

Their pouches are sitting on top of a table in front of them. Nobody's here.

Gordon grabs the pouches. Chris gives a little look at Kate. She trusted her gut. She found her way under life and death pressure. And he's acknowledging that.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Stern paces back and forth. He's sweating. Can't take the wait, the pressure...

He looks at Doniger.

DONIGER

Two minutes now.

The technicians on the transit room floor are filling new glass shields with water. Charging batteries. Clearing away the last of the debris.

CUT TO:

INT. OLIVER'S ROOM -- DAY

The oak door leading into the room is being pounded on fiercely.

Lady Claire is watching the door -- the wood is starting to split.

Marek sees her.

MAREK

Don't worry. We're not going out that way.

Marek yanks the sheets off Oliver's bed. He uses his dagger to slice a strip off the side of the sheet. Then he cuts another and another.

His eye glances out the window to see Chris and the Professor at the threshold of a doorway leading out into the courtyard. Two fully armored knights are standing between them and the front gate.

MAREK

Keep cutting, all right?

She nods. And starts cutting the sheets as Marek was doing.

Marek grabs his longbow and goes to the window.

EXT. COURTYARD -- DAY

Chris glances around to door jam. Trying to decide what to do.

THWACK! One of the knights in the courtyard falls face first into a muddy puddle. An arrow sticks through his chain mail and into his back.

VOICE

Go! Go!

CHRIS

(looking up)

It's Marek.

The second knight turns around to see Marek in the window -- firing an arrow at him.

He runs for cover.

Chris, the Professor, Kate, and Gordon rush out of the doorway.

Chris and Gordon carry swords. The Professor and Kate have spray bottles and fire cubes ready.

CHRIS

Andre!

Chris tosses Marek's pouch up to him.

INT. OLIVER'S ROOM -- DAY

Marek grabs the pouch in mid air. Gives a little good luck salute to Chris and turns back to Claire.

She has cut the entire top sheet into strips.

The oak door is splitting apart.

MAREK

That's enough.

Marek rushes to the bed and starts knotting the strips together end to end.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD -- DAY

Chris sprays a guard in the face with the knockout gas. The guard swings his sword wildly, then falls over.

Kate, Chris, the Professor, and Gordon run through the front gate and toward a fallow field next to the small village.

They are less than a minute away from the field. From a large open space. Less than a minute away from being able to recall the time machines...or so they think...

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Stern is balling his fists up, about to burst with anxiety.

The Chief Technologist is typing commands on his computer.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

Okay...we're powering up.... Almost.
Almost there. 60% 80% Done. We're operational.

There's a huge sigh of relief from Stern.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTELGARD -- DAY

Chris, Kate and the Professor race toward the open field. Soldiers are a few seconds behind them. Two knights on horseback emerge from the manor house.

Gordon is way ahead of the others. And he's not looking back. He's almost at the field.

A few more feet. A few more-- He's there.

He hits the button on his marker--

--and hears an annoying beep like your computer makes when you put in a command it won't accept.

He looks down at the marker. Hits the call button again.

BEEP-- A little red light flashes through the white ceramic.

GORDON

Shit!

He hits the marker again and again. Increasingly frantic.

Only now does he look at Chris, Kate, and the Professor. They are just arriving in the field.

GORDON

Try your markers! Try them now!

Everyone hits their markers. Beeps all around. No go. No machines...

GORDON

Shit! Shit!

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

What's going on? Why don't they--

GORDON

I don't know! The transit room must
be down...

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

"Down"?!

GORDON

I don't know!

Chris sees the soldiers getting closer and closer -- and the
knights on horseback coming even faster--

CHRIS

Doesn't matter. Right now we have to
hide.

GORDON

Shit!

Gordon is freaked out. He's losing his cool. Chris, on the
other hand, is dead calm. With each new obstacle, each new
brush with death, he is becoming calmer and more focused.

He scans the terrain around him--

CHRIS

(pointing)

Forest.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Alarm buzzers are sounding all over the place. Red lights are
flashing.

STERN

What the hell is wrong with it?

DONIGER

Goddamnit. The main driver was
damaged in the explosion.

STERN

You're just discovering this?!

DONIGER

The diagnostics said it was fine.

STERN

The "diagnostics"? This isn't a personal computer! Didn't you look at it. Physically examine it?

Doniger jumps up from the console. Grabs Stern's shoulders. Gets in his face.

DONIGER

You need to calm down!

STERN

Get your fucking hands off me!

He shoves Doniger away.

STERN

How - long - to fix it?

Doniger looks at the Chief Technologist.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

Three hours.

STERN

What about using the first generation transit chamber?

Stern points to another transit chamber, dark, unused, through another thick set of glass windows.

DONIGER

Can't do it.

STERN

Why?

DONIGER

We just can't.

STERN

Why? You said the first generation system worked fine. It was just slower... That's what you told me...

Doniger looks at him. And it's obvious Doniger didn't tell Stern the whole story...

STERN

I want an answer, Robert. If I don't get one -- I will bring in the authorities.... God knows how many laws you broke building this thing...

CUT TO:

INT. OLIVER'S BED CHAMBERS -- DAY

The oak door is being destroyed from outside. SLAM! SLAM!
SLAM! It will only hold for a few more seconds....

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OAK DOOR

Black Plume is hacking the door to pieces with a battle ax....

The intensity on his face is incredible -- the determination...
With a pocket knife, this guy would be scary as hell. With a
battle ax he's your worst fucking nightmare.

INT. OLIVER'S BED CHAMBERS -- DAY

Marek has tied one end of his hastily made "rope" (knotted strips
of bed sheet) to an iron eyelet and dropped the other end out the
window.

It's a five story drop out the window. Jagged rocks are below
them.

LADY CLAIRE

I don't know if I can do it.

MAREK

Come here.

Marek fumbles around for his next words.

MAREK

Can you... You need to hold on to
me.... I'll walk us down the wall.

She looks at him.

The door splinters off its hinges.

No more time.

MAREK

Arms here. Legs around my waist.

AT THE OAK DOOR

Black Plume steps through the shredded door with his battle ax--

--and in so doing he pushes on a trip wire that Marek has
obviously rigged up. The tension on the wire yanks a burning
torch off the wall.

It falls on the floor in front of Black Plume. It wouldn't be a problem except Marek has laid the velvet draft protector on the floor--

It erupts into flames.

Black Plume screams and dives backwards--

EXT. MANOR HOUSE -- DAY

Marek "walks down the wall" hand over hand on the rope.

Lady Claire's body is wrapped around him in a death-defying embrace.

The moment is one of extraordinary intimacy, laced with sheer terror. Of falling. Of being hacked to death by Black Plume--

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST -- DAY

Chris and Kate race through the forest.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE FOREST -- DAY

Gordon rushes through the trees. The Professor is falling behind and Gordon isn't slowing down to help him.

STAY with the Professor as he runs.

A knight on horseback is right behind him. Gaining fast. The knight lifts a heavy wooden mace and slams the Professor from behind with it.

The Professor collapses.

He shakes off the pain and tries to get up. The knight who knocks him over circles. Another knight arrives and unsheathes his sword, preparing for the coup de grace.

FIRST KNIGHT

No. Don't kill him.

SECOND KNIGHT

Who says?

FIRST KNIGHT

Sir William.

SECOND KNIGHT

(cowed)

Oh...

FIRST KNIGHT

Bring him to the dungeon...

(beat)

I'll go get the other one.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST -- CHRIS AND KATE -- DAY

Kate is hyperventilating. Chris is holding her tight, against her chest, calming her.

CHRIS

Shh... Shh... It's okay. It's going to be okay...

They are hidden in dense underbrush.

KATE

It's not fucking okay. The machines don't work. We're stuck here.

CHRIS

They'll fix the machines.

(beat, then firm)

Listen to me. We're going to get out of here.

KATE

How?

CHRIS

Your first book -- the one that's going to get you tenure.

KATE

Huh?

CHRIS

That's what's going to get us out of here.

KATE

What are you talking about?

CUT TO:

EXT. DORDOGNE RIVER -- DAY

Marek and Lady Claire stay low as they make their way along the river bank.

LADY CLAIRE

If we continue along the river for three miles we will come to my brother's forces.

Marek nods.

But just then he hears something... Horses. Galloping. Approaching.

Then he sees the knights approaching. Four of them -- led by Black Plume...

MAREK

In the water. Come on! Come on!

Marek yanks her in.

MAREK

Can you swim?

LADY CLAIRE

Yes. But the current is strong.

MAREK

Take my hand.

They start floating down stream. As they move toward the center of the river the current gets stronger. They move faster.

Marek looks to the other side of the river. Two more knights.

Shit. Nowhere to go. No move to make.

The knights just trot along the bank. They've got all the time in the world.

Marek watches them. Looks into Black Plume's eyes...

LADY CLAIRE

Sir Andre--

He turns to look where she is pointing. A few hundred yards down the river there is a fortified bridge. A mill is integrated into the structure. Several water wheels turn underneath the bridge. Passing between the wheels could be very dangerous.

The current is picking up.

LADY CLAIRE

What now?

Marek stares at the water wheels. At the bridge.

MAREK

I have an idea.

EXT. EDGE OF THE RIVER -- DAY

Black Plume eyes Marek from the river bank. Next to the mill bridge. He motions for his men to enter the structure from both sides.

BLACK PLUME

(to himself)

What are you doing, rogue? Whatever it is, I assure you, it will be in vain...

The junior knight next to Black Plume, looks over at him, knows his master speaks the truth...

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

The river is all white water here. Marek swims directly for one of the water wheels.

As he reaches it he grabs hold of the spokes, then steps up onto one of the paddles, lifting Lady Claire with him.

INT. MILL BRIDGE -- DAY

Marek and Lady Claire jump off the water wheel into a small dark room. They are dripping wet. She is shivering fiercely.

Marek leads her through a room full of two rows of trip-hammers clanging loudly onto blacksmiths' anvils. This is a medieval metal shop. What's odd is -- there's no one here. It gives the place an eerie feel. A sense of foreboding.

The banging reverberates loudly off the stone walls.

Suddenly a knight jumps out at Marek. Their swords clank together.

CLANK. CLANK. CLANK.

Marek jumps over a row of hammers and grabs Lady Claire.

MAREK

Come on!

The knight chases after Marek.

INT. ELSEWHERE IN THE MILL BRIDGE -- DAY

Black Plume's knights cautiously make their way through a room with a large wooden chute in it. Periodically it spits out finely ground grain into a huge crate on the floor.

The air in the room is hazy with yellow grain dust.

VOICE (O.S.)

In here!

INT. ANOTHER GRAIN CHUTE ROOM -- DAY

The shouting voice belongs to Marek of all people.

MAREK

In here!

LADY CLAIRE
(suddenly scared
Marek is on the
English side)

What are you doing?

MAREK

It's okay. It's okay....

Then he whispers the rest into her ear.

Four knights are now in the room. Swords drawn.

The toughest, meanest-looking knight swings his sword back and forth in a complex pattern.

MEANEST-LOOKING KNIGHT

Surrender your sword. Or you will
surrender your head.

Marek calmly reaches into his pouch and pulls out a tiny fire-starting cube. He holds it up to show the threatening knights.

They look at him like he's nuts.

Marek pulls the string out of the cube and carefully places it on a low railing. The knights watch the cube. Then look back at Marek. Why does he have that smug expression on his face?

He's got to be nuts. That's the main thing they're thinking.

Until he grabs Lady Claire and literally throws her through a small window in the wall behind them. A split second later he dives out after her.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

Lady Claire hits the water hard. Marek nearly lands on top of her...

...and then BOOOOM!

The entire bridge explodes!

UNDERWATER

Marek and Lady Claire can see the flames through the water, and the debris as it splashes down through the surface and sinks toward them.

EXT. RIVER -- DAY

Marek and Lady Claire surface to behold the destroyed bridge. She is completely flabbergasted. Stunned by what has occurred.

LADY CLAIRE

How did you do it? You work magic, knight.

MAREK

No magic. Grain dust explodes when it comes into contact with fire.

LADY CLAIRE

But there was no fire.

MAREK

The cube makes fire.

LADY CLAIRE

With magic.

MAREK

With science. I will explain--

THUMP! UGGHH!

Marek suppresses a scream. An arrow juts from his left shoulder...

VOICE

The next one won't hit your arm...

Marek turns to see Black Plume with his long bow drawn -- an arrow aimed at Marek's chest.

BLACK PLUME
(to the three
knights with him)
Collect them and put them in the
dungeon. I'll return in an hour.
(beat)
Keep them alive...

Something about the way he says that sends shivers down the spine.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

FADE UP TO:
A BLURRY POV

A woman's face slowly comes into focus. It is Lady Claire, leaning over us.

LADY CLAIRE
Welcome back, Irishman.

Now we move to reveal:

INT. DUNGEON

Marek has just regained consciousness. His left shoulder is wrapped with a bloody tourniquet. Lady Claire is holding his hand, looking into his eyes.

MAREK
Where am I?

The Professor and John Gordon are here as well. Everyone is shackled in thick iron chains.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON
Dungeon of the manor house at
Castelgard. You've got a pretty deep
wound, Andre. You lost
consciousness.

MAREK
Are any of you injured?

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON
Just bruises.

MAREK
How long have I been here?

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

Half hour.

(trying to bolster
Marek)

Enough time for Lady Claire to tell us
about your daring rescue attempt. She
says you have the bravery of ten men.
Those are her words, not mine.

LADY CLAIRE

Ten men at least. Perhaps twenty.

Marek looks at her, into her eyes.

The sounds of a metal door being opened. Everyone stops,
listens. Footsteps now, getting closer...

A key placed in a lock -- turning. CLANK. And the door to their
cell swings open.

Black Plume stands at the threshold.

FIND John Gordon -- his eyes go wide at the sight --

His jaw drops open --

GORDON

Holy shit...

BLACK PLUME

Hey, John... Been a while--

Huh? Do these two know each other? Impossible--

Black Plume draws his sword and thrusts it into Gordon's belly--

BLACK PLUME

You rat-fucking son-of-a bitch.

Gordon's stares back at him, eyes the size of saucers.

Needless to say the Professor and Marek are pretty goddamned
stunned themselves.

Black Plume removes his sword and Gordon collapses on the ground.

BLACK PLUME

(to guard behind
him)

Get her out of here.

The guard unlocks Lady Claire and whisks her out.

Black Plume kneels on the ground next to Gordon, grabs him by the
hair and lifts his head so their eyes can meet.

BLACK PLUME

How did you look yourself in the mirror? How did you sleep at night? "Never abandon your wounded on the battlefield. Never." That's the ultimate sin. That's the first thing they taught me in basic training. You're a disgrace to every man who ever wore the uniform...

Gordon tries to say something. A few raspy sounds. But he has no breath. His lungs have been punctured.

Slowly his eyes close. He's dead.

There is a beat of silence.

Black Plume takes a deep breath. A cleansing breath. It's as if a huge weight has been lifted from his shoulders.

Then he rips the marker from around Gordon's neck, drops it on the stone floor and crushes it under his boot.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

Who are you?

BLACK PLUME

Where you're from? Or here?

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

Both...I guess.

BLACK PLUME

Sir William De Kere. For the fourteen months that I've been here. Before that I was William Decker. From Winston-Salem, North Carolina. I spent twelve years in the Marine Corps before John Gordon recruited me to come work for ITC.

De Kere (Black Plume) lifts a thin chain around his neck to reveal a matchbox-sized white ceramic square -- i.e. ITC's first generation marker (an example of which Doniger and Gordon showed us earlier).

DE KERE (AKA BLACK PLUME)

The last time I saw this piece of shit he was running like hell for his time machine. I was on the ground, with three arrows in me.

He lifts his chain mail to reveal vicious scars all over his body.

As De Kere continues speaking in the coming minutes we notice that his speech is marked by the occasional odd pause, strange emphasis or intonation.... Something about him is off. You can't quite put your finger on it. But you can sense it. And it's the same thing you sense when you talk to schizophrenic...

DE KERE

It's a fucking miracle I survived.
The priest in Casteigard certainly thought so. And since French archers had shot me...let's just say I had all the credibility I needed with Oliver.

Marek and Professor Johnston look at De Kere....

MAREK

They told us they'd never been more than a hundred yards--

DE KERE

Doniger's a fucking liar. So take whatever he told you with a grain of salt. We surveyed this whole valley. The day I got hit I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

(beat)

You were pretty impressive this afternoon, Marek. For an academic? Jesus...

MAREK

How do you know--

DE KERE

We read every report that came out of your dig before we made the first trip back. I know all of your names.

(beat)

Look, I'm going to cut to the chase:
I am stuck in this Godforsaken place--

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

Stuck?

DE KERE

The arrow wounds...

The Professor and Marek give him blank looks.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

Arrow wounds? Why does that...?

DE KERE

The transcription errors would kill me if I tried to go back.

MAREK
Transcription errors?

DE KERE
They didn't tell you about
transcription errors? Of course. Why
would they? Doniger is a goddamned
snake.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Doniger and the Chief Technologist have just dropped a bomb on
Stern. He stares back at them.

STERN
What the hell are transcription
errors?

DONIGER
Mistakes...in the re-assembly process.
Minor errors occur every time you're
reconstructed on either side of the
wormhole. Every time you travel. If
you travel too many times the
transcription errors compound and
eventually cause noticeable damage,
mental problems, perforations in the
lungs or the heart.

STERN
Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't
you tell them?!

DONIGER
Because...it's a negligible problem in
the second generation system...

STERN
But the first generation system...

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST
We had problems. Sometimes even with
just a single trip...

STERN
What kind of problems? How serious?

INT. SMALL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Doniger and The Chief Technologist lead Stern into the room and
point at a metal cage.

Stern looks inside. A beautiful gray cat lies asleep. Its face buried in its paw. Stern looks back at the two men -- what is their point?

Doniger taps on the cage. The cat snaps awake -- and now we see that the left side of it's face is hideously deformed. The left half of its nose is a mangled mound of flesh. It has two left eyes.

The cat screeches -- a horrendous screech -- and hurls itself towards Stern, who jumps back. Horrified.

The cat slams into the bars of the cage over and over again, it's face starting to bleed.

DONIGER

He'll keep doing that for an hour...

CUT TO:

INT. DUNGEON -- CASTELGARD MANOR HOUSE

Marek and the Professor, in chains, listen to De Kere.

DE KERE

I've taken eight trips back and forth. That's right at the limit anyway. Add to that the fact that my insides have been thoroughly scrambled by those arrows... That computer at ITC would never be able to put me together right again.

(beat)

The point is...I'm stuck here...in this...shithole. And life sucks here. Unless you're at the very, very top. I think you've experienced enough of this place to understand what I'm talking about.

MAREK

(weary smile)

I think you're right.

De Kere reacts to Marek's smile with a smile of his own that fades slowly into a look of hatred.

DE KERE

You think I'm right.

De Kere puts his dagger to Marek's throat...

...and cuts the marker from around his neck. Then he takes the Professor's marker too.

DE KERE

You didn't think I was going to forget these, did you?

De Kere drops the markers on the ground and stomps on them.

Marek and the Professor stare down at the destroyed markers. That was their way out. Their way home... They are in shock as the implications of what De Kere has just done sink in...

DE KERE

We're all stuck here now...

MAREK

You son-of-a-bitch...

DE KERE

You two have a choice to make. You killed nine men during your escape attempt, the punishment for which is weeks of excruciating torture. I'm talking about stuff that...

(laughs, a little bit off)

Christ. You wouldn't believe the stuff they do to people here. Anyway -- several weeks of the most horrifying pain you can imagine, followed by death. That's what's behind door number one.

By now -- his speech patterns, his rapidly shifting emotions (from smiles to vicious hatred, etc) -- have left no doubt in our mind... De Kere is insane. The transcription errors have definitely caught up with him....

DE KERE

Behind door number two: I explain to Oliver just how useful you two are. I tell him you know how to build catapults that shoot farther than anything he's ever seen, that you know the recipe for effective gunpowder, and Greek Fire...all that stuff that a historian of the Middle Ages would know. Simple things that will be discovered in the next fifty or a hundred years. Things that will turn the tide in our battles with the French. You do that he'll keep you alive. And I'll be a hero.

(MORE)

DE KERE (CONTINUED)

I won't tell him that you can also predict the future. You know the dates of surprise attacks. The names of important spies... All of that information you will tell exclusively to me. Knowing it, I'll become quite wealthy and powerful. So long as you stay loyal I'll keep you alive, and even allow you lives of moderate comfort...

(beat)

So what'll it be, guys? Door number one? Or door number two?

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Stern exits the small room with the cat in the cage. We can hear it screeching, until the sound proof door closes behind them.

STERN

I'm going to the FBI.

Doniger looks at him. Then starts to laugh.

DONIGER

You don't understand the first thing about the real world, do you, Dan? Just another egghead physicist.

There's a hint of self-loathing in that last sentence.

DONIGER

What do you think the FBI's going to do when you walk in the door? Pile into their sedans, stick a light on the roof, and come racing out here to investigate? I got news for you -- the second you say "time-travel" they'll write you off as a lunatic. A freak. Do you have any idea how many lunatics call the FBI every day? It'll be weeks, maybe months before you get anyone to take you seriously. And by then we'll have broken all this equipment down and converted this space into an effort to isolate the properties of some arcane subatomic particle like the E-meson or the quark.

STERN

You're forgetting the fact that people are missing. Seven of them. Vanished into thin air.

DONIGER

That they might investigate. But I guarantee they'll start off with the theory that you -- the lunatic who walked into their office talking about time-travel -- chopped them up into little pieces and fed them to the fish. And Dr. Stern -- let me remind you of something -- I'm worth six billion dollars. With resources like that, how difficult do you think it will be for me to manufacture enough evidence for you to end up in jail?

Hardball. Like Stern never even dreamed it could be played. He just stands there, stunned.

Totally stunned.

DONIGER

Now, sit down and shut the fuck up. And I'll try to get your friends back...

Stern just stares at him. And now we notice that he's not the only one. The Chief Technologist can't believe what he just heard...

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN OF CASTELGARD -- LATE AFTERNOON

The town is almost empty now. The last group of soldiers and knights from the manor house are making their way along the road to La Roque.

EXT. ROAD TO LA ROQUE -- LATE AFTERNOON

La Roque is visible atop a high cliff in the distance. The epitome of a medieval fortress. Massive. Impenetrable.

The Professor and Marek sit in chains on a horse drawn cart. They look pale, exhausted, on the verge of collapse -- mental and physical.

Marek looks at another cart in front of them. Lady Claire sits on it, also in chains. They watch each other.

Both carts are surrounded by armed men on horseback.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

(quietly)

There's one piece of good news in all this. I destroyed the open marker.

Marek looks at him.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

De Kere was wearing it. All that stuff Doniger said about losing it himself was just bullshit.

Johnston pulls up the sleeve of his tunic and reveals the tracking device. A message reads: "deactivation achieved."

MAREK

That's good.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

That's good for the world.

MAREK

Are we really going to help Oliver turn the tides against Arnaut? Oliver is supposed to die in the siege of 1357. What if we help Oliver live? What if what we do means Arnaut dies? We're changing the course of history... It could... God knows what it could do to our world. Not that we're ever getting back there. Doniger might not send anybody after us--

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

We'll get out of here, Andre. Believe that.

The Professor glances at his countdown clock. It reads three hours. Three hours until their markers expire.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

And, for the record, Oliver will die tonight. Arnaut will win the siege. You know why? Because he's going to catch Oliver off guard. He's going to sneak his best knights into La Roque through the secret passageway that runs from that monastery right there...

(points)

...into La Roque.

Johnston points at the monastery.

MAREK

It's 1357. The French don't find that passageway until twenty-three years from now. 1380.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

History's about to be rewritten.

The Professor smiles.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

Take another look at the monastery.

Marek tries to see whatever the Professor is trying to get him to see... But he can't see it...

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

Southeast tower.

Marek looks at the Southeast tower and then he spots it. Atop the flagpole is an orange and black flag.

MAREK

Orange and black.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

The colors of Princeton University.

MAREK

Kate?

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

There isn't a noble family in all of France which uses orange on its flag. I think Kate and Chris made it to the monastery.

MAREK

And this is their way of communicating with us....

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

The monastery is aligned with Arnaut. Kate knows where the secret passageway begins. She'll show them. Twenty-three years early....

MAREK

Kate and Chris still have their markers...

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

Which means two time machines.
Doniger said each one holds two
people.

(beat)

We're going to make it through this,
Andre. We're all going to make it
home...

Marek's eyes show excitement -- but then something melancholy
creeps into them.

Now we see that he is looking at Lady Claire.

MAREK

And what happens to her?

The Professor looks at him.

MAREK

What's supposed to happen to her -- I
mean before we came here and mucked
around with history. What happened to
her? Did she survive this siege?

THE PROFESSOR

Arnaut's lead knight -- Bujold --
rescued her during the attack. Got
his ear chopped off during the
fighting. She marries him.

Marek nods. A mixture of emotions on his face.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Silence. Doniger looks down at the transit room, watches the
technicians work on the main driver, which is still broken.

Stern looks down at the floor, feeling helpless and humiliated.

STERN

Can I ask you something?

Doniger looks at him.

STERN

Why did you develop this technology?

DONIGER

Because it could be done. Because I
figured out how to do it...

STERN

In other words, ego.

DONIGER

(shrug)

Human nature. It's why we rule the world, and not the animals. We see a mountain and we climb it...because its there....

Stern looks away.

DONIGER

That wasn't the main reason though.

(beat)

Do you realize how much of the conflict in the world, the wars, the ethnic slaughter is fundamentally about history? About differing interpretations of what happened in the past? What if science could resolve those disputes, show exactly what happened?

Stern stares at him.

DONIGER

I'm not saying it would end all conflict just like that. But talk about a way forward... Imagine it, Dan. Just imagine it....

CUT TO:

EXT. LA ROQUE -- DUSK

ANGLE on Lord Oliver bathed in the golden light of dusk.

He is holding his hand over his eyes like a visor against the sun. His eyes are searching something in the distance. But we don't show what it is. We STAY on his eyes.

LORD OLIVER

One thousand. I say one thousand.

DE KERE

It's certainly close to that, my lord.

Now the CAMERA MOVES to REVEAL that Oliver and De Kere are standing atop the battlements of the huge fortress at La Roque.

They are looking out at a massive plateau to the west. A half mile away more than a thousand soldiers and knights are facing the fortress. Ready to lay siege.

Hundreds of knights on horseback. Hundreds of archers. Foot soldiers with pole arms. And dozens of engineers setting up massive wooden catapults.

It is a stunning image -- daunting -- all the more so because it is silhouetted against a fiery red-orange sunset.

Oliver is still scanning the horizon.

LORD OLIVER

There he is, the illiterate French pig. On the white horse.

In the distance we see Arnaut, on a white horse, at the front of his troops.

LORD OLIVER

Hold the bitch up for him to see.

FIND Lady Claire in chains nearby. Soldiers yank her up some stairs to the battlements and hold her up so she is visible from the plateau.

EXT. PLATEAU -- THE FRENCH SIEGE LINES -- DUSK

Lord Arnaut, atop his white stallion. He is a handsome man, even with the long scar that runs from just below his left eye all the way down to his neck.

He looks off in the distance, stares at the woman in chains atop the battlements.

AIDE DE CAMP

(in FRENCH,
subtitled)

Is that her, my Lord?

Arnaut stares off in the distance. A long beat. And then a small nod.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- DUSK

Claire stands. Still defiant.

FIND Marek and the Professor thirty feet away, also in chains. Four guards stand with them.

Marek is watching Claire. Her defiance moves him, involves him....

EXT. PLATEAU -- FRENCH LINES -- DUSK

Arnaut looks down at a piece of parchment in his hands. The wax seal is Lord Oliver's, the rearing English lion prominent.

Arnaut breaks the seal and reads the short note.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- DUSK

Oliver watches two horseman gallop across the plateau from the French lines. The lead rider flies a white truce flag. A smile forms on Oliver's face.

Marek and the Professor watch the horsemen too.

Oliver turns to Lady Claire.

LORD OLIVER

Proud, but in the end cowards. It seems that your brother is, in fact, quite willing to bargain with the English dogs for his sister's life. Sir William?

DE KERE

Yes, my lord.

LORD OLIVER

A people that refuses to fight, that insists on deal-striking and concession-making to protect what they don't have the spine to put at risk, such people are destined to be slaves, would you agree?

DE KERE

Without question.

Arnaut's messengers dismount their horses in front of the raised drawbridge.

EXT. COURTYARD -- LA ROQUE -- DUSK

Arnaut's messengers walk into the courtyard. Oliver, De Kere, and several other knights go to meet them.

FRENCH MESSENGER

Lord Oliver -- I come as a messenger from Lord Arnaut de Cervole.

Marek and the Professor look down at the scene from the battlements.

LORD OLIVER

(haughty)

What is your message?

FRENCH MESSENGER

My lord rejects the bargain you put forth in your letter. Instead he will allow you thirty minutes to surrender. If you do so, he will grant mercy. If you refuse, my master suggests that you make peace with God for you will be meeting him presently.

Oliver is stunned. Just completely dumbfounded. The gall. The fucking gall....

The shock wears off and Oliver's face begins to darken...

He looks around him. Hundreds of people are looking at him. His soldiers. His knights. The entire castle.

Everyone is silent. You could hear a pin drop.

FRENCH MESSENGER

I am authorized to take your answer back verbally, or, if you would prefer to write a response--

The sound of scraping metal. A flash. As Oliver's sword slams into the messenger's neck.

FRENCH MESSENGER

Aaaaah!

Blood squirts. The messenger drops. His hand clutches his neck, trying desperately to stanch the bleeding.

EXT. ATOP THE BATTLEMENTS -- DUSK

Marek and the Professor watch in horror.

Thirty feet away from them Lady Claire watches too...

EXT. COURTYARD -- DUSK

LORD OLIVER

Hold him!

Oliver sheathes his sword and grabs an ax from one of the nearby soldiers.

LORD OLIVER

Hold him still!!!

The messenger is screaming. Oliver's soldiers struggle to hold him down. De Kere puts his foot on the man's forehead to hold it in place.

THUUNK! Oliver's ax comes down hard, severing the messenger's head, executioner-style.

EXT. ATOP THE BATTLEMENTS

The Professor winces as the French messenger's head rolls into a puddle. He turns away, disgusted by the sight.

Marek, on the other hand watches, almost dispassionately... By now he has seen so much of this, and he has killed several men himself...

EXT. COURTYARD

Oliver picks up the messenger's head by the hair, and carries it to the second messenger.

LORD OLIVER

Here is my response. Take it to your master.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLATEAU -- FRENCH LINES -- DUSK

Arnaut watches in the distance as two horses, but only, one horseman gallops toward him from the fortress.

VOICE

(in French,
subtitled)

My lord--

It is Arnaut's aide-de-camp. Arnaut watches the approaching horses.

AIDE-DE-CAMP

My lord, there is an urgent message from the monastery. From the abbot.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- DUSK

Lord Oliver, splattered in the French messenger's blood, walks up to the Professor and Marek. De Kere is behind him.

Oliver looks his two prisoners over...

LORD OLIVER

Shall I remove your heads for your treason this afternoon? Or perhaps I should hang you.

The Professor and Marek look back at him. Afraid to respond.
Afraid to make things worse.

LORD OLIVER

Sir William believes I should spare you. He says that, in exchange for your lives, you will make me gunpowder far superior to that made by my engineers. He says that you have knowledge of Greek Fire and other such weapons...

(beat)

Is this true?

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

It is, my Lord.

Oliver looks at the Professor. Then at Marek.

Considers their fate....

LORD OLIVER

You shall have until the sun drops below the horizon. If you can produce these weapons, by then, you will live. If not, you will die.

A WHOOSHING sound is heard. It is getting louder, fast.

Oliver spins to see a huge ball of flame coming toward them. From this angle it looks as if it has been shot out of the sun itself.

The flaming sphere careens over their heads and slams onto a roof atop the inner curtain wall.

The wood shingle roof bursts into flames.

And now we see that the flaming projectile was a dead cow, covered in flaming pitch...

The Professor stares at it, incredulous...

THE PROFESSOR

Well, that certainly makes an impression...

Now in the distance we see Arnaut's huge catapults launch more projectiles.

A huge boulder seems to be heading right for them--

Everybody hits the deck.

Except Oliver and De Kere.

CRUNCH. It slams into the heavy wall a few feet beneath them. Stone crumbles around the point of impact.

Oliver and De Kere notice that Marek is still standing too...

A slight smile forms on their faces. This is a man worthy of their respect...

FIND Lady Claire. She is also looking at Marek.

The Professor pulls himself up off the ground.

LORD OLIVER

Why didn't you duck, Irishman?

MAREK

A man dies when it's his time.

Oliver's smile broadens.

LORD OLIVER

Make me the weapons by sundown. Or, rest assured, it will be your time.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

The Chief Technologist works on a computer.

TECHNICIAN

Sir -- we've finally got some good news.

The Chief Technologist looks at the technician's screen.

STERN

What is it?

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

The open marker's been disabled. The wormhole's closing. It looks like your friends did their job...

ANGLE ON DONIGER reacting to the news....

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

Probably means your friends are still alive.... If they're not -- what they've done for the planet--

STERN

They're still alive. It's your job to get them back here...

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- DUSK

Lord Oliver stands atop the battlements with De Kere observing Arnaut's lines.

LORD OLIVER

Where is he? He always rides up and down the lines trying to rally his cowardly troops.

Oliver strains his eyes trying to see. Suddenly he has a thought.

LORD OLIVER

Ahh.... I know where the pig has gone. I know....

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. MONASTERY -- NIGHT

Inside the cloisters. Kate and Chris stand alone. Waiting for something...or someone. Kate watches the shadows...

KATE

How much time left on the markers?

CHRIS

(checking countdown clock)

Fifty-seven minutes.

KATE

Jesus. We're cutting this close.

Just then three men come into view, approaching along a dark, covered stone pathway.

The first man is a monk. But the two men behind him are not. They carry swords. These men are warriors.

And now we see their faces. They are Arnaut and his aide-de-camp....

CUT TO:

INT. ARMORY -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

The Professor and Marek mix various elements together in large stone bowls.

De Kere watches them.

A loud CRASHING in the background. The professor jumps as the sound. Then shakes it off.

Smoke pours in from the outside. (Arnaut is continuing to hurl rocks and flaming objects from his catapults.)

The Professor and Marek work frantically.

DE KERE

You're doing it exactly the same as Oliver's guys do it. You're using the same recipe.

THE PROFESSOR

It's not the recipe we're changing. It's the way we mix it. It has to be ground extremely fine. Especially the saltpeter. Northern Europe doesn't catch on to this for another fifty years.

DE KERE

What does that do?

MAREK

You'll see. Tell Oliver we're ready.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. MONASTERY CLOISTERS -- NIGHT

Arnaut stands with Kate and Chris. The abbot is also with them.

LORD ARNAUT

(heavy French
accent)

I have heard tales of a secret entrance into La Roque for many years. But I have come to believe it is a fiction.

CHRIS

It's no fiction, my lord. A passageway exists. And we can help you find it. But you must first make a promise. The abbot tells me you are a man of your word.

LORD ARNAUT

What promise?

CHRIS

Our friends are captives inside the castle. We wish you to guarantee their safety.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

A huge flaming stone slams into the top of the battlements, smashing off the crenellations and dropping into the courtyard.

A few feet away, the Professor and Marek stand with Lord Oliver and De Kere.

Oliver's troops have set up small catapults and primitive cannons atop the battlements.

THE PROFESSOR

Because he is not confined by a fortress, the enemy is able to build larger catapults, catapults with the range to hit you, while you are unable to hit him with your small catapults.

The Professor nods to one of Oliver's troops who sticks a huge metal arrow into a cannon and lights it.

BOOM.

There is a puff of black smoke and the arrow shoots out -- travelling only about halfway to Arnaut's lines.

THE PROFESSOR

Your cannons are, likewise, impotent because your gunpowder does not explode with sufficient force.

Marek looks at Lady Claire who is still chained up near Lord Oliver. Their eyes meet....

THE PROFESSOR

My powder is in that cannon. And on the tip--

The Professor takes a heavy metal arrow, dips the tip in a gooey mixture.

LORD OLIVER

(excited)

Is it Greek Fire?

THE PROFESSOR

No, my lord. Better. The fire of Athenaios of Naukratis, which is called "automatic fire."

LORD OLIVER

(suspicious)

Is that so? Show me.

The Professor lights his cannon.

BOOM! A much louder explosion. Dense black smoke.

The arrow explodes out of the cannon and travels twice the distance of Oliver's arrow. It lands just ten feet from one of Arnaut's catapults.

LORD OLIVER

Is that all? Where is the fire?

Just then, the arrow bursts into a circle of fire, spitting blobs of flame in all directions. Arnaut's catapult catches fire.

LORD OLIVER

A-ha! Yes!

In the distance we see Arnaut's men run for water.

THE PROFESSOR

My Lord, that's not all.

Oliver looks at him, confused. The Professor points out at the catapult.

Arnaut's men arrive with buckets of water and begin dousing the flames. Only the water does nothing to quench the fire. Rather it seems to spread it.

With each new dousing the flames leap higher. Arnaut's men step back, confused.

In the end they just watch helplessly as the catapult burns to the ground...

LORD OLIVER

By God! I must have a quantity of this. How many men do you require to make enough for every cannon?

The Professor looks around at the soldiers on the battlements. The more soldiers he can tie up, the easier it will be for Arnaut to take the castle.

THE PROFESSOR

Twenty will do. But fifty would be better.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. HALLWAY -- ITC CORPORATION

Doniger and the Chief Technologist talk in hushed tones in a hallway off from the control room where Stern remains.

DONIGER

Think, Paul. Think about your future.
The wormhole is closed. That's what
we had to fix.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

It's murder. You're talking about
murder!

DONIGER

It's not murder. Somebody falls off a
boat and starts drowning, you don't
have to dive in after them--

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

What are you talking about?

DONIGER

I'm saying the law doesn't obligate
you to rescue--

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

I don't care about the law. It's-- We
can't just leave them there!

DONIGER

Paul -- Get a grip on yourself! If
these guys come back-- People died
back there. Fuck -- if they got
injured, anything serious, they could
come back with serious transcription
errors. They could come back like
that fucking cat! Do you know what
that would mean for us? For you and
for me?

The Chief Technologist rubs his face. He feels like his head is
in a vice. Doniger keeps working him.

DONIGER

You have 7 million stock options in
ITC, Paul. You could be worth eight
or nine-hundred million dollars in one
day when we go public. Or you could
go to jail, without a cent, disgraced.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. MONASTERY -- THE CLOISTERS -- NIGHT

Arnaut, Chris, Kate, the abbot, and Arnaut's aide-de-camp.

LORD ARNAUT

You say you must search for this passageway yourself. If you do not know its location, than how do you know it exists?

CHRIS

Our master, the scholar Edward de Johnes, knows of its existence from documents he has examined.

Arnaut considers their claim.

WHOOSH! FUMP.

ABBOT

Ahh--

The abbot clutches his belly. An arrow protrudes from it.

Before anybody can react two more arrows whoosh by. It's dark here, so we can't see the arrows till the last second. They seem to come out of nowhere--

Everyone hits the deck. The aide-de-camp calls out in French.

INT. MONASTERY -- NIGHT

A group of guards who have accompanied Arnaut hear the aide-de-camp screaming for them.

They draw swords and go running.

EXT. ROOF OF MONASTERY -- NIGHT

An English assassin, clad in black, fires off an arrow.

Another assassin skirts across the roof behind his comrade and takes up a firing position nearby.

INT./ EXT. MONASTERY -- CLOISTERS -- NIGHT

Arnaut pulls the Abbot behind a column of the arcade. The Abbot is bleeding profusely.

ABBOT

(in French,
subtitled)

To attack a place of God, the property
of the Church, does Oliver know no
limits?

LORD ARNAUT

*Rest, my friend. And know that Oliver
will die tonight. By my sword.*

We hear yelling all around. In English. In French. Swords have started to clang.

Several French knights run up to aide Arnaut.

Arnaut grabs Chris and puts a dagger to his neck.

Flames leap from a nearby room.

LORD ARNAUT

This is a trap you laid.

KATE

No, my Lord. We wish only to help you.

LORD ARNAUT

You are English. Why should you help a Frenchman?

ABBOT

(in French,
subtitled)

*They're Irish. There's a big
difference, believe me.*

Arnaut turns to look at the Abbot. He is being attended to by several monks.

LORD ARNAUT

(to Chris and Kate)

I will give you fifteen minutes to find the passageway. If you cannot I will know that you are English spies.
(switching to
French)

Thierry, take two men and guard them.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. ARMORY -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

It is located atop the keep, the strongest part of the castle, the final refuge.

Dozens of soldiers grind and mix powders on the floor of the armory under the supervision of Marek and the Professor.

Marek looks through a narrow "arrow-loop" window out at the battlements -- out at Lady Claire, who is still chained to a wall near Arnaut.

From across the room, De Kere spots Marek looking out at Claire.

CRUNCH!

A flying boulder slams into the wall of the keep. The armory shudders.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

(to De Kere)

If one of those hits the roof-- If it's on fire this whole place will go up.

DE KERE

Then you better work fast.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. HALLWAY -- OUTSIDE CONTROL ROOM

The Chief Technologist looks into the control room through glass panel.

He watches Doniger speaking to Stern. Doniger is obviously reassuring Stern. Manipulating him.

Lying to his face.

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY -- NIGHT

Kate and Chris crouch with one of the monks. She is examining diagrams of the monastery. Arnaut's knight, Thierry, and two others are nearby.

KATE

Fifteen minutes. Jesus. What we dug up -- the monastery was rebuilt five or six times since this period. It was burned to the ground--

Chris and Kate notice the flames leaping from several windows. They are now part of that history.

Kate looks back at the diagrams...

KATE

All right, so what? I can do this...

Find her hand as it reaches out and clasps Chris's. Squeezes it tight as if for reassurance.

Just then an English knight crashes into the room, swinging a morning star. Thierry and the other French knights rush to meet him.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. HALLWAY -- OUTSIDE CONTROL ROOM

The Chief Technologist is still paralyzed with indecision. He stares in at Doniger and Stern.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMORY -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Marek is looking out at Lady Claire. De Kere comes up behind him.

DE KERE

Damn good-looking, isn't she?

Marek squares himself as if to strike De Kere.

De Kere draws his sword.

DE KERE

Don't be stupid, Andre.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. HALLWAY -- OUTSIDE CONTROL ROOM

A technician rushes by the Chief Technologist carrying a high-tech piece of equipment.

TECHNICIAN

We're almost there on the driver, Paul. About five minutes. You should start re-initializing the system.

The Chief Technologists nods.

He's in hell right now, trying to make this decision...

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Oliver looks out at a patch of forest. Flames and smoke rise from the other side of it. De Kere stands with him.

OLIVER

It appears that the monastery is in flames.

DE KERE

Indeed it does...

The two men smile thinly.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY -- NIGHT

Several buildings are in flames. But the fighting seems to have ended.

Dozens of Arnaut's knights mill around on horseback.

Dead men lie in various positions on the ground.

The aide-de-camp rushes up to Arnaut who sits astride his white horse speaking to one of his knights. He says something in French to his master.

Arnaut looks surprised. Excited. The aide-de-camp motions and Arnaut follows him.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY GRAVEYARD -- NIGHT

Kate and Chris stand near a crypt. The graveyard is right at the edge of the monastery living quarters.

KATE

I believe the passageway runs under the ground here. That would mean the entrance is through here...

She points at the crypt. The inscription chiseled into the stone is for a monk who died eighty years ago in the 1200s.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMORY -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Marek and the Professor supervise more than twenty soldiers mixing gunpowder, etc. Marek eyes his countdown clock. It reads 29 minutes.

MAREK

(quietly to the Professor)

We've got under a half hour.

The Professor looks at him.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

We hear a scraping sound. Metal against stone. Then stone against stone.

And then flickering light... The CAMERA is inside a dark passageway. As the stone panel covering it is removed we see a torch flame. The flickering light illuminates Arnaut and several of his knights.

INT. CRYPT -- NIGHT

Arnaut looks into a long, dark, underground passageway. Stone arches every few feet. Wood beams to support the roof.

Arnaut turns and we see the smile on his face. He nods respectfully at Kate and Chris.

Then he turns to his knights. And he's all business. He barks out orders in rapid-fire French.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Soldiers scurry along the parapets.

Sudden activity--

LORD OLIVER

Prepare for battle! Prepare for battle! The French advance!

Fires burn in several locations around La Roque. The walls have been battered in dozens of places by Arnaut's catapults.

Out on the plateau to the west of the castle hundreds of men move forward. Knights on horseback, archers, foot-soldiers with ten foot long pole arms....

LORD OLIVER

Archers to position!

Dozens of English archers rush to arrow-loops and other cover positions.

Out on the plateau, Arnaut's troops continue to advance.

The catapults move behind the men. Still hurling stones.

Two six-story high siege towers, each covered with leather tarps to resist flaming arrows are pushed forward toward La Roque's walls.

It is an amazing sight -- a spectacle of approaching death...

DE KERE

Look--

De Kere points at a man on a white horse at the front line --
it's Arnaut.

LORD OLIVER

So, the pig survived our assassins.
Well, we shall bleed him on the walls
of La Roque then.

(beat)

Engage!

All hell breaks loose as Oliver's archers, with superior arrow
range due to their height on the castle walls, fire their first
salvo.

Hundreds of flaming arrows course through the night sky.

EXT. PLATEAU OUTSIDE LA ROQUE -- NIGHT

The arrows streak down at Arnaut's army. Shields are raised in
near unison.

THUNK-THUNK-- THUNK-THUNK-THUNK

Arrows slam into shields...

But we hear screams and grunts too. Some of the long, pointed
arrow heads go right through the shields and into the men beneath
them.

Men fall. Flames erupt.

Arnaut -- atop his white stallion -- yells out something in
French and his men respond by rushing forward toward the castle
walls. Now the French archers can range the English and they let
loose a torrent of arrows toward the castle.

Their accuracy (like the English archers) is stunning. Men
behind cover positions on the battlements get hit -- even with
just a tiny part of their body exposed.

An English soldier falls off the wall. He screams as he falls
the six stories into the moat -- and is impaled on a row of
spikes which emerge from the murky water....

Now Oliver's archers fire their second salvo. It is a strangely
ordered process of mass killing. One side fires. Then the
other. Then the other.

A hundred arrows rain down atop the French. And the height
advantage of the English archers makes a big difference. Their
arrows fly down, with the help of gravity, at a much higher
velocity than the French arrows fly up.

A tap-dance of arrows THUNKING into shields. Screams. A dozen men drop... Then Oliver lets loose with his cannons. BOOM-BOOM-BOOM.

The ground outside La Roque is on fire in a dozen places. Arnaut's forces are getting decimated.

Atop the battlements Oliver screams with glee. Then he turns to De Kere.

LORD OLIVER

The fire of Athenaios, bring it now
and we will finish the pig off before
he even reaches the walls!

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY

A stream of French knights rush through the secret passageway, heading to the rescue. Right behind them are Chris and Kate.

The man-made tunnel gives way to a narrow cave. Stalactites protrude from the ceiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARMORY -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Marek and the Professor hand bowls of gunpowder and Greek Fire to Oliver's soldiers, who carry it along the parapets to the cannon masters.

When they have a brief moment out of earshot of the soldiers the Professor and Marek look at each other. And they look worried....

MAREK

(checking his
countdown clock)

Twelve minutes.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

We'll be lucky if we're alive twelve minutes from now. When Oliver realizes that we did the bait and switch with him -- that we gave him a bunch of inert mud...

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY

The French knights swear loudly (in French). A pile of boulders and crushed rock blocks their way--

ANGLE ON Kate and Chris. Their worry-lined faces. They look at each other.

Chris checks his countdown clock. 11 minutes 35 seconds. 34...
33...

CUT TO:

EXT. ARMORY -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Marek watches as a soldier runs up a stone staircase toward the battlements. He is carrying a thick rope...in the shape of a noose....

Marek looks over at Lady Claire, chained up a few feet away from Lord Oliver.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Lord Oliver leans in toward Lady Claire as he speaks to her. His eyes full of hatred and triumph.

LORD OLIVER

Imagine how demoralizing it will be
for your brother to see you there --
hanging from the battlements,
suffocating slowly...

Lady Claire looks back at him impassive, strong.... De Kere takes the noose and puts it over her head.

EXT. ARMORY -- NIGHT

Marek sees what's happening. His breath starts coming fast. What can he do? How does he stop this?

He looks along the parapet walk, the only way out of the armory. Four soldiers stand there to prevent his escape.

He looks back at Lady Claire. Her hands are tied behind her back. The noose is around her neck. Now a soldier is tying the other end of the rope to an iron ring on the parapet.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

Lord Oliver and Lady Claire.

LORD OLIVER

The trick is to avoid jerking the rope. You see, that snaps the prisoner's neck. Death comes quickly then. But if you avoid doing that...well...I have personally seen people live for close to an hour...choking slowly...their eyes bulging further and further out of their sockets...

EXT. ARMORY -- NIGHT

Marek is going crazy as he watches:

De Kere grabs Lady Claire. Tries to pick her up and slide her over the battlements.... But Lady Claire fights him. Wiggles from his grasp.

Marek looks around frantically. His eyes fall upon a torch which sits just outside one of the armory's windows. (A translucent pig's bladder is stretched across the window to avoid any embers from making their way into the armory.)

Marek yells out at the top of his lungs:

MAREK

Oliver!

Oliver turns to see who is calling him. Screaming at him in such a disrespectful manner.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

Oliver sees Marek. Just outside the armory. Marek is holding a torch. With the flick of his wrist he could destroy the armory.

Lady Claire looks at Marek. Watches him.

EXT. ARMORY -- NIGHT

Marek stands there, holding the torch. The four guards approach with their swords out.

MAREK

No further!

The guards stop as Marek threatens to toss the torch.

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY

Chris and Kate aid the French knights in removing the last of the boulders that blocked their way.

The group rushes forward into another cave.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARMORY -- NIGHT

Everyone is dead still. The guards. Marek. Oliver.

THE PROFESSOR

What now?

MAREK

I don't know.

Now one person starts to move. De Kere.

He walks toward the armory. His eyes black. He draws his sword. Then he looks at it and puts it away...

He whistles to a page -- who brings him huge dual-bladed battle ax. It is identical to the one Chris and Marek dug up at the beginning of the story....

MAREK

Shit...

THE PROFESSOR

He's calling your bluff, Andre...

A beat...

MAREK

I'm not bluffing...

Marek tosses the torch into the armory.

Oliver can't believe it. His go wide.

Neither can De Kere or the soldiers.

Or the professor.

THE PROFESSOR

Andre!

MAREK

Here! Get down!

Marek pushes the professor down right underneath the window covered with the pig bladder.

THE PROFESSOR

Andre!!!

KA--BOOOOM!!!!

The armory explodes with a ferocious explosion...

The shingle roof bursts into the sky. Wood beams go flying.
And stones shower the courtyard.

Sections of walls collapse...

FIND Marek and the Professor -- the explosion shoots out the window that they are crouching beneath...

The overpressure escaping through the window prevents the wall from collapsing on top of them...

Debris rains down on top of them, shingles, wood, chips of stone....

The force of the explosion knocks De Kere and Oliver off their feet.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLATEAU OUTSIDE OF LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

The French army sees the massive explosion from inside the castle walls. They erupt in cheers.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

The English soldiers are in disarray -- still picking themselves up off the ground after the massive armory blast.

Suddenly -- a loud bell begins clanging --

SOLDIER'S VOICE

Breach! Breach! Breach!

Oliver spins to see French knights pouring into the courtyard of his castle from inside his own great hall.

We quickly TRACK BACK past the emerging French knights to REVEAL that they are entering the castle from the fire place in the great hall (where the secret passageway ends).

At the rear of the line of twenty knights, Chris and Kate emerge through the fireplace.

Oliver can't believe his eyes. But bad is about to go to worse for Oliver:

CUT TO:

EXT. PLATEAU OUTSIDE OF LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Arnaut sees that Oliver's soldiers are rapidly thinning out along the battlements (as they are going to fight the French knights who entered through the secret passageway).

The French leader shouts out a command to his soldiers. It is repeated all down the line.

Then the entire army charges the castle walls...

The six-story belfries (scaling towers) are pushed to the edge of the moat, and soldiers inside prepare to lower a bridge to the battlements.

Other soldiers slog through the moat with high scaling ladders.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Oliver rushes down toward the battle in the courtyard, leaving Lady Claire, hands tied behind her back, noose still around her neck, lying on the parapet in the company of a single soldier.

Suddenly:

SOLDIER'S VOICE

Scaling! Scaling! Scaling! South wall! The French are scaling!

Oliver turns and looks up at the battlements in horror-- There are hardly any soldiers still on the walls.

Then he looks back down at the courtyard to see his soldiers (footmen and archers) getting slaughtered by the fully-armored French knights.

He swears loudly then points up at Lady Claire.

LORD OLIVER

(shouting to his soldier)

Kill her now! Kill her!

The soldier draws his sword--

--just as another sword pops through his stomach. The soldier looks down at the bloody sword tip. It pops back in.

He drops to the ground dead.

Behind him is Marek...

MAREK

Claire...

LADY CLAIRE

Sweet knight...

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. HALLWAY /INT. CONTROL ROOM

The Chief Technologist takes a deep breath and enters the CONTROL ROOM. He goes to his computer.

He types in some commands. We see the words "protocol for disabling system" appear on the screen.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Kate and Chris enter the courtyard behind a phalanx of French knights. The battle rages everywhere around them.

KATE

There he is. Professor!

Professor Johnston is crouching down behind a pile of fallen stones. He sees them.

CUT TO:

THE PRESENT -- INT. HALLWAY -- OUTSIDE CONTROL ROOM

The technician at the other computer notices a quick uptick on his graph -- which become four distinct peaks...

TECHNICIAN

Field buck!

STERN

They're going to make it?

DONIGER

It's a probability. But it looks pretty good.

TECHNICIAN

Looks like four peaks. That means four people coming back.

Doniger shoots a surreptitious glance at the Chief Technologist, as if to steady him.

The Chief Technologist stares down at his screen. It reads "protocol for disabling system -- executing..." He looks at it. Stares at it...

Then his hand reaches out and he clicks on the "stop button" on the screen.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

I can't do it, Bob.

STERN

Do what?

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

He asked me to disable the system. To leave your friends there.

Stern turns to Doniger...

STERN

You son of a bitch.

And with that Stern punches Doniger in the face. And, for an egghead, it's a damn good punch.

Doniger drops.

TRANSIT ROOM FLOOR TECHNICIAN (V.O.)

Control room -- driver operational.
You are go to restart the machines.

The Chief Technologist's screen reads "re-initializing...system start-up..."

Doniger picks himself up off the ground.

STERN

Get out!

DONIGER

It's my goddamn company!

Stern, with the help of the Chief Technologist shoves Doniger out into the hallway. They shut the door behind him. In the hallway we can see Doniger typing a code into the door-lock keypad. Nothing happens.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

I changed the code, Bob. Forget it.

LA ROQUE BATTLE --NIGHT

The bridge from a French siege tower slams down atop the La Roque battlements. The first man out is Arnaut. Five knights are behind him.

EXT. PARAPET -- NIGHT

Chris and Kate crouch down with the Professor. Kate looks at her countdown clock.

KATE

We've got four minutes till the markers expire! We have to get to open space, right now!

CHRIS

Where's Marek?

The Professor points to--

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

Marek and De Kere face each other from about ten paces.

No one else is near them, except Lady Claire, who is behind Marek.

De Kere hefts his battle ax. Marek draws his sword.

EXT. PARAPET -- NIGHT

CHRIS

Jesus.

KATE

Even if we can get Andre, how do we get outside the walls fast enough? The draw bridge is up.

The battle rages in the courtyard. And along the various parapets and walkways along the high castle walls.

CHRIS

That's how we get out.

Chris points at the siege tower leaning against the south wall. French troops are pouring in through it.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Oliver rushes through it followed by a page.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

De Kere swings the ax. Marek steps back. De Kere charges, swinging again. Marek parries with his sword.

But the ax is so much heavier, and has such momentum that it almost knocks the sword right out of Marek's hands.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Oliver throws open a heavy oak door...to find Arnaut on the other side of it...

ARNAUT

I have often heard that the English nobility haven't the courage to stand and fight.

Oliver draws his sword instantly and runs at Arnaut.

OLIVER

I have heard the same about the French and much worse--

CLANG! CLANG-CLANG!

OLIVER

Is it true that French boys nurse until the age of ten?

EXT. PARAPET -- NIGHT

Chris leads Kate and the Professor up toward the south wall battlements, where the siege tower is located. Their escape route.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

De Kere slices the air with the ax. CLANG. Marek blocks it with his sword, but the ax slides down the blade of the sword and slices into Marek's arm.

He jumps back. Blood covers his sleeve.

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

A technician looks at his computer graph.

TECHNICIAN

Damn it.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

What?

TECHNICIAN

The field buck -- we just lost one of the peaks...

STERN

Which means--

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

It is only probabilities, but--

STERN

Only three are going to make it back.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Oliver and Arnaut clash in a spiral staircase. Arnaut swings hard. Oliver parries, but loses his footing and falls. He tumbles down the stairs.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

Things are going much worse for Marek. Bleeding from his right arm, he is having trouble holding his sword with the intense grip he needs to parry the tremendous momentum of De Kere's double-bladed ax.

De Kere swings the ax down hard. Marek puts his sword up.
CLANG!

And Marek's sword goes flying... It clatters along the stone walkway and falls off the edge...

ANGLE on Lady Claire's face -- devastated...

EXT. SOUTH WALL -- NIGHT

Chris, Kate, and the Professor climb up to the parapet to see that the French siege tower has caught fire.

Kate shoves Chris, hard. He falls. An arrow whizzes over his head. The group ducks for cover.

Three English archers are holed up atop a nearby guard tower. They turn their attention from Chris and Kate back to the French siege tower. But before they can get another volley of arrows off, French soldiers scale the guard tower and strike them down.

CHRIS

(re: countdown
clock)

Three minutes. We have to make a decision right now!

Chris looks at the siege tower. Then at Marek. He waves for them to leave.

MAREK

Go! You're almost out of time. Go!

KATE

We can't leave you here!

MAREK

Go!

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

De Kere swings his ax back and forth, forcing Marek back against a wall.

Marek looks over the edge. The moat is six stories beneath him, and filled with spikes. He looks at Lady Claire, whose arms are still tied behind her back.

De Kere smiles. Then brings the ax over his head-- No, he doesn't impale himself in the back like Chris had joked...

He brings the ax down with incredible force. Marek tries to roll out of the way--

THUNK!

MAREK

Ahhhhh!

EXT. SOUTH WALL -- NIGHT

Near the French siege tower. Chris, Kate, and the Professor are looking over at Marek -- 50 feet away on another wall.

KATE

Oh, Jesus--

She can't look. She closes her eyes.

But we FOCUS IN on the Professor. On his eyes.... Suddenly the look of horror in his eyes is replaced by a sense of wonder...

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

My God--

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- NIGHT

Marek's hand is against his head. Blood is everywhere. But he isn't dead. He's still moving...

And when he removes his hand we see that he is missing his ear...

Marek looks up. And the look in his eyes is like nothing we've ever seen... For he remembers the Professor's words about "Euiold", the knight with the missing ear, the knight who married Lady Claire....

De Kere looks at him, trying to figure out where Marek's sudden confidence is coming from...

It rattles him... De Kere swings. THUNK! Marek dives out of the way, pulling De Kere off balance as he does. De Kere falls. He rolls over and pulls out his sword.

Marek springs up and grabs the ax. In a single fluid motion he swings it with all his weight at De Kere -- who is getting up off the ground--

THUMP! We hear the sound. But we don't see it. Blood splatters... Then we see De Kere's headless body collapse on the ground.

A beat...

KATE (O.S.)

Andre!

He turns toward Chris, Kate, and the Professor.

KATE

Come on! You can make it! We've got two minutes!

MAREK

I'm staying.

KATE

Andre!

MAREK

Professor--

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

I know.

(to Kate)
Come on. He belongs here.

KATE

What!

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

I'll explain. Come on! We're almost out of time. Sixty-five seconds!
Let's go!

Marek waves to them as they go toward the siege tower. The flames have now died out. And the tower, having served it's purpose for the French, is now abandoned.

THE PRESENT -- INT. CONTROL ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

TECHNICIAN

The amplitudes are getting bigger.
They're definitely on their way back.

STERN

(suddenly freaked)
What the hell is he doing?!

Stern is looks down at Doniger, who has re-emerged in the transit room below. He walks over to one of the heavy power cords and disconnects it. One of the landing platforms suddenly goes dark. There are four more powered up.

Stern is already through the door and racing down the metal steps that lead directly from the control room to the transit room.

INT. GREAT HALL -- NIGHT

Lord Arnaut has his sword at Lord Oliver's throat.

LORD ARNAUT

Do you beg mercy?

LORD OLIVER

I'll never beg mercy from you, you French pig.

Arnaut thrusts his sword into Oliver's chest.

LORD ARNAUT

Then you may die in the name of France.

EXT. SIEGE TOWER -- NIGHT

Chris, Kate, and the Professor clamber out the bottom of the siege tower and onto the ground. Their countdown clocks read 27 seconds...26...25...24...

They rush for the open field before them. It is illuminated only by moonlight, and the flickering fires in the castle behind them.

THE PRESENT -- INT. TRANSIT ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Stern rushes toward Doniger.

DONIGER

Don't!

As Doniger says it he pulls out a pistol.

EXT. PLATEAU IN FRONT OF LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Chris, Kate, and the Professor rush toward open space.

7 seconds...6...5...4...3...2...

CHRIS

Now! Now! Now!

Chris and Kate hit their markers. Their time machines slide into view.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS -- LA ROQUE FORTRESS -- NIGHT

Marek cuts rope binding Lady Claire's hands.

Just as he does he looks out to see a flash of blinding white light cut through the blackness of night.

He looks out at the night, then turns back to Claire...

THE PRESENT -- INT. TRANSIT ROOM -- ITC CORPORATION

Doniger holds the gun on Stern in the transit room.

DONIGER

Get out of my way.

Stern stares at him, dumbfounded...

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

Are you crazy?

Stern looks Doniger in the eye. Then starts moving toward him slowly, deliberately.

STERN

Give me the gun. You don't want to do this, Dr. Doniger.

BANG!

A gunshot rings out. Stern clutches his chest.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

Bob!

Doniger turns the gun at the Chief Technologist...

But before he can get a shot off, Stern dives into Doniger, knocking him to the floor.

Stern, blood oozing from his chest, wrestles with Doniger, holds him down. The chief technologist jumps into the fray.

The struggle for several seconds before Doniger manages to break free. But he trips as he does and falls into the grenade-damaged time machine Baretto returned in.

Doniger aims his gun at the Chief Technologist. But he's not quick enough --

Stern has already pressed the override button on the side of Baretto's machine.

With a BLINDING FLASH and a SUCKING ROAR the time machine activates. Doniger screams as he is shrunk down toward the floor. When he's gone, Stern turns to the Chief Technologist.

STERN

Is he coming back?

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

If he does...that machine was broken.... The transcription errors would....

The Chief Technologist shudders at the thought. An ITC technician rushes out to Stern.

TECHNICIAN

Dr. Stern -- there's an ambulance on the way.

Stern looks down at the wound. It hit him at the very side of his torso.

STERN

I guess I'd be dead already if it hit anything too vital.

Now suddenly there are three quick flashes.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST

Your friends...

And specks on the floor grow rapidly until we can see Chris, Kate, and the Professor. Full size.

They are filthy, spattered in dirt and mud, nicked and cut all over their bodies. Their clothes are tattered. And they look absolutely exhausted. On the verge of collapse.

And they are in serious fucking pain from the time travel...

But they are alive...

Chris steps out of his time machine. Turns to Kate and the Professor.

CHRIS

(fighting the pain)

I don't know about you guys, but
that's the last field trip I'm going
to be taking for a while...

Kate and the Professor can't help but chuckle. Stern smiles.

Then there is another flash... On the pad Doniger left from moments ago.

Everyone turns to look at it:

A shape grows quickly... It takes a moment for us to realize it's a person. It's Doniger -- horribly deformed -- hideous--

Dead.

Eyes close. People can't look.

CUT TO:

PRESENT DAY -- EXT. DORDOGNE VALLEY -- FRANCE -- DAY

Chris, Kate, the Professor, and Stern enter a fourteenth century abbey. In the distance a half-mile away down the hill we can see their original dig site...

INT. ABBEY -- DAY

The group looks at a stone tablet in the floor of the church. The inscription, in French, indicates "Lord and Lady Bujold"

We catch a few snippets from a modern historical interest placard (in English) near the grave stone: "...both died on the same day... widely respected during their long lives by commoners and nobles alike.... five sons who went on to prominence.... patrons of the arts who assisted a truly astounding list of early renaissance artists..."

STERN

Do you think he was happy?

The Professor laughs. Chris and Kate smile. Knowing smiles.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON

I'm sure of it...

(beat)

Speaking of which...

The Professor has a glint in his eye as he turns to Kate. He looks her in the eye. Then he looks at Chris. Then back at Kate...

And it's clear that he knows exactly what's been going on between these two and he thinks it's just fine.

Caught totally off guard, Kate turns crimson. So does Chris.

The professor breaks into a smile, quite pleased with himself for busting them like this.

At the same moment, Chris and Kate start stammering out an explanation--

And we--

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END