

Why?

AMELIA

Because I was afraid. Because I want
to live. Don't you?

KNIGHT
Depends on the price.

AMELIA
When she was dead, I felt...relieved.
And ashamed. (beat) I guess we all
have to do a little evil for the sake
of the greater good.

A bittersweet smile creases Knight's features.

KNIGHT
I used to believe that too, when I was
your age. But then again, I used to
believe a lot of things. (beat) The
trouble with the end justifying the
means is that sometimes you get to the
end and wonder if it was worth it. And
what it was all for.

Thus concludes the lesson. As he turns away,

AMELIA
You didn't answer my question.

KNIGHT
Yes, I did. You just weren't
listening.

She's about to say something else when his raised hand stops her.
Gypsy tenses, listening. Two strides, and he's at the window.

HIS POV: Mountain Men and soldiers push through the front doors.

GYPSY
We gotta go.

INT. BUILDING - DAY

A warren of dark rooms and narrow corridors. They rush for
the stairs. Glimpse the hunters coming up from below.

KNIGHT
The roof!

INT. STAIRWELL

Soldiers bound up the stairs, Mountain Men in the lead,
jacked up on adrenaline and bloodlust. Suddenly they stop.
Exchange glances. Confused. And... afraid.

The shadows seem to grow deeper. A strange sound emanates
from above. It sounds like... wings.

SERGEANT
Somebody light a fucking torch!

One of his men does. Wishes he hadn't.

Because the walls are covered in graffiti -- weird, primeval, nightmarish. All of it drawn in blood.

WHAM, he is yanked upward into the black. The torch falls on the floor. A moment later his headless corpse lands beside it.

Steel boomerangs SWISH through the air, refracting the torchlight, slicing off body parts, cutting people in half. Shapes, more animal than human, glide overhead. Two harpoons strike a soldier from different directions. Cables pull taut, tearing him apart. Blood spatters, adding a fresh coat of gore to the walls.

It's a massacre.

The last Mountain Man races down the stairs. HOWLS, knee-capped with arrows.

He can barely make out the outlines of beaks and talons... and blood red eyes, glowing in the darkness, as they converge on him-

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

His SCREAM washes over Knight, as he puts his shoulder through the door, pushes onto the rooftop, daylight stinging their eyes.

GYPSY
You hear that?

KNIGHT
No.

GYPSY
Me neither.

The roof is bare save for a single urn, smoke wafting from its top. Knight races to the edge. Sixty feet down, at least thirty to the next roof, a flimsy bridge connecting the two buildings.

AMELIA
Oh my God...

A figure stands by the urn, as if it just materialized out of thin air. Its head lolls to the side at an odd angle, face obscured by a feathered bird-like mask. Its right hand, topped with long, steel claws that would make Freddy Kruger jealous, is held over the flame, heating up the blades. The other wields a wrist crossbow. His name is TALON, and he's the leader of-

GYPSY
(fuck me)
Ravens.

Talon raises his head. His eyes, covered by a mesh of ruby red steel, size up the intruders

Gypsy takes one uncertain step. Another. A HIGH PITCHED SHRIEK emanates from behind Talon's mask.

GYPSY

RUN!!!

EXT. ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

They do. Dash from roof to roof via makeshift bridges, built out of planks and ropes. Ravens everywhere, behind, to the side, even above, airborne wraiths sliding along cables, strung overhead like an intricate spiderweb.

Boomerang flies at a show stopping bullet time. Knight pushes Amelia aside, the edge of the weapon slicing his shoulder as it passes by, Gypsy ducking under, an inch to spare... and it just keeps going... returning to its owner.

And we are moving again. A vertigo-inducing rollercoaster.

Another roof. A sheer drop with no exits. Knight -- still mid-stride, chops down a pole with one blow. It falls over the gap, they cross in a hurry... don't look down!... don't look down!... safe! Gypsy chucks the pole into the abyss. Ravens fire their cable crossbows, zipline over the chasm, hardly skipping a beat.

Several converge on Amelia. A scythe is about to claim her head. Swing! Knight blocks it, but there are just too many--

She topples a cage. A flock of pigeons flutter into the path of the airborne assailants, blinding them. WHAM, they collide, a mid-explosion of blood and feathers.

When the view clears, Amelia has vanished.

Knight casts about, no sign of her, no choice but to keep running, they leap onto the roof of a church, turn a corner--

Talon stands there. Waiting. Two dozen more Ravens encircle our duo, springing the trap.

KNIGHT

Not my day...

We do a 360 around Gypsy and Knight. Back to back.

GYPSY

I told you this was a bad idea, didn't I? Just like I told you she was going to ditch us. Just like I told you--

KNIGHT

Don't worry. I have a plan.

GYPSY

Really?

KNIGHT

No. I'd just rather die without
listening to your whining.

They brace themselves... A WHISTLE cuts through the silence
like a firecracker. Heads turn--

Amelia stands in the center on a giant stained glass ceiling
window covering the dome of the church. For the first time
her auburn hair is down, flowing freely in the wind. For the
first time we glimpse something that wasn't there before and
understand why Edward wants her dead so badly.

AMELIA

I am Amelia of Aquilon. Daughter to a
murdered king. Rightful heir to the
throne of this land. I am the one you
want. (beat; low) So come and get me,
motherfuckers.

Ravens consider. One of them beelines for the girl. Not to be
outdone, his mates follow, eager to claim the double bounty.

She waits.

They converge. Cautiously step onto the glass. It crackles
under the weight of many men... but holds.

She waits.

Tiny spiderwebs shoot from under their feet, spreading like a
virus... turn back or press on... greed wins... closer... closer.

AMELIA

NOW!!!

Knight hesitates, he knows what he must do, but--

AMELIA

DO IT!!!

On Talon. And then he knows it too. He SHRIEKS, RETREAT!!!

Sprints for the edge, as Knight locks eyes with Amelia and-

SMASHES THE GLASS.

Chain reaction ripples along its surface, POP, POP, POP.
Hairline fractures turn into cracks. Ravens might as well
flap their arms, cause the whole thing SHATTERS and-

PLUMMETS

Talon and his bunch plummet with it in a mass trap door exit.
Unfortunately so does Amelia.

INT. CHURCH/EXT. ROOF

Drops down fifteen feet. And-

SNAP, a rope tied to her waist pulls taut. Good news - she's anchored herself to the roof. Bad news - the rope rubs against the jagged shards embedded in the frame, fraying rapidly.

AMELIA

Help!!!

Knight -- Gypsy -- what to do -- Gypsy backs up, centers himself, winding his body like a spring -- knives out and -- dives off the roof toward her.

ROPE -- GONE -- she falls...

He TACKLES her mid-air, his momentum carrying them both toward

THE CHURCH WALL. SMASH into it. His daggers dig into the limestone in a shower of sparks. And-

Break the fall.

They hang there, Amelia's hands wrapped around him. Their bodies pressed together. Faces inches apart.

GYPSY

I gotcha.

She looks at him, about to speak-

A familiar SHRIEK from below. It's Talon, clinging to the same wall with his steel claws. And climbing toward them, fast.

GYPSY

A little help!!!

But the roof is empty. No sign of Knight.

Back to our duo. Gypsy can't let go of the knives. Amelia can't let go of Gypsy. Talon powers toward them, vengeance incarnate.

AMELIA

Do something!

Gypsy considers. Plants his lips on hers.

GYPSY

Now I can say I kissed a princess
before I died.

AMELIA

I have no intention of dying today.

And then Talon is on them. Swings, about to skewer both--

WHOOSH, an arrow SPINS toward him, spooling cable. Hits his clawed hand dead center, nailing it to the wall. Talon SHRIEKS again, this time in pain, as-

Knight slides toward them. An Angel of Death minus the wings. Relieves Talon of his mask. And his head along with it.

Eyes Amelia. Seeing her as if for the first time. Then,

KNIGHT

We had a deal. I have no intention of breaking it. Neither should you. You want to help? Stay alive.

AMELIA

Life's a gamble, right? Besides, I knew you'd keep me safe.

GYPSY

Touching. Better tell me the name of that ship though. In case you don't make it.

AMELIA

Then you'd better make sure I do.

Knight chops the cable, grabs Amelia. Gypsy lets go off the knives. They swing across--

And land on the balcony on the other side.

INT. CHURCH - STAIRWELL

Our trio half sprint, half fall down flights of stairs. A door looms. Gypsy kicks it open, and they're in-

EXT. STREET - DAY

A lone Raven mans the perimeter. Sees the intruders. And... runs like hell. Gypsy gloats.

GYPSY

Ravens! Ravens! Come out and play!

He clucks like a chicken. Beat. Our Raven reappears. And this time he's brought along about fifty of his friends...

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Our guys hauls ass down the alley and across the square, a wall of bodies behind them. Knight hazards a glance back...

Ravens have inexplicably stopped in their tracks. Almost like they're unable to cross some imaginary line.

AMELIA

...Why aren't they following us?

Knight takes in the cheerful surroundings, the brightly painted shops, the clean streets.

KNIGHT
We're out of their territory.

GYPSY
And into whose?

KNIGHT
Let's hope we don't find out.

He starts walking. Amelia's hand stops Gypsy.

AMELIA
What you said about my father...

GYPSY
I was out of line.

AMELIA
No. You were right.... But we're not all like him and Edward. Some of us want peace.... If I were queen...

GYPSY
...Well, you're not. Today you're a fugitive. (beat) Just like me.

He pulls away, heading after Knight. Beat, and she follows. As they press on into the unknown, we drift back toward the invisible border of the domain, concluding our journey on...

An exotic, delicate flower nailed to a post like a marker. Blooming out of an eye socket of a Raven's mask. Off that,

EXT. RED LIGHT DISTRICT - DAY

PROSTITUTES entice men and their money from behind gilded glass doors. Samurai struts along, taking in the offerings, unconcerned with pursuit, unafraid of consequence.

A beautiful young WOMAN, a stylish mix of geisha and courtesan, East meets West, catches his eye, holds it. He angles towards her. She blinks, coy, seductive.

Samurai studies her for a beat. She doesn't waver. He takes the back of her head and kisses her, passionate and hard.

SAMURAI
How much?

WOMAN
...The weight of your head in gold.

It's only now we see the same flower in her hair.

The drug, passed through the kiss, hits Samurai like a ton of bricks. The walls shimmer, then ripple, then undulate. Her features twist into a macabre sneer.

Samurai tries to draw his blade. It tumbles to the ground. Its owner isn't far behind. Eyes open, brain working, but limbs paralyzed -- a ketamine high gone bad.

As we CRANE UP, WOMEN, part prostitutes, part priestess -- young, old, but all somehow beautiful -- converge on his fallen form. This is a female gang known as the SIRENS.

EXT. FOUNTAIN - DAY

A bronze child pisses into a marble tub. Zulu pulls his head out of the water, checks his six. Mountain Men are fifty yards out and closing.

A deep breath, and he's off again, going on fumes and desperation.

EXT. RED LIGHT DISTRICT - STREET - DAY

CLOSE ON Samurai rattling down the street. As we PULL BACK, we see that he's propped up on an ox drawn cart, his hands chained to a beam rising out of the open cab. A half dozen Sirens are arrayed around the wagon. They are unarmed.

Suddenly the wagon lurches to a stop.

Viking. Axe in hand. High fucking Noon.

VIKING

No one has to die here today.

An older Siren steps forward. Her movements are elegant, her language precise, her tone courteous and devoid of emotion.

SIREN

Everyone dies, son of Odin. It is the way of the world. Before you do, answer me this. Why are you willing to sacrifice yourself for the sake of this creature? He's violent. Arrogant. Amoral. His sole purpose is to fight, fornicate and feed. He cares about nothing. He is nothing.

VIKING

Yes.

SIREN

Then why?

VIKING

(beat)

Because I was like him once.

Samurai doesn't get it. But the Siren does.

SIREN

It has been a honor to meet you...
Viking.

She bows at the waist, a demonstration of respect, revealing-

A second Siren behind her, blow gun at her lips. WHOOSH, white powder shoots out. Right into Viking's eyes.

An instant later his world fades to black. He's blind. He roars, swings the axe-

At nothing. Sirens circle, taking their time, a pack of wolves about to rip into a wounded bear. Weapons -- sais, kusarigamas (a sickle with chain topped with an iron ball), tekkos (filed horseshoes used as knuckledusters), metal fans, etc -- emerge.

One rakes across Viking's back. Whirls away, as his blade strikes impotently at the now empty space. Another takes a chunks out of his side. Shoulder. Leg. Death of a thousand cuts.

Samurai watches. All he can do is watch. Or...

SAMURAI

...Left!

Viking hears, realizes, reacts, all in one fluid motion -- his axe arcs left, finally finding flesh. Siren SCREAMS, drops dead.

The others tense. One pulls off her straw hat, throws it, WHOOSH.

SAMURAI

Down!

Viking ducks, as the projectile -- razor sharp steel embedded in its rim -- slices off the head of a Siren behind him. A geyser of red. The survivors attack en masse.

SAMURAI

Behind you!

Viking drives the backspike into the face of one, a short sword sinks between his ribs, fuck you, he eats it for breakfast, grabs the blade, lops off the arm holding it, two left, the Boss Siren runs for the Samurai as he yells, a coach calling plays,

SAMURAI

Right, high block, hack!

Viking executes the combo, splitting the last Siren in two, just as the ring leader thrusts her sai into Samurai's mouth.

Since he can't move a muscle, he uses the only functioning part of his body. Namely, he catches the flat of the blade with his teeth.

A silent struggle, as she presses the point into his throat. He holds it back, literally clinging to life by the skin of his teeth.

Viking searches for Samurai's voice, knows he's in trouble.

VIKING
Show me your hands!!!

With superhuman effort, every fibre of his being straining, Samurai JANGLES his chains against the post.

Viking locks on the sound. Primes the axe. Boss Siren sneers.

SIREN
Pray to your gods you don't miss,
Norseman.

On Viking,

VIKING
Pray to yours.

He throws the axe. It sails through the air, spinning end over end, as it PASSES THROUGH the Siren's skull, splattering everything above her eyebrows. And THWACK, severs the chain.

The Siren just sits there. Unaware that she's dead. Finally figures it out. Falls off the wagon and onto the street, THUMP.

Viking rushes over. Grabs Samurai in a fireman carry.

SAMURAI
My swords.

Viking fumbles for the blades with one hand, shoves them into Samurai's belt, and they're moving. A high pitched WARBLE washes over them. A dozen Sirens appear at the end of the street.

VIKING
Do I want to know?

SAMURAI
No. You want to run.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Speaking of running, Zulu's doing just that. Stumbling is more like it. But being chased by three guys out to kill you and eat you, not necessarily in that order, is one helluva incentive.

He cuts down a narrow alley into-

EXT. SLAVE MARKET

Remember the place we first met Zulu back on pg. 6? Deja vu.

The familiar DIN of the auction assaults his already frayed senses... strangers... faces... reactions: indifference, curiosity, confusion, hate. He'll find no help here.

He trips, falls. Doesn't have the strength to get up. This is where it began. This is where it's going to end.

His eyes drift across... aimless, unfocused... settling on...

The mangy tiger. Lying on the floor of his filthy cage, same as before. He appears to be dead. Or close to it. Once again, he and Zulu have something in common.

Slowly, almost on instinct, Zulu wraps his hand around the tip of the spear. Blood seeps through his fingers, drips onto dust...

EXT. ALLEY

Mountain Men are coming at a steady clip, certain as death and taxes. They know they've got their quarry right where they want him. Which is why it comes as a mild shock, when they see--

Zulu sprinting towards them, blood trickling from slashed palm, throwing everything he's got left into one final, suicidal charge.

They close on one another. Ten yards out. Nine. Eight. Sev-

Zulu drops to the ground, revealing-

The liberated tiger, mid-leap, soars over his prostrated form, drawn by the scent of blood. The luckless Mountain Men have a split second to do a Wile E. Coyote before-

The beast SMASHES into them, faces ripped off, limbs torn out, a lifetime of captive rage unleashed in one explosive instant.

Zulu takes in the carnage. Moves on, as we PULL UP, Zulu getting smaller and smaller, as we ascend to a bird's eye view of the area, spotting Viking and Samurai, with Sirens in hot pursuit. Drop down toward our duo.

EXT. STREET

Viking staggers forward, blood pouring freely from half a dozen wounds. An archway looms ahead.

SAMURAI

Put me down! I can fight, damn it!

Viking leans against the arch, staining the stone red. Samurai tries to regain his footing. Takes a couple of baby steps... and falls. Viking slides down beside him, spent.

VIKING

Well. That didn't quite work out the way either one of us intended. Ready?

SAMURAI
 You're the hands. I'm the eyes. (beat)
 You could have told me.

VIKING
You could have told me.

Silence. Filled with things said and unsaid. Then,

SAMURAI
 Next life.

VIKING
 Next life.

ZULU (O.S.)
 How about this one?

Samurai grins.

SAMURAI
 Never figured I'd be glad to see
 you again, savage.

ZULU
 It's nice to know you're still an
 ass. Shall we?

He grabs Samurai. Viking climbs unsteadily to his feet, holds out his axe, its tip moving from one side of the arch to the other, measuring distances he can no longer see.

VIKING
 No. This is a good place. I'll hold
 them. You go.

SAMURAI
 Then I stay too.

VIKING
 To do what? Bleed on them? Dying is
 easy, boy. Living, day by day. That's
 the hard part. (to Zulu) Get him to
 the cemetery, friend.

Zulu nods. Lifts Samurai on his powerful back.

ZULU
 You still don't know my name.

VIKING
 I still don't need to. (beat) If
 you live, find my son. Tell him
 that I... Just tell him.

Samurai tries to say something. But all he can manage is-

SAMURAI

...Why?

VIKING

When you become a father, you'll understand. Good bye... Samurai.

It's the first time he's called him that.

Zulu's off. Viking stands alone. Stands tall. Waits for the approaching Sirens. ROARS, swings the axe--

We don't see its impact. We stay on Samurai's face, as he watches the battle from Zulu's shoulders, its receding SOUNDS playing over his features. Finally he closes his eyes. BLACK.

The inky darkness billows, as though pulled by the wind. Camera pushes through it to find-

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Arab and Monk crouch under a black awning, rippling under a light breeze. Arab surveys the area with his spyglass.

ARAB

Less than a mile to the cemetery.

The good news is lost on his travel companion. Arab folds the instrument, glances at the position of the sun.

ARAB

We should go, Monk.

He strides for the exit. Notices the latter isn't following.

ARAB

Monk...

Monk explodes. His calm, dignified facade is ripped off, discarded like a mask at the end of Carnival.

MONK

You think you know everything, don't you? That you have all the answers. That you can pray away your sins? That I'm a servant of God?! That I am a good man?!!!

His secret. His demons. All laid bare before us.

MONK

I am no monk. I killed the man who wore these robes. Just as I have killed others, beyond count. Men. Women. Children, like that boy today, even younger. I have raped.

(MORE)

MONK(cont'd)

I have tortured. I have cut babies from their mother's wombs. I have slaughtered, starved, pillaged and burnt entire villages to terrify others into submission. I am a monster. I am a plague. I am the Devil. Even my own generals turned against me because they knew that someday I would destroy them too. That's why I am here. Dressed in these clothes. Pretending to be something I am not.

On Arab, as the enormity of the confession sinks in.

MONK

Come on. Say something. Tell me there's good in all of us! Tell me there's a God!!! Tell me!!!

Arab turns, Monk grabs him -- Arab spins, gunslinger quick, bow drawn, aims at Monk and fires in one fluid motion.

The arrow WHISTLES -- hits the man behind Monk -- a massive, armored Highlander in full blue battle paint, Braveheart on steroids, a claymore raised high above his head.

He topples, except he was just the decoy. Another pair have snuck up on them, fast, soundless, and Arab realizes it just a second too late, as one of them swings a mace--

And THUMP! Another shaft BULLSEYES the Scotsman mid-strike, splatters him against the wall. The second drops his partner, PUNCHING through the shield and the man.

Arab -- one glance at the fletching on the arrow, and he knows who it is. Eyes snap to adjacent rooftops. To Monk,

ARAB

Go!!! Go, damn it!!!

Monk -- still reeling from it all -- Arab shoves him toward the door, rolls, as a third shaft sails by, cutting through the space he inhabited a quarter second ago.

He comes up in a crouch, his own arrow notched, retaliates.

WHOOSH, it cuts through the air -- and THUMP, splits the wood inches feet away from Bowman's face.

Bowman smiles at the attempt. Watches Arab's rooftop in a small mirror mounted on a nearby wall. Sniper vs. Sniper.

Back to Arab, as he peeks cautiously over the railing, trying to figure out if he got the shooter. Since no more arrows are coming, it would appear to be the case. On the other hand...

Bowman -- arrow primed -- just waiting patiently for Arab to rise from behind the cover.

Arab doesn't fall for it. Gets comfortable. Or at least tries to.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Monk, alone, adrift, moves without purpose. A dozen yards ahead Sumo steps out of an alcove. Skin burned, a rough bandage over one eye, he is as imposing as before, only uglier.

Monk doesn't seem to notice or care. Just keeps coming.

Sumo swings a fist. Monk doesn't block or dodge. WHAM, it knock him flat on his back.

Slowly he gets up. WHAM. Take two. Sumo's frustrated.

SUMO
Fight me!

MONK
No.

It's unclear if he's addressing Sumo or himself. Up again. WHAM.

SUMO
Fight me, damn it!!!

MONK
(grits his teeth)
No...

He staggers upward. Sumo strikes again-

Right into Monk's counterstrike. Fist against fist. Energy ripples up Sumo's arm, shattering bone. Sumo HOWLS in pain.

And then Monk looks up for first time since the start of the confrontation, and we realize that there's something starkly different about him. Maybe because he's not Monk anymore...

He cracks his neck. Stands a little taller. Smiles through bloody teeth. It's a razor thin smirk, more scythe than a smile, that never reaches his eyes. Jekyll and Hyde time.

MONK
You should have listened.

He doesn't fight Sumo. He takes him apart.

A pressure point hit to a Golgi tendon on the back of an elbow triggers a reflex which immediately relaxes the muscle, allowing the joint to bend more easily in the wrong direction. CRACK, Sumo's left arm is history.

Side of the knee is next. CRACK, the big man crumbles. A blow just below the occipital ridge. Concussion.

Desperate, defenceless, Sumo tries to crawl away. Monk casually kicks him in the side, targeting floating ribs. CRUNCH. Red marks the point of impact. Again. Again. And again.

Sumo vomits blood. Monk's had enough fun, wraps his prayer beads around Sumo's throat. Pulls them tight, like a garrote.

Sumo. Eye bulging. Lips turning blue. It's not pretty.

Monk -- or rather whatever the thing that was pretending to be Monk, hiding inside him until now -- watches Sumo die. He likes to watch. And then...

His eyes focus on the prayer beads. The symbol of faith turned into an instrument of destruction.

Slowly his expression changes to that of disgust. At what he's about to do. At what he was and has once again become. At the chilling realization that he's more of a monster than the man whose life he is about to claim. He lets go.

Sumo collapses. Wheezing. Whimpering. A stone cold killer reduced to a terrified child.

Monk -- for he's that, once again -- leans down. Softly,

MONK

You were right. I am not the better man. (beat) But you could be.

He hands him the prayer beads. And walks away.

On Sumo, as he watches him go. Holding the offering. Wondering why he was spared. Wondering what to do next. Wondering....

EXT. ROOFTOPS - DAY

Sun. White hot. Beats down without mercy.

Arab lies flat on his back, with no shade to shield him from its punishment. His eyes shift to the only available exit.

The door leading to the stairs and the street below. About twenty feet away. Might as well be a thousand. Meanwhile,

Bowman is chillin' comfortably in the shade, sipping water from a canteen, waiting for the other guy to make a move. All the time in the world...

Arab doesn't have that luxury. A glance at the sun confirms what he already knows: for him, time is running out. And with it, hope.

Arab's gaze shifts toward the corpse of the Highlander. Then his partners, dropped by Bowman. A thought forming...

EXT. ROOFTOPS - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Bowman spies Arab poking his head into view. Gotcha!

WHOOSH, an instant later his shaft SHEERS the top of Arab's head. The body THUDS on the roof, as we swivel around it--

It's a dead Scotsman wearing Arab's clothes. Arab crouches beside it, waiting for Bowman to confirm the kill.

Back to Bowman. That was too easy. Reaches for his quiver. Another special arrow. Pulls the cover off its head, revealing a razor sharp six point tip.

Arab waits, his own arrow primed...

THWACK! THWACK! THWACK! THWACK! THWACK! Five shafts ERUPT through the stone at regularly spaced intervals, 14th century armor piercing rounds, each closer and closer to their intended target.

Arab -- fuck me. Only one option left.

He runs for the door, sprinting like hell, zig-zaging, making it utterly impossible for anyone to draw a bead on him. He's only a couple of feet away from the exit, when-

Bowman's shaft strikes him between the shoulder blades, knocking him against the very door he was trying so desperately to reach.

Arab falls face down. DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Bowman steps out on the roof. One slight problem.

Arab's body has vanished. Left in its place are three sets of chest plate armor, courtesy of the slain Highlanders. Medieval bulletproof vests. Bowman's armor piercing arrow has cut through two of them, pushing into the third.

On Bowman, as we hear-

INT. PALACE - DAY

A gilded chair, ornate and undoubtedly expensive, flies through the air, SMASHING into what's probably a priceless vase.

EDWARD (O.S.)

FUCK!!!!

GREGORY

Patience, your Grace. They are wounded. Exhausted. It's only a matter of-

EDWARD

Time?! Time?! A week? A month? A year?!!!

He takes a deep breath. Think, think...

EDWARD

The only reason that bitch isn't dead is because they are protecting her. Which means she's promised them something in return.

GREGORY

Amnesty? Money?

EDWARD

No. If they wanted either, they would have knocked on my door hours ago. The man who leads them. He's smart. So it has to be something tangible. Something worth risking his life for.

GREGORY

A way out.

EDWARD

Precisely. Land or sea?

GREGORY

They are closer to the harbor. But, as your Grace is aware, we have a thousand men blocking every street from here (points at the map) to the water.

EDWARD

Which means he knows it too. Unless-

He stares at the map. You can practically hear the gears turning.

EDWARD

One of them is a gypsy, is he not?

GYPSY

Yes, your Gra-

WHAM, Edward drives his dagger into the cemetery.

EDWARD

Catacombs.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A high wall marks the border between the lands of the living and the dead. Gargoyles. Tombstones. Creepy.

Knight, Gypsy and Amelia enter, cautious, ready for more trouble.

ZULU
About time.

Both groups take each other in.

KNIGHT
The smith?

Samurai, still wobbly from the drug, shakes his head.

KNIGHT
The others?

Zulu shrugs.

KNIGHT
Five then.

ARAB (O.S.)
Six.

He glides out of the shadows. A look between him and Knight. Both are glad to see the other is still standing, but they are not about to acknowledge it, not now, not ever.

KNIGHT
Monk?

ARAB
...Alive last I saw him.

AMELIA
Do we wait for him?

Knight shakes his head. To Gypsy,

KNIGHT
Lead the way.

They drift through the cemetery, marathon runners nearing the final leg. Amelia sidelines Knight.

AMELIA
You just left a man behind to die.

KNIGHT
Yes.

AMELIA

What if it was you? Or me? Someone you loved? Or are you even capable of that? Is getting on that ship all you care about?!

KNIGHT

Do you?

AMELIA

As long as Edward lives, he'll never let me rule! So I don't have a choice!

KNIGHT

Yes. You do. I've made a lot of them. All bad ones, as it turned out. And then one morning you wake up and realize you don't have many left, and that the road before you is shorter than the road behind. So I'll get on that ship. And if that man is still alive by the time we sail, I will kill him, drink to his memory and live to lose another day. And I will lose. I always lose. That is my future. But it doesn't have to be yours.

AMELIA

What you're asking me to do--

KNIGHT

I ask nothing. I simply remind you that the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men stand by and do nothing.

Amelia gives him the same look he gave her at the church. Seeing him as if for the first time.

They crest a small hillock. And stop.

Because the entrance to the catacombs is blocked. Not by soldiers or by gangs, but by people, too poor to live anywhere else. Young. Old. Men. Women. Children. Some crippled. Some stricken. All hungry and desperate.

A MAN steps forward.

MAN

We mean you no harm.

KNIGHT

Then you'll let us pass.

MAN

Yes. All we ask is that you let us have one.

KNIGHT

One what, friend?

MAN

One of you.

They instantly tighten their ranks.

MAN

Please understand. We have sick. Good people dying of hunger. Children whose only crime was being born here. The bounty for just one of you can save their lives.

Knight sizes up the opposition. A few carry weapons ranging from sticks to stones, but most are unarmed and in no shape to fight.

KNIGHT

You their leader?

MAN

I'm just a man out front. Sometimes others follow. As your people appear to follow you.

KNIGHT

Then tell your people to step aside. Or we will go through them.

MAN

I have no doubt you are fully capable of doing so. But dying by your hand is preferable to the alternative. I wish there was any other way.

KNIGHT

As do I.

The mob advances. Frantic,

GYPSY

What do we do?

KNIGHT

Try to wound them, if you can. If not...

AMELIA

They are unarmed, for God's sake!

KNIGHT

Then they should have armed
themselves! Or stayed out of our way!

SAMURAI

You're right. It's either them or
us. And you know who made them this
way? Men with swords. Men like you.
And now... men like me.

Closer. Closer. Arab draws--

MONK (O.S.)

Wait!

He catches up with our crew. Pushes through their ranks.

MONK

Take me.

Amelia grabs his hand, desperate.

AMELIA

You don't have to do this! Not for
these people! Not for us! Not for me!

MONK

No. Only for myself.

He gently frees himself from her grip.

Beat. The crowd parts like the Red Sea. One by one, our heroes
walk past Monk. Their eyes do all the taking. Arab is last.

ARAB

I will pray for you.

MONK

Don't waste your breath.

The crowd converges on his solitary figure.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The survivors walk in silence.

AMELIA

That man died for me. And I don't
even know his name.

Arab hesitates. Then,

ARAB

He was a servant of God. That is
all you need to know.

THUNDER washes over them. Except it's not thunder. It's horses. Lots of them. Coming fast.

KNIGHT

...Run!

EXT. CRYPT - DAY

An ancient crypt lies before us, covered in memories and moss. Our crew haul ass toward it. Behind them, galloping over the ridge, is a line of heavy cavalry - Edward, Teutons, Bowman, soldiers, Mountain Men out front.

Doors loom. They push through, slamming the entrance shut.

INT. CRYPT - DAY

Knight slides a crossbar across the doors. Gypsy lights a torch, tosses another to Samurai.

GYPSY

Third tomb from the right.

Lances DRIVE through wood, followed by a grappling hook.

Arab and Zulu pull off the lid. The smell of decay and death pours out, revealing a set of stairs leading into the earth. They rush down, just as the door's torn off its hinges.

Soldiers pour through the breach, clearing the way for Edward. Pointing to a Sergeant, then the hole,

EDWARD

You. Ten men. Now.

SERGEANT

Yes, sir.

EXT. CRYPT - DAY

Edward exits the crypt. Monk stands nearby. Soldiers surround him, afraid to approach. Edward is not.

EDWARD

Anything you want to say to me?

MONK

A great deal. But you wouldn't listen.

EDWARD

What makes you so sure?

MONK

Because when I was you, I didn't either.

Edward's gaze pans off the prisoner, locking on a nearby building, smoke billowing from its stacks. To his Captain,

EDWARD
That would be a tannery?

CAPTAIN
Yes, Your Grace.

EDWARD
...Flood the tunnels with oil.

CAPTAIN
But sir... Our own men are down there.
And that could burn this entire
section of the city to the ground.

Edward returns his attention to Monk.

EDWARD
Yes. (beat) These good people are
hungry. Feed them.

A Teuton swings his sword. Monk's eyes never leave Edward's.

MONK
I forgive you.

Off the terrible sound of steel striking flesh,

INT. CATACOMBS - CONTINUOUS

Feet POUND into muddy soil, echoing in the dark void. Rats scurry. Lungs heave. Only light is from torches, moving fast, distorting vision and perspective. We're in a honeycomb maze of passageways and tunnels, endless, claustrophobic, nightmarish. Gypsy is on point, the only one who knows the way.

Suddenly he stops, as liquid, thick, black and viscous, flows from above. Raises his torch. Amelia's hand lands on his, halting the move.

AMELIA
Oil.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Edward watches his soldiers empty barrels into gutters and storm drains. Walks to an open vent.

EDWARD
Give my regards to your father!

He drops a flaming brand. We fall with it.

WHOOSH! Oil ignites! Flame lurches forward.

INT. CATACOMBS

With the fire, racing in all directions, surging like some demonic force towards--

Our heros, running. They can feel the oxygen being sucked out, the heat closing in. Fire cuts off escape routes, singeing clothes and bodies. Right, left, front!!!

GYPSY

Fuck it!!!

He tosses the torch to Knight, vanishes into darkness.

ZULU

Which way?!

AMELIA

He left us to die.

She turns to Knight.

AMELIA

It was a good try. Thank you...
Please say something.

Beat. A confession,

KNIGHT

I am.... afraid.

AMELIA

I thought you were never afraid.

KNIGHT

A man who isn't scared of dying has
nothing to live for. (beat) I do.

Finally the armor cracks, exposing the man beneath. The daughter he never had. The father he will never be. He struggles to say something. But, for once, he's at a loss.

She takes his hand, places it on the pommel of his sword. Smiles through the tears. A confession of her own,

AMELIA

...Me too.

A haunting moment. Knight draws his blade...tip at her throat.

RUMBLING. Gypsy streaks out of the black, clothes smoldering, running like hell itself was behind him. Notes the sword.

GYPSY

What the fuck are you doing?!

Reclaims the torch. Back on point. Rumbling gets LOUDER. And then-

A WALL OF WATER ROOOAAARS through the tunnel, coming straight for them. Collides with burning oil. Now, for those of you who skipped Chem 101, when you mix fire with water, you get-

EXT. STREET - DAY

Edward waits, expectant...

The earth convulses. Cracks form, followed by a series of popping and hissing sounds. A cobblestone shoots into the air, propelled by a geyser of steam. Lands at Edward's feet. He studies it, bewildered, as it dawns on him...

EDWARD

The flood gates...

POP, POP, POP, POP, more pavement explodes into the sky. 4th of July. Except these aren't fireworks. And what goes up...

Imagine a hailstorm of stones, a biblical fucking plague, as the soon to be king's horses and men are CRUSHED by the barrage.

Edward strides through the chaos. Colonel Kilgore.

EDWARD

The harbor!!! The harbor, now!!!

INT. CATACOMBS - SAME TIME

Our heroes are carried by the current. The world is a washer on spin cycle. Gypsy surfs the wave, pushing himself off the walls with feet, hands and knives.

GYPSY

Right!!!... Left!!! Your other left!!!

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

The force of the water ejects them out of the tunnel. They land in a heap. It takes everyone a moment to register the fact that they're still alive. But dead people don't feel pain.

GYPSY

(breathing hard)

You didn't think... I'd leave?

AMELIA

Never crossed... my mind...

GYPSY

Liar...

AMELIA

Thief...

KNIGHT
Save it. Over there.

Ships loom in the distance, silhouetted against the red sky. Their sails ripple in the ocean breeze like wings of majestic birds, basking in the warm glow of the magic hour.

ZULU
...Most beautiful thing I ever saw.

SAMURAI
There's a name for it. Freedom.

Extends his hand, offering to help Zulu up. Beat. He takes it.

Knight surveys the group. They stand close. Leaning on one another. Hope shining through blood and exhaustion.

KNIGHT
Let's go.

EXT. HARBOR - SUNSET

Sailors scurry about. Our heroes approach.

KNIGHT
Which one?

AMELIA
There.

A vessel moored at one of the piers. Gypsy reads the name.

GYPSY
Amelia. I should have known.

RIDERS. First heard, then seen, coming fast. Soldiers, stationed at the docks, charge from the other end. This isn't over.

KNIGHT
Go!!!

The final fifty yard dash. Samurai pushes aside a deckhand, chops at the anchor, splitting the thick rope.

EXT. SHIP - SUNSET

Amelia and Gypsy leap on board. Captain takes one look.

CAPTAIN
I don't want no trouble.

AMELIA
Then get this damn boat moving!

Captain snaps at the familiar voice, barks a command.

EXT. HARBOR - SUNSET

The vessel groans into motion. Knight, Arab, Zulu and Samurai run parallel, helping to push it off, fending off soldiers, keeping them off the ship, off the princess, off one another. For once, they fight as a single unit. As a team.

Zulu jumps on board. Then Samurai. Then Arab. Then Knight--

An arrow clips him mid-jump.

Bowman -- five hundred yards out -- notches the second shaft.

Knight staggers up, keeps going. Riders on his heels.

Arab -- Bowman or riders -- riders it is. Drops one, two, three--

Knight takes it up a notch -- 10 yards out, 8, 6 -- running out of dock, but he can still make it, he will, he must.

Gypsy, at the stern, held by Zulu and Samurai, reaches out to him, shouting at the top of his lungs.

GYPSY

COME ON!!! COME ON!!!

And everyone else is shouting too, willing him to press on, wanting to give him their strength. Amelia's calling out to him, pleading. Only Arab is silent, as he kills everyone behind Knight, draw, aim, release, draw, aim, release, a blur of death.

Knight's fingers touch Gypsy's. Entwine. "The Defiant Ones"...

Bowman's shaft hits Knight in the leg. He stumbles, falls. Gets dragged behind by Gypsy. Their hands come apart.

A beat later the boat is too far. And Mountain Men too close.

Knight knows what will happen if they take him alive. Looks at Amelia for the last time. Then his eyes meet Arab's.

He nods.

Beat. Arab fires his arrow into Knight's heart.

Amelia. Her anguish. Her silent scream.

The others. Frozen. Shocked. Only Arab moves. Having fulfilled his promise, he slides against the railing.

The ship glides into the open sea, toward the dying sun.

EXT. HARBOR - SUNSET

Mountain Men fight over Knight's meager possessions like vultures. One of them kneels next to the body, knife out. Edward's boot catches him in the face, knocks him back.

EDWARD

He was a soldier. Bury him like one.

Edward shifts his gaze to the receding boat. Gregory sidelines.

GREGORY

A war ship, Your Grace?

EDWARD

...No. She's fast, and the wind is in their favor. Pity. Let's go.

GREGORY

Where?

EDWARD

To the palace, of course. To claim my rightful place on the throne. And prey for a storm, a pirate or a giant fish.

GREGORY

She'll turn to your brother's allies. Try to raise an army.

EDWARD

No doubt. She'll be back. Except next time we meet, I'll have a crown on my head and loyal subjects, eager to defend it against a foreign invader. The key to being a good general isn't winning battles. It's not losing wars. And this one is over.

INT. PALACE - COUNCIL CHAMBERS - EVENING

The city's power elite -- landowners, merchants, priests and aristocrats -- simmer in frustration. Edward glides in.

EDWARD

A thousand pardons, my friends. I trust you've not been waiting long.

NOBLEMAN

We have. As, I'm sure, was your intent. So let's dispense with this charade. We all know Amelia is the rightful heir.

EDWARD

Indeed. Feisty girl. Beloved by her people. Would have made a fine queen, I'm sure. Pity she's dead.

Reactions. This is news to everyone.

EDWARD

Oh. You haven't heard? Cut down in her prime by the same men who murdered my brother. I saw her body with my own eyes.

BISHOP

And the assassins-?

EDWARD

Killed while resisting arrest.

NOBLEMAN

How convenient. I suppose we'll never know who hired them.

EDWARD

You already know who hired them. Me.

Stunned silence. Edward doesn't bat an eye.

EDWARD

That's what all of you are thinking. Or are we still playing charades?

MERCHANT

You are next in line for the throne.

EDWARD

Who says I want it? Seems to me that being king is something of an unhealthy occupation these days. I'm but a simple soldier. I know how to fight and how to fuck. So I leave the burdens of the crown in your capable hands, gentlemen.

BISHOP

You mean-

EDWARD

I mean I intend to bury my brother and my niece and be on my way. I'm tired. I want peace. Retire to the country, perhaps. Plow my fields. Bed my women. Besides, people grow restless without a leader. There will be riots. Looting. Maybe civil war.

(MORE)

EDWARD(cont'd)
 Third cousins slitting each other's
 throats over the spoils. Honorable
 men, like yourselves, turning against
 one another. Messy, unpleasant stuff.

They eye one another, divided, suspicious, each believing the
 others to be capable of exactly that.

EDWARD
 Any road, I'm sure you'll manage.

He strolls toward the exit.

NOBLEMAN (O.S.)
 Wait.

Edward permits himself a small smile.

EDWARD
Wait?! For what?! You just accused me
 of killing my own flesh and blood!

NOBLEMAN
 Nonsense! We were merely suggesting-

EDWARD
 That it would be in my interest to
 possess the throne. You're wrong. It
 is in yours.

All eyes on him, as he goes around the room.

EDWARD
 Church. Docks. Textiles. Banking.
 Construction. Your fortunes -- all of
 your fortunes -- are tied directly to
 the health of this house. And without
 a head, it is anything but healthy.

MERCHANT
 What do you want from us?

EDWARD
 Only that you search your hearts.
 And ask what is best for the good
 people of this city.

We drift along the faces of the council until we find-

LAWYER
 I propose that Edward take his
 rightful place on the throne!!!

Speak of the Devil. An aye. Another. Then a roar of AYES!
 Edward's grin should be on the cover of Shit Eaters Monthly.
 A magnificent bastard.

EDWARD

Shall we say dawn tomorrow?

EXT. BOAT - EVENING

No one says anything. Because they are too drained. And in too much pain. Silence. Gypsy is the first to break it.

GYPSY

Wine.

A crewman hands him a jug. He guzzles. Passes it to Arab.

GYPSY

Drink.

ARAB

My faith-

GYPSY

You could kill him. You can drink to his memory.

Beat. Arab accepts the offering. A long pull.

Zulu's turn. Then Samurai. Finally, Amelia, completing the circle.

She raises the jug to her lips. Stops.

AMELIA

I cannot.

WHAM, she smashes the jug against the deck. Wine splatters the boards like blood. To the Captain,

AMELIA

Take me back to the city. Then deliver these men wherever they wish to go.

Gypsy explodes, the enormity of everything they've been through in the last 24 hours finally catching up.

GYPSY

You stupid, selfish bitch! He died for you! So you can live!!! And now you're going to throw it all away! For what?! For power?! For revenge?! For pride?!

AMELIA

No. For him. For my people. For those who died here today. For the same reason he didn't kill that woman. Because there are some things you cannot do, even if you know you must. Because the price is too high.

She takes in these hard, desperate men. Speaking to all and each.

AMELIA

What do you think will happen once Edward assumes the throne? How many more will die? Hundreds? Thousands? (beat) I'm a coward. You know why? Because I'm not brave enough to walk away. Because I'm scared that years from now I would trade all that I have and more for the chance to go back to this day. This moment. And make a different choice.

We hold on their faces. Wait for answers.

GYPSY

You know what'll happen years from now? No one will care that we ran, or that you stayed. No one will even remember.

Turns to the rest of the crew.

GYPSY

Time to see the world.

ARAB

...I've seen it.

He staggers to his feet. Picks up his bow.

ARAB

I have... unfinished business.

Beat.

SAMURAI

As do I.

Picks up his swords. Takes his place beside Amelia and Arab.

GYPSY

There's no glory in this.

SAMURAI

I know.

Gypsy sets his jaw. Fine. Turns to Zulu.

GYPSY

Guess it's just you and me, mate.

ZULU

No. It's just you.

GYPSY

What are you going to do, fight for the same people that put you in chains and treated you like cattle?! This is freedom! This is what you wanted!!!

ZULU

Yes. But not like this. A slave would run. A free man would choose to stay.

Picks up his spear. Joins the rest.

Gypsy stands alone. Looks at Amelia. He can't believe it. Won't. Stupid, so fucking stupid... Bites into every word.

GYPSY

Idiots. God. Damn. You. All. (beat)
And me along with you.

They stare at him, surprised. Impressed even. All business,

GYPSY

Shut the fuck up. We need a plan.
What's the ship's cargo?

AMELIA

I was hoping you'd ask...

The sails billow, powered by strong ocean breeze. Letters appear on them and flutter away, gone with the wind.

CHAPTER V: THE RETURN

EXT. PALACE - DAWN

Sun peeks cautiously over the horizon.

INT. PALACE - DAWN

Edward stands naked, arms outstretched, Christ sans the cross.

BISHOP

Have you invoked God's name over
the course of this night, my son?

A pair of naked women lie in rumped sheets at his feet.

EDWARD

Repeatedly.

Consecrated oil pours on his head.

INT. ELSEWHERE - SAME TIME

Gypsy pours tar on a small burlap sack, coating its exterior.

INT. PALACE - DAWN

Lavish imperial robes are placed on Edward's body.

INT. ELSEWHERE - SAME TIME

Amelia puts chain mail over hers.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAWN

A cleric tests the string on a harp.

INT. ELSEWHERE - SAME TIME

Arab affixes a fresh string to his bow.

INT. PALACE - DAWN

A royal scepter gleaming with jewels is being polished.

INT. ELSEWHERE - SAME TIME

Samurai's katana, as the wetting stone glides along its edge.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAWN

Bells TOLL, announcing the impending coronation.

EXT. ELSEWHERE - SAME TIME

Zulu DRIVES a spike into wood.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAWN

Giant doors part, revealing a breathtaking space filled with the city power elite we met during the council session, as well as a gallery of commoners.

Edward strides in. Man of the hour. Bishop waits at the end of the aisle. Edward kneels before him. Pause. Then,

BISHOP
Let us begin.

EXT. ROYAL DOCKS - DAWN

A bored guard stands vigil in the watch tower. Scratches his balls. Glances at the ocean. Double-takes.

A ship is coming out of the sun, strong morning breeze powering her unfurled sails. Amelia's crest flies proudly on the mast.

Guard blanches. Sounds the alarm. At least tries to.

The ringing of his bell is drowned by those atop the cathedral.

The ship grows bigger and bigger, as it barrels toward--

Guard -- fuck it, they don't pay him enough for this --

Runs, as behind him the behemoth RAMS the docks, destroys -- nay, OBLITERATS the watch tower, the pier and everything else that stands between it and the sea wall.

EXT. SEA WALL - DAWN

Soldiers react, raising weapons. There's just one tiny problem--

EXT. SHIP'S DECK

There's no one at the wheel. It's anchored to the deck, fixed on a precise course.

The beast keeps coming. A juggernaut. Forty yards from the sea wall. Thirty. Twenty...

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAWN

Bishop recites some fitting Latin benediction. Choir sings. Edward and Co. are blissfully unaware.

EXT. SEA WALL - DAWN

CRASH, the mangled ship PLOWS into it, wood buckling, bow compressing, finally grinding to a halt as--

Our five -- Amelia, Gypsy, Zulu, Arab, and Samurai -- leap from the deck, race along the wall as soldiers converge.

INT. SHIP'S CARGO HOLD - SAME TIME

We finally see the ship's cargo.

GUNPOWDER. The fuses are lit and burning white hot. KA-

EXT. SEA WALL

BOOM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Makes a rather sizeable hole in the world. Shrapnel SHREDS everything in general vicinity. The ship is rendered to tinder, the wall to dust. Our heroes tumble down steps, as stairs and pursuing soldiers disappear behind them, erased by the explosion.

INT. CATHEDRAL

Shockwave SHATTERS stained glass windows. Edward heard that. Mutters the name like a curse.

EDWARD

Amelia.

The natives get restless. Edward tries to reclaim the spotlight.

EDWARD

Everyone, remain calm! The same assassins who murdered my beloved brother and niece are now trying to stop me from claiming the throne! My men will deal with them! (to his Captain) Bar the doors. Don't let anyone in or out.

BISHOP

Perhaps we should postpone until-

EDWARD

(low)

Keep going, or I will rip your fucking heart out.

Bishop instantly presses on with the ceremony.

EXT. PALACE - OUTER COURT - DAWN

Our crew keep going full tilt, into the courtyard -- about fifty soldiers there, still reeling from the shock and awe of the explosion -- through them, knife and butter, rush inside.

Samurai peels off. Faces the horde. Hand hovering by the pommel of his sword, a gunslinger ready to draw.

He does.

SWISH, SLASH, SWISH, SWISH, SLASH. Five men die where they stood, frozen for one brief moment, before collapsing to the ground.

45 soldiers stop dead in their tracks. Eyes like saucers.

Samurai surveys the opposition. Zeroes in on one.

SAMURAI

You. You're next.

Edward's finest gulps.

INT. PALACE - HALLWAY - DAWN

And we are back with our crew, running down a long hallway. A CLATTER of hooves echo ahead. The three remaining Teutons RUMBLE towards them like Panzer tanks at Stalingrad.

Distance between them vanishing fast.

Gypsy -- still on the move -- tar-coated sack out, throws it!

It hits the lead Teutons. Sticks. Arab and Zulu throw theirs. Same effect.

Both the audience and the charging Teutons have a moment to ponder what the-

KABOOM. Remember the sticky bombs from "Saving Private Ryan"?

Gypsy's Teton is blown off his horse, concussive force pulverizing him inside the steel exoskeleton. KABOOM. KABOOM. Adolf and Fritz join him in the afterlife.

And our foursome just sprint through, never skipping a beat.

INT. PALACE - FOYER - DAWN

Large foyer looms ahead. Arab senses, spins, shoots. WHOOSH, an arrow intended for Amelia gets knocked off course.

Bowman -- second floor -- rapid fires another.

Arab fires, lightening quick -- who's better? -- dead even. WHOOSH, WHOOSH, WHOOSH, WHOOSH, shafts splinter as Amelia, Zulu and Gypsy run through the crossfire, fragments raining harmlessly on their heads.

And they're out. Bowman and Arab instantly shift their aim on one another, dodging and sniping at the same time, mirroring each other's moves, a dance of death, a duel of masters.

INT. CATHEDRAL

Bishop extends a golden chalice to Edward's lips.

BISHOP

Do you swear by the blood of Christ
to uphold the laws of this land?

EDWARD

I do.

He drinks. Sacramental wine stains his robes.

EXT. COURTYARD

A geyser of gore, Lone Wolf And Cub style, as Samurai dispatches another soldier. Outnumbered forty to one, fighting a 360 degree battle, covered in blood, other men's and his own. A wound disables his right arm. He tosses the sword into his left, annihilates one, two, three, four. Maybe he isn't the greatest swordsman who ever lived, but then again...

INT. FOYER

Arab and Bowman weave through pillars like wraiths, each unable to find an opening in the other's defence. Arab reaches for his quiver, only a few arrows left...

INT. CORRIDOR

The trio turn a corner -- straight into a fusillade of crossbow bolts. Zulu shoves Gypsy aside, shields Amelia's body with his own, PHUM, PHUM, PHUM, takes the worst of it.

Five soldiers at the end, reloading.

Zulu staggers, but doesn't go down, keeps running.

They work faster.

He charges toward them, ROARING. Hurls a spear. It PLOWS through one guy, nails the second.

Three left. Hastily crank their bowstrings. One fires--

The bolt hits Zulu, point blank, but he's unstoppable, unleashed, fury of all oppressed personified in one man.

BASHES a head against the wall. SNAPS a neck. Finally rips a bolt out of his own body and stabs the last soldier under the chin and into the brain.

It's over. But Zulu still refuses to go down.

Looks at Amelia. Marks her with his own blood. Simply,

ZULU
Make it right.

All she can do is nod. And keep going.

His body finally buckles. He sinks into one of the thrones of great kings of old lining the length of the corridor. Sits there, an echo of Conan, frozen, fearsome even near death.

INT. CATHEDRAL

Bishop readies the Host.

BISHOP
Do you swear by the body of Christ
to be merciful and just?

EDWARD
I do.

EXT. COURT YARD

Corpses litter the courtyard. Soldiers -- or rather what's left of them -- surround Samurai. He rests on his feet, a boxer after 11 rounds, waiting for them to attack...

A sword lands at his feet. Another. More. A pile of discarded steel like a monument to his skill. One question,

SOLDIER
Who are you?

Samurai flicks the blood off the blade. Slides it back into the scabbard. The moment he's been waiting for...

SAMURAI
 Nobody.

INT. FOYER

Arab looses an arrow. Only one left.

Bowman whirls behind the pillar. He's been counting. And he's got another quiver strapped to his back. Fucker comes prepared. He can't outshoot our guy. So he is going to outlast him.

Arab -- it's now or never. And then he does something odd. He RIPS the fletching from one side of his last shaft. Notches it. Takes a deep breath. And steps out into the open.

ARAB
 Finish it!

Bowman has a clear shot. Still he waits, cautious.

Arab aims to Bowman's right. Clearly off target.

ARAB
 Finish it! Or are you afraid?!

Bowman -- prudence vs. pride -- pride wins -- he pops out, fires at Arab, who fires at the same instant.

Bowman's shaft sings through the air. Dead on target.

Arab's arcs, an obvious miss.

Bowman's eyes track it. The corners of his lips curl upward ever so slightly.

His shaft strikes Arab square in the chest, just as-

Arab's arrow curves, sweeping left, around pillars -- an amazing trick shot -- THWACK, piercing Bowman's neck.

Both men go down.

INT. CATHEDRAL

BISHOP
 Do you swear by the name of Christ to wear this crown as his loyal servant?

EDWARD
 I do.

INT. CATHEDRAL - OUTER CHAMBER

Amelia and Gypsy rush toward the doors. Gregory blocks their path.

GREGORY

Wait!

Gypsy swings his sword. Gregory raises his hands, unarmed, crucifix in one, key in the other.

GREGORY

You'll need this.

Holds out the key as a peace offering.

AMELIA

Why?

GREGORY

If you die, no one will know. If you live, you'll remember. I'm not a monster, Princess. I only serve one.

Gypsy lowers his sword. Grabs the key, turns--

Gregory slides a dagger out of his crucifix. Stabs Gypsy in the back, rattle snake fast. Slashes at Amelia, opening a cut on her cheek. She cries out, retreats.

Gregory reclaims the key.

GREGORY

That said, there's a far greater chance you'll fail. And the reward from my master will be far greater than one I would receive from you.

Gypsy -- on the floor, bleeding -- reaches for his sword. Tries to get up. Can't.

Gregory advances on Amelia. Slash. Slash. Slash. She dodges, barely. Her palm gets sliced open. She bites off a scream.

GREGORY

I have no stomach for violence, and you have no tolerance for pain. It would be easier for both of us if you simply accepted the inevitable.

Gypsy gathers whatever strength he has left. Pushes his sword toward Amelia. It skitters across the floor.

She snatches it, holds it best she can. She might as well be wielding a feather duster. Gregory cocks an eyebrow.

GREGORY

Your father would not have approved.
Do you even know where to put that?

WHAM, she parries, lunges, nails him straight through the windpipe. Just like Knight showed her. Then into his heart.

AMELIA

Here and here.

Off Gregory's genuine puzzlement,

AMELIA

I had a good teacher.

Gregory dies. She relieves him of the key. Leans over Gypsy.

AMELIA

Are you with me?

He clasps her hand. Their blood mixes.

GYPSY

To the end.

She helps him to his feet. They limp onward, together.

INT. CATHEDRAL

Bishop lowers the crown on Edward's head.

BISHOP

Then by the power vested in me by the
Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost-

INT. FOYER

Arab staggers forward. Each step a small victory.

Bowman, arrow through his throat. Looks up.

Arab stands above.

Bowman tries to say something. Gurgles blood instead.

ARAB

For my friend.

Arab's scimitar LOPS Bowman's head clean off.

INT. CATHEDRAL

BISHOP

I declare that you shall rule from-

INT. CATHEDRAL - OUTER CHAMBER

Amelia turns the key, CLICK.

INT. FOYER

Arab slowly kneels toward the Holy Places. Softly he begins to pray. Trails off mid-sentence...

INT. CATHEDRAL

BISHOP
-this day onward. Rise a king.

DOORS open. White light pours in. Heads turn.

Amelia stands on the threshold, framed by the rising sun, Gypsy by her side. One hell of an entrance.

Slowly she walks toward Edward. Regal despite her appearance.

Crowd ripples as she's recognized. People jostle for a look, cross themselves, whisper her name, kneel at the sight of the resurrected princess. For the first time we see a hint of fear in-

EDWARD
Niece.

AMELIA
Uncle. It would appear that rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated.

EDWARD
I shall have to find those responsible.

AMELIA
Then you won't have to look very far.

Edward tries to speak. She cuts him off. Her voice -- strong, confident and clear -- resonates in the cathedral. It's the voice of a queen speaking law unto her subjects.

AMELIA
This man murdered your king. My father. His own flesh and blood. Just as he attempted to murder me. He will, of course, deny it. But undoubtedly many of you have heard him say that he saw my body with his own eyes. Yet here I stand before you, alive. Not for the lack of trying on my uncle's part. Just ask him to account for all the violence and bloodshed that tore apart our beautiful city this past day.

Edward is about to protest. She presses on.

AMELIA

He will, of course, say that I was kidnapped by my father's assassins, and these were merely attempts to rescue me from their hands. Yet one of these men is here, beside me. He and others like him have risked their lives to safeguard mine. Does it look like I need to be rescued from him?

Her eyes bore into Captain's.

AMELIA

Or perhaps we should ask my uncle's soldiers why they were given orders that no one be taken alive?

Captain looks away. To the members of the council,

AMELIA

He has, of course, assured you that chaos will reign in the absence of a ruler, and that he will usher in a new era of prosperity and peace. But ask yourselves this - if he lied about everything else, how long will it take for him to break his word? To raise taxes in order to fuel his wars and his lust for power? To take your lands in order to increase his?

To the commoners,

AMELIA

He will, of course, claim that he's your King, rightfully anointed in the eyes of God. But ask yourselves this - is this the kind of king God wants? The kind of king you deserve? A murderer. A thief. A liar. A tyrant.

And last but not least, Edward.

AMELIA

I'm sorry, Uncle. I interrupted you. Perhaps you were about to say something entirely different. If so, please continue. See if you can find a single soul here who will believe your innocence. Or care to listen.

On Edward. Checkmate.

EDWARD

...You...

Slowly he CLAPS.

EDWARD
You magnificent bitch...

AMELIA
I hereby charge you with murder and high treason. The sentence is death. But don't worry. You'll be given a fair trial. (beat) I knew you'd hang some day, Uncle. All you needed was the rope. Captain.

Beat. Captain nods. Edward is surrounded. A gallows smile. Takes off the crown. It CLANGS by Amelia's feet.

EDWARD
You earned it.

With that, he strides out, defiant to the last.

It begins as a shout. It becomes a chant. And then a ROAR, as many lips utter one word over and over again.

CROWD
Amelia!!! AMELIA!!! AMELIA!!!

She turns to Bishop.

AMELIA
My people were promised a coronation. I would hate to disappoint them.

Bishop glances at the councilmen. A silent understanding.

BISHOP
As you wish... my queen.

And as she kneels before him, the crowd rejoicing, the bells TOLLING, we CRANE upward, slowly DISSOLVING INTO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's quiet. Peaceful. Four simple graves lie side by side.

There are no flowers, no processions or trumpets. Just four survivors honoring their fallen comrades.

We pan along their faces. Amelia. Gypsy. Samurai. Zulu.

Nothing is said. Nothing needs to be said.

They share a look. Something passes. Then one by one they walk away. DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHIP - DAY

Zulu stands on a bow of a ship. Stares out into the wide blue ocean, filled with hope and promise. The voice behind him is that of a child.

GIRL (O.S.)
Where are we going?

He turns. We turn with him, revealing--

The ship's deck, packed with slaves. Make it former slaves. We recognize faces from the market. Men. Women. Children. Young. Old. Rich. Poor. All races, classes and creeds mixed together, now equal in their search for a new beginning.

Zulu sweeps the girl into his powerful arms. Looks toward the distant horizon. And finally smiles.

ZULU
Home.

And as he walks among his people, a Moses to his makeshift tribe, we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORGE - DAY

Samurai enters. Surveys the space. Without its former master, it feels hollow, abandoned.

He touches the cold surface of the hearth. Picks up a hammer. Feels its weight...

INT. FORGE - LATER

The coals in the forge glow red hot. Samurai watches the flames, their fire reflected in his eyes.

EINAR (O.S.)
Who are you?

And there he is again. Ready to defend his home against the intruder. Samurai regards him evenly. Then,

SAMURAI
The son of a blacksmith. Just like you.

Einar is caught off guard.

EINAR
You knew my father?

SAMURAI
Yes.

He takes out his swords. One last look...

SAMURAI

He was the bravest man I ever met.

He tosses the swords into the forge. Picks up a hammer. Starts swinging. Beat. Einar approaches, slow and uncertain. Gradually resumes his usual place. Begins to help.

They work together, comfortable in each other's silence.

INT. PALACE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Amelia and Gypsy are alone in a vast and opulent hall, standing before the throne.

GYPSY

So this is where you rule.

AMELIA

No. I rule out there. Among the people. This... is only a chair.

Beat.

AMELIA

Stay.

GYPSY

You know I can't.

AMELIA

You can't or you won't?

GYPSY

Does it matter?

AMELIA

It does to me.

Another silence. The elephant in the room. She avoids it.

AMELIA

Darkness is at an end. A new age is coming. An age of reason. An age of light. A rebirth. A better world. Help me build it.

Gypsy reads behind the words. Softly,

GYPSY

I don't belong there. Just as I don't belong here. You will rule, and you will be loved, and you will be remembered. Me... I'm just a thief who'll die as I lived - broke, ignorant and alone.

No good-byes. He starts walking away. She calls after.

AMELIA
 Why did you come back? The
 others... they had their reasons.
 But you... you had nothing to gain.

GYPSY
 Yes.

AMELIA
Then why?

He halts. Holds her eyes in his own.

GYPSY
 Because you asked me to.

The words hit her like a ton of bricks, and she wants to say something else, when-

Doors open, and the throne room is flooded with a multitude of ministers, courtiers and councilmen. For the briefest of moments their eyes remain locked across the crowded room...

She walks back to the throne. Gypsy strides to the exit. Each to his or her own destination. Each to his or her own destiny.

Gypsy crosses the threshold. Looks back for one last time.

Queen Amelia is sitting on her royal throne. A man wearing the robes of an advisor, similar to Gregory's, leans over, whispering something in her ear.

It's the Lawyer.

Gypsy's eyes. The mind behind them. A tsunami of DIALOGUE, overlapping, clashing, a jigsaw puzzle assembling itself.

KNIGHT (V.O.)
 Killing a man is more chess than
 brute force...

LAWYER (V.O.)
 I represent a person of considerable
 influence...

AMELIA (V.O.)
 That palace is a cage, and my
 titles are chains.

FREDERICK (V.O.)
 He was a lousy king!

LAWYER (V.O.)
 All my master desires is the crown.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

ALARM sounds. Amelia drives a dagger into her father's heart.

AMELIA (V.O.)
The man you killed. He was one of
the king's most trusted bodyguards.

Bodyguard rushes over, drawing his sword. Amelia throws herself onto her father's body. Our guys run in.

Freeze on the image. Except now we realize that there's no blood on the bodyguard's blade. And plenty of it on Amelia.

GIRL (V.O.)
You saw what you wanted to see.

AMELIA (V.O.)
I guess we all have to do a little
evil for the sake of the greater good.

ARAB (V.O.)
Every job needs a getaway plan...

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Amelia, terrified, pleading.

AMELIA
Please, sir! Take me with you!

ARAB (V.O.)
Timing...

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Amelia, leading the crew out, a Pied Piper.

AMELIA
This way!

KNIGHT (V.O.)
...It's either you or him...

EXT. CEMETERY - SUNSET

AMELIA
As long as Edward lives, he'll
never let me rule!

EXT. TAVERN - MORNING

FREDERICK
After the princess, he's next in line
for the throne. And unlike her, he's
got the muscle to hold it.

ARAB (V.O.)
Precision...

KNIGHT (V.O.)
So you think ahead...

INT. TAVERN - DAY

On Amelia, as Knight pieces it together.

KNIGHT
They chose us. Because we were the
only ones who could do the job.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

AMELIA
Life's a gamble, right? Besides, I knew
you'd keep me safe.

KNIGHT (V.O.)
....you play the odds...

ARAB (V.O.)
Patience...

INT. LOFT - DAY

Amelia, curled up in a corner, watches Knight and Gypsy from
the shadows. Just a scared rich girl. Or so we thought...

KNIGHT (V.O.)
...You create opportunity.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAWN

AMELIA
I knew you'd hang someday, Uncle.
All you needed was the rope.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - MORNING

Edward looks at his brother's corpse. Then to the Captain,

EDWARD
Who else has seen this?

KNIGHT (V.O.)
...and when you have the advantage...

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - DAY

EDWARD
I saw her body with my own eyes.

On Lawyer, Amelia's plant, as he permits himself a small smile.

KNIGHT (V.O.)
 ...you strike...

EXT. BRIDGE - MORNING

Amelia's hands are suddenly steady, as she plunges the blade into Sumo's eye socket.

EXT. SHIP'S DECK - SUNSET

On Amelia, as the exchange takes on a different meaning.

GYPSY
 What's the ship's cargo?

AMELIA
 I was hoping you'd ask...

KNIGHT (V.O.)
 ...without mercy...

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAWN

AMELIA
 See if you can find a single soul here
 who will believe your innocence.

Edward. He is innocent, at least of his brother's murder. And he knows exactly who framed him. Clap. Clap.

EDWARD
 You magnificent bitch...

KNIGHT (V.O.)
 ...and to kill...

AMELIA
 The sentence is death.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY (RESUME PRESENT)

Gypsy stops an OFFICIAL who's entering the room.

GYPSY
 That man with the Queen. Who is he?

OFFICIAL
 Her advisor. Niccolo Machiavelli.

On Gypsy, as his face changes -- from puzzlement -- then confusion -- then finally stone cold realization.

GYPSY (V.O.)
 She was right. Change was coming.
 And she was the one who set it in
 motion. An end to the Crusades.

(MORE)

GYPSY(cont'd)

An era of prosperity and peace. A
rebirth of science and arts. A
Renaissance. She ruled long, and
she ruled well. As did her children
and her children's children. (beat)
And still I wonder...

DOORS SLAM SHUT, erasing Amelia and Machiavelli from Gypsy's
view and ours. SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END