

SOLOMON KANE

by

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Based on the character 'Solomon Kane',
Created by Robert E. Howard

TITLES:

NORTH AFRICA. 1575

FADE UP ON:

EXT. NORTH AFRICAN COASTAL TOWN - NIGHT

A BRILLIANT NIGHT SKY. Cloudless and pure with a dazzling array of stars.

BURNING EMBERS drift upwards followed by tongues of FIRE reaching into the blackness.

Then the SOUND of FEROCIOUS COMBAT rises. Swords clashing, pistols roaring along with the cries of the dying.

The stars and embers are suddenly replaced by THE FACE OF A FIERCE WARRIOR. He screams a ferocious challenge. There's murder in his eyes as...

...he raises a vicious scimitar, it catches the light of the fires nearby and he...

... HAS A HOLE BLOWN THROUGH HIS HEAD.

As the victim collapses out of frame we see the killer still holding his two smoking MATCHLOCK PISTOLS - this is SOLOMON KANE, swordsman, Naval Captain, mercenary, buccaneer and servant of the Queen of England. He turns to the MEN following him.

KANE

No mercy to heathens! Advance!!

He smoothly holsters his pistols and unsheathes his two signature swords - a CUTLASS and a RAPIER.

He deflects a flurry of attacks from his enemies and cuts them down without a thought. It is obvious he is a martial expert with these weapons as he drives forward.

SOLOMON KANE is in his early thirties but it's hard tell through the history of violence and adventure which has weathered his face. He's masculine but wolf slim with long dark hair tied back, intense, predatory eyes and pale skin, now spattered in the blood of his victims. He's dressed in ornate, expensive clothes where, somewhere beneath all the finery is the uniform of a Captain in the Queens Navy. With the trims and excess of his own choosing he looks unique and exotic - a murderous dandy.

Kane hacks at another of the city's defenders. Sidesteps yet another sweeping scimitar and delivers death with every thrust of his rapier. He is unstoppable.

At his back Kane's own PLATOON OF MARINES follow. Equally relentless and bloodthirsty as their commander are a wedge of PIKEMEN, ARCHERS and SWORDSMEN driving further and further into the city's defences.

Further behind still, is the SEA PORT where they entered this glittering, exotic and magical city where an ENGLISH NAVAL TALL SHIP is moored. The HARBOUR and MUCH OF THE CITY BY THE SHORE IS BURNING FIERCELY. The path of destruction and fire is like a wake left behind by Kane's advance.

The whole city seems to be in a panic. WOMAN and CHILDREN screaming in fear, MEN rushing to defend their homes, NATIVE WARRIORS launching attacks on Kane's soldiers but nothing seems to be able to stop them.

One of KANE'S OWN MEN rushes past him, fleeing from a MOB of the city's defenders. Kane pulls a pistol, takes aim... He SHOOTS HIS OWN MAN IN THE BACK. The man crashes to the ground, screaming as a dozen scimitar blades hack him to pieces.

KANE
(under his breath)
Faithless coward.

Kane, sweating and blood-spattered, dashes forward, eyes gleaming.

KANE
On-me men! See; there's our goal!

Perched on the cliff overlooking the city is a CASTLE OF BLACK OBSIDIAN. Almost organic in its lines and architecture it sits impassive; a careless guardian of the burning city beneath.

A handful of his men make it to his side. Fighting all the way. One, LIEUTENANT MALTHUS, at Kane's shoulder.

MALTHUS
Captain, what about the prisoners
we're supposed to rescue?

KANE
Malthus; you take care of that.

MALTHUS
What are you going to do Captain?

Kane grins like a wolf.

KANE
I have a different prize in mind.
Cooper!

COOPER, a great brute of a man fights his way towards Kane.

KANE
Send half the men with Malthus.

COOPER
And the rest?

KANE
See that black tower ahead?

COOPER
Aye.

KANE
It's the one the slave girl told
us about.

COOPER
You don't believe her Solomon?
She would have said anything to
save herself. There's no fortune
to be had.

KANE
Perhaps but I'll be long dead
before I pass up a chance like
this.

MALTHUS
Is that the real reason we came
to this barbarian place Captain;
just to line your pockets
further?

Kane laughs even as they both stop to fight off a FRESH
WAVE OF ATTACKERS.

KANE
You have no ambition Malthus;
that's your principal failing.

MALTHUS
At least I know the difference
between good and evil.

KANE
Which is why you will never have
the riches or power that I have.
Now follow your orders!

CUT TO:

2 INT. OBSIDIAN CASTLE - NIGHT. MOMENTS LATER

2

DOZENS OF DEFENDING CASTLE GUARDS are slamming the heavy
main doors and barricading them. Holding the wooden bar in
place as...

More and more SOLDIERS push in to defend. All marshalled by the inner doors of the obsidian castle, they are heavily armed, disciplined and eager for a fight.

But SUDDENLY those doors SMASH INWARDS with a HUGE EXPLOSION of fire and gunpowder that TEARS THE HEAVY DOORS OFF THEIR HINGES.

The SOLDIERS ARE BLOWN APART. The lucky ones are flung aside by the blast as a VORTEX OF FLAME howls down the hallway - tapestries, artwork and people all engulfed in the inferno.

The GUARDS lie dead or dying. A wall of flame burns in the doorway.

A FIGURE walks through the flames, leading a DOZEN MEN.

He moves like a wolf, focussed and deadly. Long hair flying, black cloak whipped by the hot air and intense dark eyes scanning the dead. This is SOLOMON KANE.

Kane stops before one of the cowering GUARDS and levels his pistol at the man.

KANE

Where is the throne room?

He repeats the line in the native language, aggressive, commanding.

The man shields his face and points, indicating the direction and spitting out instructions.

KANE takes in the information and then SHOOTS THE MAN, POINT BLANK.

KANE

(to his men)

This way!

As KANE leads HIS DOZEN MEN further into the castle, he shoots and stabs every last one of the defenders.

KANE SLAUGHTERS EVERY SURVIVOR. No one is spared.

3

INT. OBSIDIAN CASTLE. GALLERY OF MIRRORS - CONT

3

KANE and his MEN pass through inner doors and advance cautiously into the heart of the castle. There's no further resistance now but no one is lowering their guard.

They enter a huge room filled with columns between which hang VAST BLACK MIRRORS. There are strange symbols etched into the surface - magical and ornate, rich in meaning.

COOPER
What is this place?

SOLDIER #1
We shouldn't be here. Can't you
feel it?

One of the soldier's turns sharply.

SOLDIER #2
There's something in here with
us.

KANE
(hissing to his men)
Quiet! Keep moving.

The other soldiers look around nervously but there's
nowhere for anything to hide.

Kane studies his own reflection as he passes a mirror. In
the surface he sees SOMETHING BEHIND HIM. He whirls round
to confront his enemy but THERE IS NOTHING THERE apart from
an infinity of his own image caught between mirrors on the
opposite wall.

A little unnerved he advances. His men follow.

As the last few men begin to move on again DARK FIGURES
SUDDENLY REACH OUT FROM WITHIN THE MIRRORS. BLACK SKELETAL
ARMS EMBRACE KANE'S MEN.

With muffled screams HALF OF THE SOLDIERS vanish, dragged
back through the now liquid glass by the demons within.

The doors of the corridor SLAM SHUT BEHIND THE OTHERS. The
remaining men start to panic. Swords and pistols at the
ready but no enemy in sight. One sees his companion falling
backwards into the darkness of the mirror...

SOLDIER
Captain...!

KANE
Hold steady.

SOLDIER
There is devilry, I know it.

Kane grabs the man, snarling.

KANE
I am the only devil here. Now
move!

Now the DOORS AHEAD OF THEM SWING OPEN.

An invitation to advance into...

4 INT. THRONE ROOM - CONT

4

KANE strides eagerly across the threshold into the THRONE ROOM. A cavernous, ornate space filled with grotesque statues of twisted figures caught in helpless agony.

KANE

This is it lads. We've found it.

He turns to his men - just as the throne room doors SLAM SHUT BEHIND HIM, cutting him off from his companions. He tries to tear the heavy doors open but they will not move. There are no handles, no way to escape.

He can hear SCREAMS from beyond the doors. A few brief moments of terror, one or two GUNSHOTS and cries of pain and then nothing but SILENCE.

He turns back to the throne room and looks about him. Little light filters through the stained glass windows but just enough to illuminate...

...the TREASURE piled around a vast, high-backed, black THRONE on a raised dais ahead. VAST WEALTH laid casually about in glittering mounds.

Unafraid Kane steps further into the throne room. It seems deserted but he is ready with his weapons.

KANE

Show yourself! Or shall I take your treasure unopposed?

Still nothing. Kane moves slowly forwards. He reaches down to pick up some of the treasures then notices THE CORPSE OF THE KING lying beside his throne. Kane is suddenly unsure.

He whirls around to confront a sound but there is no one there.

KANE

Show yourself!! You should...

He stops in mid sentence, unnerved, as THE SHADOWS AROUND THE ROOM SEEM TO MOVE AND TWIST before him.

The air in the room freezes, his breath billows around him clouds now.

A CRACKING, BREAKING SOUND echoes around the room as ICE TENDRILS BEGIN TO SNAKE ACROSS the floor, towards the THRONE.

FINGERS OF SMOKE AND SHADOW twist a whirl on the throne as little by little a SHAPE APPEARS.

A FIGURE seemingly CLOTHED in BLACK SHADOWS that shift and change around him. It must be a man but it is so hard to see beyond the darkness that envelopes him. For fleeting, heart-stopping moments, the darkness takes form - something awful and corrupt - before becoming hazy and indistinct once again.

Then the figure speaks. The voice seems to be coming from the very air itself. Powerful, resonant, insidious and beguiling. This is the Devil's Reaper.

REAPER

Solomon Kane. Soldier, pirate,
thief, warrior... *murderer*.

Kane holds his ground but knows he's in trouble.

KANE

You think I have not met
sorcerers in my travels? I have
no fear of you.

A subsonic rumble fills the room. Kane says he has no fear but he's growing nervous now.

REAPER

I am no mere sorcerer Kane. You
know me. You know my *master*. He
is your master too.

KANE

I have no master save the Queen.
I am a...

REAPER

NO!!

It is a shattering sound. The power drives Kane to his knees.

A darkness swallows the room for a moment and when it passes, there are low MOANS OF PAIN coming from all around the throne room. Kane sees in the gloomy half-light FIGURES HANGING FROM THE WALLS.

His MEN, CRUCIFIED, FLAYED, IMPALED all around.

The REAPER RISES and slowly advances on Kane. He moves with a savage, predatory grace. Beautiful and menacing.

REAPER

Your time is over Kane. Your deal
is done. I have been sent to
claim His prize.

KANE
I made no deal.

REAPER
When you killed your first
innocent in greed and lust; you
made your pact with Him.

Kane struggles to his feet again.

KANE
I am a soldier. I killed only...

REAPER
NO!!

Once more the sound is like a hammer blow, knocking Kane to his hands and knees.

REAPER
You are a butcher! Revelling in
the fear and torment you brought
with you!

KANE
(quietly)
No...

REAPER (CONT)
And were you not rewarded? With
power? With wealth? With fame?
Everything you desired.

As the spectre finally stands over him, Kane looks up and stares into the abyss of the shadow's face; there are burning eyes deep within, a ghastly predatory face that shifts and twists with each word.

REAPER
You know who I serve?

Kane tries to catch his breath. His world is spinning as he realises just what he is facing.

KANE
You... you cannot take my soul.

REAPER
You have already lost it.
Bow your head before me!

Kane sees now, in the Demon's hand, A SWORD. A blade of seething molten metal. Runes and patterns flow across its surface.

REAPER
You are damned.

Defeated, Kane does, slowly, bow his head. The Reaper raises the sword above him, preparing to strike the death blow.

It sweeps down with incredible force only to be met by...

...KANE'S TWO SWORDS BLOCKING its path. Kane rises to his feet. Teeth gritted, eyes blazing.

KANE

Tell your master I will not be going to Hell.

Even in the face of this pure evil Kane will not be defeated. He stares into the abyss once more; unflinching though still full of fear now.

KANE

The Lord protects me.

Kane parries another sweeping thrusts but the burning blade slices through his rapier.

REAPER

Fool! He does not want you. You are damned.

Kane blocks a return thrust which destroys his cutlass.

Unarmed now, Kane slowly backs away as the Reaper advances on him again. There's nowhere for him to go...

REAPER

On your knees!

KANE

Never! I will never give myself to you!

Kane charges at the HUGE STAINED GLASS WINDOW and smashes through an image of Demons and Angels, locked in eternal conflict.

The glass shatters, revealing the burning city and the night sky beyond but nothing below apart from the sea crashing onto jagged rocks hundreds of feet beneath.

With a desolate cry, Kane plummets down into the void with the words of the Devil ringing in his ears.

REAPER

You cannot escape us. Wherever you go, we will find you...Your soul is lost.

FADE TO BLACK:

A TERRIBLE SCREAM against the blackness.

TITLE: SOLOMON KANE

FADE UP ON:

6 EXT. MONASTERY - DAWN 6

An ISOLATED GREY STONE MONASTERY on a windswept hillside. The first pale splashes of a chill, silver dawn bring little hope for the day to come.

7 INT. MONASTERY CORRIDOR - CONT. DAWN 7

TWO MONKS in their heavy hooded robes carry a tray of water and bread along the cloisters of an open courtyard. Their breath steams around them.

Other MONKS go silently about their business.

YOUNG MONK
How long has he been here?

OLDER MONK
Nearly a year.

YOUNG MONK
A year? Master, I do not understand why we serve this man.

OLDER MONK
We do not serve him. He sought sanctuary here and that is what we offer. Are you, a novice, to judge him?

They stop outside a door.

YOUNG MONK
I hear his screams in the night.

OLDER MONK
We all do. You might scream too if you'd seen what he has.

YOUNG MONK
(awed)
Then what they say about him is true.

The older monk casts a withering eye on the novice.

OLDER MONK
What do they say Thomas?

A nervous pause. The young monk is not sure he should even say this out loud.

YOUNG MONK

That... he met... that... Satan himself came for his soul but he would not relinquish it. That his body is marked with runes and spells to keep him from the sight of the Dark One.

OLDER MONK

A lesser man would be out of his mind by now but Kane... he is unlike any other.

The older monk knocks on Kane's door.

8

INT. KANE'S MONASTIC CELL - CONT

8

The KNOCK on Kane's door is followed by a gentle creaking as it opens slowly. The two monks respectfully enter the gloomy room as Kane remains silent but watchful in his cot.

OLDER MONK

Solomon?

A voice comes from a dark corner.

KANE O/S

Brother Fletcher; how does the day find you?

OLDER MONK

As the Lord intended; cold of bone and stiff of joint. We have a little breakfast for you.

KANE O/S

Who is this novice?

OLDER MONK

He joined us only a few days ago.

Kane levers himself to the edge of his bed and into the flickering amber light of a candle. The Kane of now is a man of small gestures and quiet, almost diffident talk - the brash, aggressive buccaneer of before has long since vanished. He has aged. His hair is longer, a stubbly beard is flecked with grey hair. His eyes are haunted.

The YOUNG NOVICE draws breath sharply as he notices Kane's NAKED TORSO. Kane's body has been marked with elaborate cuts and tattoos. Some fresh, others old and scarred over - his skin is a text of its own.

The walls of the room itself are covered in similar WRITING and SYMBOLS. Runes, hexes, spells and text have been carved or painted onto the walls. There are dozens of books and scrolls around the room. Religious and spiritual texts lie alongside books on witchcraft and sorcery.

YOUNG MONK
(stunned)
Your body...

OLDER MONK
Still your tongue!
(to Kane)
Forgive him Solomon, he is young.

KANE
(to the novice)
Didn't you know; I am a marked man?

Thomas cannot help but stare.

YOUNG MONK
Do they really... protect you from...

ABBOT O/S
Mind who you name in this holy place, novice!

A SHADOW falls across the open doorway. They turn to see the ABBOT. Both monks bow their heads as the Abbot enters the room.

ABBOT
Leave us.

The monks hurry out as the Abbot closes the door behind them. He is an elderly man; stern and devout but not unkind. He scrutinizes the room, taking in the desecration around him. He eyes Kane silently.

ABBOT
Once again we heard your cries at matins.

KANE
I didn't mean to disturb your prayers. My dreams haunt me, even here.

ABBOT
You would do well to listen to what they tell you.

KANE
They tell me I am damned.

The Abbot examines the books and texts on a table. He is not pleased by what he sees; a Bible with scribblings and notes over the text. Other books, clearly full of magic and pagan spells.

ABBOT

And yet you still defile our sacred text. And these others; such dark works.

KANE

They are just books Abbot.

ABBOT

If you believed words had no power you would never have corrupted your own flesh so. Men have been burned for less.

KANE

I am no heretic.

ABBOT

I know that my son but these are not times of tolerance. If someone were to ever find out that we harboured you there would be... questions.

Kane climbs from the bed and gathers his papers together, returning them to his wooden chest and closing the lid.

KANE

Who would know? I live here in solitude; I have renounced violence; given up my power. Given my wealth to the church.

ABBOT

And we are grateful for all your gifts to us.

(about the books)

You don't need this witchcraft to hide from evil; God protects his own.

KANE

But I am not one of God's own am I? But how can I redeemed myself in His eyes, when I know the servants of darkness are searching for me?

Kane falls silent. The Abbot sits.

ABBOT

Solomon, these months you have been here, I have felt a shadow growing over us all. And when I prayed for guidance I ...

(a beat)

I do not see a way for you to remain.

(a long pause)

You must leave us.

KANE

Leave? No.

ABBOT

I am sorry.

KANE

Please Abbot, this is sanctuary.

But Kane sees the resolve in the Abbot's face.

KANE

Where can I go?

ABBOT

Go home.

KANE

No.

ABBOT

You are of noble birth; I know you have lands in the west.

KANE

No.

ABBOT

Solomon I...

KANE

I cannot return home.

ABBOT

Nor can you remain.

CUT TO:

9

EXT. MONASTERY GATES - DAY

9

High winds sweep rain horizontally against the stone walls of the monastery as the GATES OPEN.

Kane is standing there. Long staff in his hand, hat pulled low and heavy wool cloak wrapped about him. Just a few bags of his personal possessions are slung over his shoulder.

Several MONKS are by the gate. One of them hands him a small parcel of food. They watch silently and CROSS THEMSELVES as he steps over the threshold and into the unknown.

10 INT. MONASTERY - CONT 10

Watching from a high window, the ABBOT and the OLDER MONK see Kane set out.

OLDER MONK
Are you doing right by sending
him back into the world?

ABBOT
My dreams said he must be sent
from here. I listen to what I am
told.

The Abbot watches Kane stride away.

OLDER MONK
Can Kane bring anything but
destruction and pain?

ABBOT
Perhaps that is what is needed in
these darkening times. He wants
redemption for his sins; there
are many paths to God, not all of
them peaceful.

MIX TO:

11 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 11

KANE makes his way across the lonely hills and valleys of this desolate part of the country.

12 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. HAMLET - LATER. DAY 12

In driving rain, KANE passes by a TINY GROUP OF NEARLY DERELICT HOUSES. A MOTHER wails in distress as the FATHER digs GRAVES for several dead children wrapped in cloth at their feet. The mother watches Kane pass with dead eyes.

MIX TO:

13 EXT. MOORLAND - LATER. DAY

13

The DRIVING RAIN has eased. The landscape clothed in dank fog. It fills the hollows and clings to the rocks. The cold settles into Kane's bones as he makes his way across open ground.

From behind him, he hears the SOUND of a WAGON rattling towards him. He turns to see it emerge like a vast ghost through the fog. It's a FAMILY driving their covered wagon. Kane steps out of their way to allow them to pass.

The DRIVER nods and slows his wagon. A young BOY looks at Kane from the back of the wagon.

DRIVER

Can we offer you a ride pilgrim?
These roads ahead should not be
travelled alone.

KANE

My thanks friend but no.

DRIVER

As you wish. God be with you.

The driver urges his horses onwards and soon he and his family are swallowed in the mist once again.

Kane hefts his bags and settles into his stride, down the path.

Up ahead the fog suddenly seems to darken as the tree line of a FOREST comes into view.

MIX TO:

14 EXT. WOODLAND PATH - LATER

14

Thicker fog in these trees now. The damp dripping from the branches and the cold clinging to Kane's woollen cape. The trees seem to press in on him. A flock of birds taking flight noisily sets him on edge.

He comes to a fork in the path and stops to consider.

A creaking in the trees leads him to look up and see FOUR HUMAN CORPSES swing from several branches in the trees. All hanging by nooses, some with their INNARDS DRAWN OUT.

KANE chooses a path and presses on.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. WOODLAND PATH - LATER. DAY

15

Still in the depths of the ancient forest, KANE has set himself a small camp to the side of the track. A tiny fire is flickering, heating water as he chews some bread.

A MOVEMENT AMONG THE TREES draws his attention, he sits up, attentively but sees nothing.

Then from behind him, A KNIFE IS PRESSED TO HIS THROAT.

VOICE O/S
Move and you die.

Kane is forced to his feet by a heavy-set, SKINHEAD THIEF who whistles to his TWO COMPANIONS who are lurking in the undergrowth. One is heavily TATTOOED whilst the other is massively built with a HEAVY, BRAIDED BEARD. They are a feral and dangerous group and enjoying their brutal work.

KANE
I want no trouble.

BEARD SMASHES Kane in the stomach with a heavy cudgel. Kane doubles and falls to the ground, coughing.

BEARD
Too bad. You've already got it.

They begin to search through his bags. There's almost nothing of interest or value. BEARD empties Kane's bag of scrolls and books. The few coins, some food and other items are taken. The thieves are not happy.

BEARD
He's got nothing. You a priest?

KANE
A traveller.

BEARD
Travelling where?

KANE
Nowhere. Just take what you want.

BEARD
Don't worry pilgrim, we will.

Kane keeps his head down. TATTOO stares at the scrolls.

TATTOO
Look at these. I say he's a sorcerer, See here; these is magical symbols.

Tattoo grabs Kane by the hair and drags him to the fire.

TATTOO
Should we burn you for a witch?

Tattoo's companions cheer him on as he pushes Kane's face near to the flames. Kane does not fight but resists and no matter how hard Tattoo pushes he cannot make Kane move. Finally Kane yanks his head free and stares hard into Tattoo's eyes. The thief flinches from the deadly look.

TATTOO
There's murder in your eyes
traveller. Would you kill me?

KANE
No.

TATTOO
You won't kill the men who steal
from you?

KANE
I will not fight another man.

SKINHEAD slaps Kane, sends him reeling back. Kane slowly climbs to his feet. The robbers laugh.

SKINHEAD
You worthless coward. Fight me.

KANE
I will not fight you. I have
renounced violence.

BEARD
We haven't.

BEARD SMASHES KANE ACROSS THE HEAD with his wooden cudgel.

CUT TO BLACK:

STERN VOICE V/O
You will do as I say boy!

Through the darkness STERN MAN'S FACE swims into view through the smoke and mist of Kane's memory. He looms down onto Kane. This is his FATHER...

16

INT. AXMOUTH CASTLE. GREAT HALL - DAY

16

FOURTEEN YEAR OLD SOLOMON KANE is standing defiantly before his father's high chair at the head of the Great Hall of his castle home. Various SERVANTS and HANGERS-ON mill about but they are trying to avoid the conflict that is raging between father and son.

KANE

No!

KANE'S FATHER

You are the *second* son and Marcus is my heir. Your brother will be master of these lands on my death.

KANE

Marcus is a brute and...

KANE'S FATHER

(talking him down)

...And you, you will join the church as is tradition.

KANE

I do not wish to be a priest; I want to go to sea.

KANE'S FATHER

What you want is of no importance Solomon! I have arranged with Father Simnal for you to accompany him to the abbey.

At his father's signal, FATHER SIMNAL who has been sitting nearby, steps up and nods politely to Kane.

KANE

I have no interest in the church or its teachings. I will not go.

KANE'S FATHER

Then you will have nothing. I will cut you off. You will be a landless vagrant. Is that what you want?

Kane turns from his father and storms out.

KANE'S FATHER

If you walk out now, you may never return. Do not defy me.

His Father's words are ringing in young Kane's ears as he flings back the doors to the great hall.

And there, suddenly, looming before him is the DEVIL'S REAPER - BURNING SWORD in hand. The Demon swings the blade and CUTS KANE DOWN even as Kane screams out in pain and fear...

CUT TO:

17 INT. COVERED WAGON - DAY

17

KANE wakes with a sudden cry to find a YOUNG WOMAN leaning over him, concerned. Talking gently, soothing...

MEREDITH

Be calm...be calm Sir. You are safe.

(calling off)

Father!

Kane tries to speak but he's delirious and confused. His face is bloodied and swollen; his body bruised and stiff.

MEREDITH

Here...Take a little water.

But Kane fades back into unconsciousness again.

FADE TO BLACK.

MEREDITH V/O

You are safe here.

18 EXT. SEA CLIFFS - DAY

18

Beneath a threatening sky and with the imposing grandeur of AXMOUTH CASTLE in the distance YOUNG KANE wanders the windswept sea cliffs away from his home. He has his travelling bags slung over his shoulder, clearly ready for the road.

The open ocean sweeps out in front to the distant horizon. A few TALL SHIPS OF THE NAVY cruise past. Solomon watches them, envious as DISTANT SHOUTS from the crew drift to him.

Then he hears a SUDDEN, SHARP SCREAM from nearby. He drops his bags and rushes round a corner to see a very tall, POWERFUL YOUNG MAN overpowering a PRETTY YOUNG GIRL. He's tearing at her clothes, clearly trying to rape her.

KANE DRAWS A SHORT KNIFE from his belt and rushes forward grabbing the youth and pulling him back...

KANE

Stop!

...only to halt, stunned, when the older youth turns on him.

KANE

Marcus...

MARCUS

(mocking)

Little brother. I heard you had run away. Fleeing the life of a holy man.

KANE

Marcus, you must not do this.

(to the girl)

Sarah, are you hurt?

SARAH

Solomon he was trying to...

Marcus slaps the girl to silence.

MARCUS

Quiet! I gave you no permission to speak.

(to Kane)

This is not your concern, Solomon. Be on your way.

Kane advances on Marcus and pulls Sarah from his grasp.

KANE

No! Let her go. Sarah, run. Go now!

Sarah races away. Kane squares up to his brother. Marcus is immense in stature, far taller and more powerfully built than his whip-thin younger brother.

MARCUS

You shouldn't get between a master and his pleasure.

KANE

Is that how it's going to be when you are Lord here; nothing but greed and cruelty?

MARCUS

(about Kane's knife)

What were you going to do with that little toothpick?

KANE

Teach you some humility to accompany your power.

MARCUS

I don't think you're the one to teach me anything little brother.

Marcus, suddenly, grabs Kane's arm, twists it hard and snatches the knife from him.

He presses it to his Kane's throat, drawing a little blood. Whispering savagely in his brother's ear.

MARCUS

I am the first-born; I am the heir and that means I am your master too. You will never be anything more than a coward, fleeing your duty. Take your bags and leave this land.

Marcus pushes Kane away. In fury, Kane turns and shoves his brother back towards the cliff edge. Caught by surprise, Marcus stumbles back and trips on a rock...

...With a cry he TOPPLES BACKWARDS, OVER THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF.

Kane desperately reaches for Marcus's flailing hand but cannot save him.

MARCUS

Brother!!! Save me!

He falls...

Kane scrambles to the edge only to see, fifty feet below, the SHATTERED BODY OF HIS BROTHER, still twitching, on the rocks below. His head has been crushed in, his jaw partly torn away.

All Kane can see through the mask of blood on his brother's destroyed face are his eyes, staring, furiously back at him.

CUT TO:

19 INT. COVERED WAGON - DAY

19

This time Kane wakes in slow silence. No screaming, just muted sadness and pain as he opens his bleary eyes onto the wagon.

A twelve year old boy, SAMUEL, is looking through some bags nearby. He is working silently and doesn't notice Kane is awake and watching him.

KANE

Boy...

Samuel turns and yells in fear and scrambles out of the wagon.

SAMUEL O/S

(yelling)

He's awake! Father! That man, he's awake!

Kane tries to right himself but hasn't the energy. He groans in pain.

The flaps of the wagon cover are drawn back. Faces are silhouetted against the daylight that pours in.

20

INT. COVERED WAGON - MOMENTS LATER

20

The young woman, MEREDITH, is holding Kane's head as she puts a flask to his lips. He drinks. Finally finds his voice.

KANE
(faintly)
Who...are you?

The man by Meredith's side is WILLIAM CROWTHORN. In his 50's, he has an air solemn kindness and gentle good humour about him. He's dressed in the simple, DARK CLOTHES OF A PURITAN, as are all his family.

Meredith mops Kane's brow.

MEREDITH
(to her father)
He is still fevered Father.

WILLIAM
It has broken. He will be well.
(to Kane)
Sir, my name is William Crowthorn. This is my daughter Meredith. And you met, quite briefly, my son Samuel. My eldest, Edward, is driving this wagon and my wife Katherine is outside also.

Samuel peers in nervously from outside.

KANE
Where are you taking me?

WILLIAM
We prayed for you. Meredith has nursed you these past days. All of us have spent time at your side.

Kane tries to rise again. He's wounded and weak but fighting.

KANE
Where are you taking me?

WILLIAM

There are many evils on this road
but we are not among them. You
are safe and on the road heading
west to Plymouth.

KANE

Plymouth?

MEREDITH

We're bound for the New World.

Kane studies the man for a moment.

KANE

I know you. You offered me a
ride.

WILLIAM

I did.

KANE

I should have accepted.

WILLIAM

True enough. You took quite some
beating but in a few days, the
Lord willing, you will be fit
once more.

(calling out)

Edward, pull over now. We'll make
camp for the night.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. RIVERSIDE CAMP - SUNSET

21

The COVERED CART is driven by EDWARD, William's eldest son
and a serious young man in his mid 20's. Though all the
family are dressed as Puritans, only Edward wears the dog-
collar and garb of a PRIEST.

Beside him on the bench is William's wife, KATHERINE; a
bright and homely woman in her 50's. SAMUEL is walking
besides the cart, swatting the long grass with a stick.

EDWARD guides the cart to some open ground beside a crystal
clear river. It is an idyllic spot in a picturesque
valley.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. RIVERSIDE CAMP - EVENING

22

MEREDITH and KATHERINE are gathering together cooking utensils and food stuff for the evening meal.

WILLIAM and EDWARD are preparing a covered area for sleeping by the wagon. Young SAMUEL is exploring nearby.

KATHERINE

Don't stray too far Samuel.

EDWARD

Samuel; water the horses.

(Samuel ignores him)

Samuel!

WILLIAM

Samuel! Edward has given you a task; set to it.

Reluctantly and muttering, Samuel unhitches the horses and lead them to the river.

KANE steps out of the wagon, still a little unsteady. Katherine is surprised to see him.

KATHERINE

Master Kane, you should be resting.

KANE

I can hardly repay your hospitality by being idle Mistress Crowthorn. Allow me a moment to wash and then I'll help as I can.

Katherine watches as Kane limps down towards the water's edge.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. RIVERSIDE - EVENING. A LITTLE LATER

23

KANE kneels beside the waters. Some way along from him SAMUEL supervises the horses as they drink. He eyes Kane nervously.

KANE

What is your name boy?

Samuel doesn't reply.

KANE

Don't fear me. What is your name?

MEREDITH comes to the river, she stops nearby Kane and begins to fill a water-skin.

KANE

Your little brother has lost his tongue I think.

MEREDITH

Remember your manners with our guest Samuel.

Kane pulls his torn and blood-stained shirt off to reveal his bruised body - along with the tattoos and scars.

Meredith is shocked by what she sees. Kane notices. Samuel too is astounded by the marks and patterns on Kane's body.

MEREDITH

How...What are they?

KANE

These? They are the story of my life. See?

Meredith comes a little nearer, fascinated.

KANE

Some are of my own making; these marks and symbols here.

MEREDITH

What do they mean?

KANE

They are for... protection. Others, here, are wounds.

MEREDITH

How were you hurt?

Kane points to a deep scar on his shoulder.

KANE

I've been shot, stabbed and beaten more times than I recall. This here, was a spear thrust by a tribesman of Africa.

MEREDITH

Africa? You were at sea?

KANE

I was a Captain.

Samuel suddenly comes alive with interest.

SAMUEL
You were a sea *Captain!*?

CUT TO:

24 EXT. CAMPFIRE AREA - NIGHT 24

KANE sits with the rest of the FAMILY around the camp fire, their heads are bowed in prayer as EDWARD reads from a prayer book.

EDWARD
Holy Lord, I have sinned times
without number, and been guilty
of pride and unbelief...

Kane lifts his head at these pointedly accurate words and looks at the family caught in the flickering firelight. He catches Meredith looking too but, embarrassed, she quickly closes her eyes again.

EDWARD (CONT)
...of failure to find Thy mind in
Thy Word, of neglect to seek Thee
in my daily life....

CUT TO:

25 EXT. CAMPFIRE AREA - NIGHT. LATER 25

They are all eating hungrily now. The simple stew has been well received.

KANE
This is a fine meal Mistress
Crowthorn; my thanks.

WILLIAM
My Katherine can make a meal from
anything. Leather shoes and
nettles one time wasn't it?

KATHERINE
It was not!

SAMUEL
It tasted like it.

The family laugh at this.

KATHERINE
Samuel tells us you were the
Captain of a ship.

KANE

I commanded the Queen's frigate,
Tiercel.

WILLIAM

Did you fight the Spanish?

KANE

I have fought everyone at some
time. Off The Main, the
Caribbean, the frozen north;
places not on any map.

EDWARD

The Holy Land?

KANE

Yes Edward; I fought the Muslims
beneath the walls of Jerusalem
itself.

MEREDITH

What a life you have led. It must
have been so exciting.

EDWARD

You think a life devoted to
violence and bloodshed is so
admirable?

MEREDITH

Don't be foolish Edward.

WILLIAM

I fought in our own holy wars
under King Henry many years ago.
The taking of men's lives is hard
no matter what their faith, don't
you agree Solomon?

Kane chooses his words carefully.

KANE

For many, yes. But I confess,
William, I had a particular gift
for it. I was never more at home
than in battle.

EDWARD

Then how did you allow those
robbers to beat you so badly?

MEREDITH

Edward that is rude.

KANE

But it is a good question.
Edward, I have sworn an oath
never to harm another man. I
will not fight.

SAMUEL

Not at all?

KANE

Not at all.

SAMUEL

But what if you meet more bad
men?

KANE

If the Lord sees fit to put them
in my way then that is as it must
be.

WILLIAM

Remember Samuel, it was the Lord
who also saw fit to put us in
Captain Kane's path.

KATHERINE

Nothing happens without a reason:
There is a plan for us all.

CUT TO:

26

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

26

A bright moon shines over the valley. All seems peaceful as
the camp slumbers.

WILLIAM is on watch by the dying fire. He's looking at a
map and smoking a pipe.

KANE appears from out of the shadows, startling William who
fumbles ineffectually for a cudgel.

KANE

I'm a friend.

WILLIAM

(laughing at himself)
I'd be of little use if you were
not, my fighting days are long
gone. Could you not sleep?

KANE

My dreams often disturb me.
(a beat)
(MORE)

KANE(cont'd)

I'd be happy to take watch while you rest, William.

WILLIAM

No, it is my task alone to watch over my family. But you're welcome to sit with me.

Kane settles beside William. They sit for a time, enjoying the flickering warmth of the nearby fire.

KANE

You are blessed to have such a family.

WILLIAM

I know. See?

Williams takes a LOCKET from his neck and opens it for Kane to see. Inside are PORTRAITS OF KATHERINE and MEREDITH.

WILLIAM

The two most beautiful women in this world. My family is everything to me. Do you have kin?

KANE

I had a brother... but that was a lifetime ago.

WILLIAM

I have lost loved ones; to plague, to persecution and bigotry. Edward, lost his wife and child.

William falls silent in contemplation.

KANE

So you sail for America.

WILLIAM

We do. It is a new start in a New World. I sold every possession we had to pay for this passage. You might consider journeying with us.

Kane falls into silence for a moment.

KANE

William let me be honest, so you know who you have taken in; I did not lie when I said killing was my great gift, above all others.

(MORE)

KANE(cont'd)

My cruelty and murderous nature
were famed. I am - I was - an
evil man.

William studies Kane for a moment and thinks about this.

WILLIAM

We have all sinned because we are
all human.

KANE

But my soul is damned. Satan's
creatures will take me should I
stray from the path of peace.

(a beat)

I will understand if I am no
longer welcome here.

WILLIAM

You are welcome Solomon.

(lightening the tone)

If only because I need a better
navigator than myself to read
this fool map. I could be leading
us to Portsmouth not Plymouth for
all I know. Here, take a look...

MIX TO:

27

EXT. COUNTRY SIDE. WAGON. TRAVELLING - DAY

27

The FAMILY make their way along a dirt track, the wagon
bouncing around as it hits ruts and potholes.

KANE - his bruised face far less noticeable now - walks at
the head with the horses. EDWARD, as usual, is driving the
cart. MEREDITH sits at his side sewing some material.

MEREDITH

Captain Kane.

Kane drops back to see her.

KANE

Miss Meredith; how can I be of
service?

MEREDITH

I made some clothes for you as
your others were so torn.

She hands him down a dark PURITAN TUNIC, SHIRT and
TROUSERS. Kane is touched by this.

KANE

I shall wear them with pride.

SAMUEL is thrashing at the undergrowth nearby with a stick, startling the horses a little.

EDWARD
Hold off on that wanton
destruction Samuel.

Samuel gives Edward a pointed stare and carries on.

MEREDITH
Do as Edward says Samuel.

SAMUEL
Why? He's not Father. I don't
have to do what he says.

MEREDITH
Samuel!

KANE
You know, you should listen to
your elder brother Sam.

Samuel halts his whipping. Kane nods approvingly at the boy, much to Samuel's delight.

CUT TO:

28

EXT. ROADWAY - LATER. DAY

28

SAMUEL walks beside KANE now, matching his easy stride.

WILLIAM and KATHERINE are up ahead, walking hand in hand.

Kane finishes pulling on the clothes Meredith made. He is dressed in their own Puritan fashion now and models it for Meredith who is picking herbs and flowers nearby.

KANE
Do I meet with your approval?

MEREDITH
Finally you are respectable.

He bows to her. She giggles. Edward is less than impressed.

EDWARD
Our clothes are not for fashion
or vanity Captain Kane; through
them we show our dedication to
God.

With a courteous nod, Kane acknowledges his understanding of this fact. Though he does share a quick smile with Meredith - who can barely hold back a giggle - as they walk on.

29

EXT. ROADWAY - LATER

29

Samuel still keeping pace with Kane.

SAMUEL

Are you going to come America
with us?

KANE

I don't think so Samuel.

SAMUEL

Why not?

KANE

You are hoping to make a new
life; I need to undo my old one.

SAMUEL

Those men who hurt you, you could
have beaten them if you wanted,
couldn't you?

KANE

(quietly)

There was a time I'd have cut
their still-beating hearts from
their chests.

Samuel is a little taken aback by this statement. He takes a moment to regroup then shrugs it off and dances around Kane holding his stick like a sword.

SAMUEL

Would you fight me?

KANE

(laughing)

If you continue with your
questions I might.

EDWARD

Leave Captain Kane alone.

Samuel pokes Kane with his stick.

SAMUEL

Don't tell me what to do Edward.
(to Kane)
Fight me.

Pokes Kane again.

KANE

I have no cause to fight you.

Samuel makes a sudden dash to grab Meredith. She screams half annoyed, half playful.

MEREDITH
Samuel, stop it!

SAMUEL
Now you have a reason! To save
this beautiful maiden from me!

MEREDITH
(playing along)
Oh Solomon! Save me! Help!

EDWARD
Stop, you'll scare the horses.

Joining into the spirit of it all Kane swipes up a stick from the side of the road. Jokingly he parries Samuel's thrust.

SAMUEL
I knew it. I knew you would fight
if you had to.

Meredith laughs and even Edward manages a gentle smile at this.

KANE
You're quite a foe Samuel but
I'll fight to save this beauty.

WILLIAM and KATHERINE watch contentedly.

Then the wagon come around a corner to a VILLAGE to find...

...BODIES lying twisted in the middle of the road. The tiny VILLAGE beyond IS IN RUINS - many of the houses still burning, others just blackened frames.

30

EXT. DESTROYED VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

30

KANE, WILLIAM and EDWARD are looking at DOZENS OF CORPSES scattered around the village. CROWS line the trees nearby, waiting to move in. The air of death and menace hangs heavy.

A little way back MEREDITH, KATHERINE and SAMUEL wait uneasily.

EDWARD
Who could have done this?

Kane studies the bodies. Men, women and children are twisted in agonized forms.

Some seem to have been burned, skin peeled away. ALL THEIR EYES ARE BURNED FROM THEIR SKULLS, leaving hollow, empty sockets.

WILLIAM
The Devil has been here.

Edward drops to his knees and starts to pray.

EDWARD
Holy Father...

Katherine, Meredith and Samuel press near.

KANE
Keep back!

Kane looks around.

KANE
Not the Devil....a witch.

There is a pyre in the centre of the village square with a stake in the centre. It has been partly consumed by flames.

KANE
There was a witch burning here
but the creature broke free.

William turns over a horribly disfigured body. It is a man dressed in the classic dark clothes of a WITCHFINDER, the charred remnants of a bible are in his hand.

WILLIAM
Dear Lord, this is the
witchfinder general. If he is
dead...

KANE
We must go.

EDWARD
We can't just leave these people
for carrion.

KANE
There's nothing we can do for
them.

Kane holds William's steady gaze.

WILLIAM
We must bury them as Christians.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

31

KANE, sweating and filthy, is finishing digging a shallow grave as EDWARD and WILLIAM lower a body into another nearby. There are a handful of others graves dotted about each with a wooden cross marking it.

KATHERINE is making the wooden crosses nearby.

SAMUEL watches uneasily from the wagon in the distance whilst everyone else is involved in the unsavory task.

Kane eyes the setting sun nervously. MEREDITH approaches over the rough ground and offers him a cup of water. He drinks thirstily.

KANE

Thank you.

She looks at him for a moment and he catches her gaze.

MEREDITH

Your...your wounds are healing well.

KANE

I never thanked you for your care.

MEREDITH

There is no need to thank me.

Now both stand amongst the graves, unsure what to say next.

KATHERINE O/S

I need more wood for these crosses.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

32

MEREDITH is AT THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE SQUARE now, gathering up pieces of wood for the crosses. As she reaches for some, she notices TWO BODIES nearby.

The BODY OF A WOMAN TWITCHES with some slight movement.

Meredith makes to shout out to her brother and father who are carrying another corpse to the graves some yards away but then the body moves again.

She approaches the corpse. Inch by inch reaching out a hand to turn the corpse over...

...a YOUNG GIRL, no more than 8 years old, is clinging to the body of her mother. This blood stained and ragged child stares up at Meredith with terrified eyes and unleashes a TERRIFIED SCREAM that echoes across the whole village....

CUT TO:

33

EXT. CAMP - EVENING

33

The CHILD sits between MEREDITH and KATHERINE, wrapped in a blanket and drinking some warm broth. The rest of the family are sitting around the FIRE. KANE is a little way off, nervously watching the gathering darkness.

KATHERINE

Can you tell us what happened
child?

It takes a moment for the child to find her voice. When she does it is so soft as to be barely audible but the terrible story is clear enough.

GIRL

(quietly)

The grown-ups said there was a
witch in the woods. She'd been
taking cattle and children. My
brother died.

Meredith comforts the girl as she draws breath to continue, haltingly...

GIRL (CONT)

...They called that man, the
Witchfinder. He said that the
witches and devils were growing
more powerful than ever before.
That something had happened to
give them strength. But still, he
trapped the witch and sentenced
her to be burned at the stake.
They all came to watch her die in
the fire but... when they set the
flames... It didn't hurt her. She
laughed and said... she said that
a great sorcerer had opened the
gate to Hell and that all the
devil's children were free. And
then...then she killed them all.

Only the crackle of the wood on the fire breaks the silence now.

EDWARD
 (quietly)
 We should pray.

The family bow their heads. Kane doesn't. He watches the girl.

GIRL
 I'm tired.

KATHERINE
 Just a moment more.

GIRL
 (suddenly angry)
 I don't want to!
 (soft again)
 I'm so tired, please.

MEREDITH
 Of course you are, you poor
 thing. Let's find a place for you
 to sleep.

As Meredith helps the girl to her feet, Kane stalks over.

KANE
 Edward, I think the child should
 have your cross for protection
 tonight. Would you mind?

The child watches Kane.

EDWARD
 Of course not - here.

He hands Kane the silver CROSS from around his own neck. Kane takes it and slowly approaches the girl. He kneels before her.

KANE
 If you wear this, it will help
 keep you safe tonight.

The girls eyes the silver cross as it catches the red firelight.

GIRL
 I don't want to.

MEREDITH
 It will help.

GIRL
 No.

KANE
 Just let me...
 (reaching for her)
 ...put it around you neck.

GIRL
 No!

MEREDITH
 Solomon, stop it. Can't you see
 she's frightened?

Suddenly Kane lunges for her violently. He grabs her...

MEREDITH
 Solomon, no!

...and press the crucifix into the child's flesh.

Instantly the CHILD SCREAMS as the METAL BURNS HER SKIN.
 She starts to howl and snarl in Kane's arms.

WILLIAM
 Dear god what have you done?

KANE
 This is her! This is the witch!

The LITTLE GIRL NOW HAS TRANSFORMED in Kane's arms. A foul,
 ancient and yet ferocious looking creature with a twisted
 snarling face, sharp teeth and long nails that tear at him.
 She is so strong he cannot hold her.

WITCH
 Solomon Kane! Solomon Kane! Your
 Master awaits his pleasure with
 you. I'll be there too, in the
 Pit! The gates of hell are open
 for you Kane.

And suddenly she tears herself from Kane's arms and FLIES
 INTO THE AIR and away into the night.

They can hear her cackling, screaming laughter echo into
 the distance.

MIX TO:

34 EXT. ROADWAY - DAWN

34

KANE and the FAMILY are travelling in silence along the
 rutted back roads of southern England. They have clearly
 been travelling all night and are exhausted.

As they approach a fork in the dirt road they hear the
 sound of many voices approaching.

SUDDENLY, A DOZEN or so PEASANTS appear from around a bend in the road ahead. Some are bloody and beaten - it is clear they are DESPERATE REFUGEES of some kind.

William tries to talk to the first few but they pass him without stopping.

WILLIAM

What is wrong? Tell me!

Finally a PRIEST rushes by.

WILLIAM

Tell me what has happened? Is it the witch?

PRIEST

A witch? I wish it was. No, these are Raiders... Dear God such terrible, cruel men. Join them or perish, they said. When we fought back but it was a massacre. Dear Lord...they seem possessed of some terrible evil. Turn back while you can or they'll have you for their slaves!

He pushes William aside and rushes on with the tide of refugees.

MEREDITH

What will we do?

EDWARD

We must turn back.

SAMUEL

No.

WILLIAM

This is the only road to Plymouth - how else will we make the ship? We must go on, find another way.

MEREDITH

Please Father...

WILLIAM

Our future is in the New World.

KANE

William, you must not continue. Can't you feel it? There is something evil gathering in the west. Go back.

WILLIAM

There's nothing for us to go back to. Our only way is ahead, to get to the ship. Can you help me?

KANE takes a MAP from the saddle of one of the horses. He studies it for a moment.

KANE

Then this road...
(showing the map)
...it takes us south through these forests and we can find a way west again, here.

EDWARD

How can you be sure? We should turn back Father. Perhaps wait a time.

MEREDITH

Edward's right. It's too dangerous.

KANE

Trust me. I can lead you.

KATHERINE

You can get us through?

KANE

If it is in my powers, I'll get you to your vessel.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. FOREST EDGE - LATER. DAY 35

Alone now in the empty countryside the wagon passes out of the open landscape and into the forest.

36 EXT. FOREST - DAY 36

Deep shadows under the thick canopy. Strange noises echo through the trees but there is no signs of life.

EDWARD

Are you sure this is the safest way?

KANE

There is no *safe* way but if these raiders are taking slaves and looting villages they'll hunt in the populated areas north of here. We may slip past them unseen. But these forests are not without their dangers. Be wary.

SAMUEL

What kind of dangers?

KATHERINE

Captain Kane means animals and suchlike. Now quiet.

The cart and horses rattles along slowly. The passengers looking nervously about them.

They enter an open glade in the forest. Before them are SOME RUINS, half overgrown by the forest.

KANE

We'll make camp here.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. FOREST CAMP - EVENING

37

A very subdued group make camp. WILLIAM is setting a fire as SAMUEL gathers wood. KANE emerges from a forest path nearby.

KANE

I see no signs of life in either direction, we should be safe. But William, set no fire tonight, it might attract unwanted attention.

William stops lighting the fire.

KANE

I'll take first watch - if that is all right with you William?

WILLIAM

Of course.

MIX TO:

38 EXT. FOREST CAMP - NIGHT 38

A dark night with the moon covered by heavy clouds. Sheet lightning ripples within them, thunder rumbles in the distance. But the camp is peaceful.

CUT TO:

39 INT. SOLOMON'S TENT - DAWN 39

KANE snaps awake to find SAMUEL'S hand urgently shaking him. The SOUND OF RAIN is loud on the canvas.

SAMUEL
Solomon. Solomon...Wake up.

KANE
What's the matter?

SAMUEL
I heard something in the trees.

Immediately Kane is up and heading out the tent.

KANE
Wait here.

40 EXT. FOREST. EDGE OF CAMP - MOMENTS LATER 40

Dawn mist hangs amongst the trees. Branches drip water as the RAIN hammers down through the foliage.

KANE stalks through the undergrowth until he sees MOVEMENT through the trees on the other side of a small RIVER.

A SUDDEN SOUND behind him, makes him turn sharply. It's just SAMUEL, trying to keep up. Kane urgently waves him away but the young man is determined to be with Kane.

KANE
(hissing)
Be *silent* Samuel, this is no game.

Together they advance until they see more clearly...

...a PARTY OF MARAUDERS ON HORSEBACK. They are a grotesque bunch with scarred and twisted faces. All have an ARCANE MAGICAL INSIGNIA on their torn and shredded leathers and rough chain mail. Some even have it branded into their flesh.

SAMUEL
What are they Solomon?

KANE

They must be the Raiders we heard of.

(hushed, urgent)

Listen to me; Go back to the camp, quietly wake them and tell your father we are to move out immediately. Go! Go!

Samuel turns and hurries back the way they came.

Kane continues his silent advance on the marauders. He sees now that they have CAGES HALF FILLED WITH DESPERATE PEOPLE.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. EDGE OF CAMP GROUND - MOMENTS LATER 41

SAMUEL running as fast as he can back to the CAMP.

He stops dead when he sees...

...THERE ARE RAIDERS ALREADY THERE. Six brutal looking men dragging WILLIAM, KATHERINE, EDWARD and MEREDITH from their tents.

42 EXT. CAMP - CONT 42

WILLIAM and EDWARD are already bloody and beaten. MEREDITH fights like a wild cat but she is punched and thrown to the ground.

Even in the face of the chaos and violence William is trying to keep everyone calm. Offering comfort and support to his frightened family as he's being beaten down into the mud.

WILLIAM

(to the attackers)

Here, take what you want; it's yours.

(reaching for Meredith)

Everything will be all right Meredith. Edward don't try and fight them.

KATHERINE

Where's Samuel? Samuel!

43 EXT. EDGE OF CAMP - CONT 43

Silently SAMUEL backs away and right into...

...A RAIDER who steps from behind a tree and grabs him.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. WOODS - CONT 44

SAMUEL O/S
Solomon! Solomon!!

KANE, hearing SAMUEL'S CRY, turns - and without caring about being seen now - RACES BACK ALONG THE FOREST PATH.:

46 EXT. WOODS - CONT 46

KANE blasting through the trees, heading back to the camp. Branches whip against him, thorns cutting, rain pouring down... but he ignores it all.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. PURITAN CAMP - CONT 47

The RAIDERS are destroying the camp. Setting fire to possessions, taking the horses for their own.

Watching it all is the OVERLORD. He takes no part in these activities but sits motionless on a MASSIVE BLACK HORSE. The Overlord is a HUGE FIGURE, ENCASED IN LEATHER ARMOUR, his face entirely covered by a grotesque MASK, huge sword hanging at his waist. It's almost as if he is directing his men silently simply by sheer force of will.

MEREDITH is struggling against her CAPTORS. She hits him but he throws her to the ground. Crouching over her, he tears at her clothes, his intentions clear.

WILLIAM and KATHERINE watch in horror. SAMUEL scrambles to them.

WILLIAM
Leave her! Please...

EDWARD, struggles free from his captor and rises to her defence...

EDWARD
Take your hands off her!

He hits the attacker with all his strength but it makes no difference. Another raider beats Edward to the ground.

KANE O/S
No!!

The RAIDERS turn at this new voice. Many hands on the hilts of vicious SWORDS but there is just one man there.

KANE is standing at the edge of the clearing, breathless and desperate.

KANE

Stop!

The OVERLORD seems to be watching this newcomer intently. He looks to one of this raiders, the one with the EYE-PATCH, and nods slowly.

EYE-PATCH strides forward, snatching Samuel away from his mother and dragging him along as he advances on Kane. He takes a huge, serrated knife from his belt and presses it to the boys' throat.

The OVERLORD watches all this calmly.

Kane prepares himself as the Raider stops a few yards in front of him.

KANE

I am unarmed.

Wiping the rain from his face, Kane sizes up the raider. He's desperately trying to work out how to diffuse the situation.

KANE

These people... Listen to me;
these people, they're good
people. Christians. Devout
people. They're no threat.

SAMUEL

Kill him, Solomon. Kill them all.

WILLIAM

No Samuel. Solomon don't...

Samuel struggles against his captor. Fighting furiously. The other raiders are advancing slowly on Kane.

KANE

Samuel, don't struggle. He'll let
you go if you don't do anything.

(to Eye-Patch)

Won't you? They have no money.
What else can they give you?

(a sudden thought)

You want slaves? Take me. I'm
strong; better than these people.

SAMUEL

I know you can do it Solomon.
Kill him. Cut his heart out!

KANE

Samuel *silence!*

Kane's eyes flick over to the silent, OVERLORD waiting nearby. The figure raises his arm and clenches his fist and then suddenly...

...The Eye-Patch Raider starts to shake and jerk as if something is moving within him. His single eye, turns as black as congealed blood.

The VOICE that comes from Eye-Patch is a rumbling growl that fills the forest. A little BLOOD DRIBBLES FROM HIS MOUTH as he speaks.

EYE-PATCH

Kill me, can you?

KANE

No...I am a man of peace; I offer no resistance. Take me. Do not harm them.

EYE-PATCH

(shaking the boy)

This boy... ..this *child* has more heart than any of you. He's the only man here.

KANE

(placating)

Listen to me....

Eye-Patch shifts his grip on the knife...

KANE

No!

...AND CUTS SAMUEL'S THROAT WIDE OPEN.

The family SCREAMS in distress.

KATHERINE

Oh God! My son! My son!

MEREDITH

Solomon! Stop him!

William moans in agonized distress.

WILLIAM

My boy! Oh Samuel!

Eye-Patch looks down at SAMUEL'S DEAD BODY and laughs.

EYE-PATCH
 This was the only man here.
 (to his companions)
 Take the girl. Kill the rest!

Meredith is snatched away. Others grab Katherine, try to tear her away from William.

MEREDITH
 Solomon! Do something! Help us!

Almost in a trance Kane takes a step towards Eye-Patch.

Kane is transforming before our eyes. The steel is returning.

The RAGE...

The POWER...

EYE-PATCH
 (drawing his sword)
 Come no nearer Puritan.

Eye-Patch watches him, his black eye burning intensely.

Kane calls to Katherine and William.

KANE
 Would you have me slaughter these men?! Can that be justice enough?

KATHERINE
 Kill them! Kill them all!

KANE
 (he turns his head up to heaven, quietly)
 Is that what you want? Is that all I am to you; a killer?

Eye-Patch stands ready for anything now from this strange predatory man as Kane focuses all his intensity on him.

KANE
 If I take your life I am bound for hell.
 (a beat)
 It is a price I will gladly pay.

Eye-Patch charges Kane, swinging his sword...

...but as the blade sweeps down on Kane he dodges to one side, takes the brute's arm and SNAPS IT IN HALF.

He yanks away the sword, reverses it DRIVES THE BLADE TO THE HILT INTO THE MAN'S BODY, slicing upwards and GUTTING HIM.

No human blood spills from these possessed soldiers only a SLUDGE OF BLACK BILE AND RED SAND. Kane doesn't miss a moment to consider the evil at work here.

KANE turns savagely on the others who are rushing towards him now.

The MASKED OVERLORD sits impassively watching it all.

The RAIDERS have no chance as they attack Kane...

For every SWORD thrust at him he replies with a DEADLY BLOW of his own.

PISTOLS are fired but bullets go astray.

It seems as if Kane is ten men, so consumed with his murderous rage. His feral howls of combat fills the air.

Some of the Raiders are more cowardly. They mount their horses and ride for safety.

One of them hauls MEREDITH onto his mount. EDWARD grabs her but the Raider takes a pistol from his belt and SHOTS EDWARD IN THE HEAD.

WILLIAM struggles with another two raiders but is cut down and stabbed by them. KATHERINE rushes to his side.

Kane delivers one killing blow after another. LIMBS ARE SLICED, HEADS SEVERED.

Kane is desperately fighting his way towards Meredith before she's taken away but he simply can't get through in time.

KATHERINE

Solomon! Solomon! Don't let them
take her!

But he cannot reach her. The OVERLORD wheels his steed about and leads his surviving raiders away through the trees even as Kane races on foot in pursuit.

KANE dashes after them but no matter how swiftly he runs, the horses vanish into the distance ahead and loses sight of them in the mist and drizzle.

In fury he turns and races back to the forest clearing.

CUT TO:

49

EXT. FOREST CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

49

In thunderous silence KANE stalks through the devastated camp. The BODIES OF THE RAIDERS are all around. He picks through their corpses and clothing, seeking information. He tears the INSIGNIA from the uniform of a dying Raider. As the creature draws its last breath it seems to CHANGE BACK INTO NOTHING MORE THAN A ROUGH LOOKING MAN. All the bestial elements melt away with the rain.

Kane considers this for a moment and then moves on. He steps past the bodies of EDWARD and SAMUEL as walks towards WILLIAM and KATHERINE.

KATHERINE is cradling the dying WILLIAM in her arms. He has been mortally stabbed, his breath coming in short, bloody bursts. He looks to Kane.

WILLIAM

Get her back.

William speaks urgently, fighting for every breath.

KANE

I will.

WILLIAM

Swear this oath to me now Kane.

William grabs Kane and draws him near.

WILLIAM

By your own word you are a butcher and a murderer; you know how to kill like no man born. Do it. For me, for my family. Kill them all.

KANE

My soul...

WILLIAM

This is how you will redeem your soul; Find my child and end this evil.

The dying man holds Kane's eyes with the last fire of his own.

WILLIAM

Swear your oath. Swear to God
Almighty and He will protect your
soul. Do it!

Kane looks to Katherine; she want to hear it too. He takes William's hand in his own.

KANE

I swear; I will find her and I
will destroy this evil.

William makes no show of having heard this... HE IS DEAD.

Katherine cradles Williams body as Kane gently takes the locket from around William's neck. He checks that the PICTURE OF MEREDITH is still within and then turns away.

As THUNDER RUMBLES through the forest Kane snatches up a few essentials - SWORDS, KNIVES, a BRACE OF PISTOLS AND POWDER along with some provisions. Then he pulls a long black Puritan cloak about him and dons a wide brim black hat.

This is SOLOMON KANE, the Puritan avenger, armed to the teeth and ready for the hunt, in all his glory.

He takes the reins of a dead raider's horse, swings himself up and charges away and into the trees.

CUT TO:

50

INT. TREES - MOMENTS LATER

50

KANE is GALLOPING along the forest path. Ducking under branches and jumping fallen trees. His hat flies off but he makes no effort to retrieve it.

The DRIVING RAIN makes the ground treacherous and visibility poor but still Kane pushes the horse as fast as it can go.

Up ahead he sees the faintest glimpse of the dark riders fleeing.

Impossibly he forces his steed even faster...

... and gains on them.

ON THE RIDERS UP AHEAD:

The group of FIVE RIDERS are pushing their own horses hard. One of them has MEREDITH bundled and covered across his saddle.

Their LEADER sees KANE in the distance and indicates for two riders to split away and deal with him.

ON KANE:

The TWO RIDERS appear parallel to him now; one on either side. Trees whipping past between them.

They draw their swords and start to close in.

Kane waits for them to attack...

Then, still at full gallop, Kane takes his hands off the reigns and pulls out BOTH PISTOLS from his belt. Arms outstretched, he levels a gun at each attacker and pulls the triggers simultaneously.

BOTH RIDERS crash from their horses.

Without a second glance Kane rides on.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - CONT 51

The remaining riders BURST from the forest edge into open, scrubby ground. Just the three of them left now but still pushing their horses hard.

MOMENTS LATER... KANE charges from the trees. Riding like the devil himself and making ground on his quarry.

ON THE RAIDERS:

Knowing that Kane is going to catch them they split up but unerringly he follows the one carrying Meredith.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. STONE CIRCLE - MOMENTS LATER 52

The RAIDER, still clutching the GIRL bundled up across his horse, gallops through the broken remains of a STONE CIRCLE on these open moors. He turns and sees KANE closing the gap second by second.

There is no escape now. Within the stone circle he wheels his horse to a halt and turns to face Kane. The horse is exhausted, foaming at the mouth, breath coming in great steaming clouds.

Kane keeps coming until he's at the perimeter of the stones. He circles beyond the stones.

KANE
Give me the girl! *Give me the girl!!*

The Raider drops the bundled up girl to the ground. She lies there stunned and exhausted.

Kane dismounts and runs to her.

KANE
Meredith...
(to the Raider)
If she is harmed...

He turns her over....IT IS NOT MEREDITH...

...just a YOUNG DARK-HAIRED GIRL. Weak and fearful. She recoils from Kane.

Kane GRABS THE RAIDER and drags him down from his horse.

KANE
Where is she?!

The Raider tries to fight but he can do nothing against Kane who beats him viciously.

RAIDER
There! You have her!

KANE
It is not her. Where is she? The girl you took from our camp? Meredith!?

RAIDER
I don't know! I don't know. Perhaps others have her. There are raiding parties all over.

Kane draws his knife and presses it into the Raider's flesh beneath his eyeball.

KANE
Tell me what you know or I will pluck your eyes from your skull; where will they take her!? Who is your master?

Kane presses the knife into his flesh. Black blood trickles down his face.

He screams in agony but then the SCREAM BECOMES A LAUGH...

...the Raider suddenly begins TO SHAKE AND TWIST. His already scared and feral face contorts into a snarl, his eyes become black as old blood.

He stares at Kane and laughs. A hideous cackle that echoes around the broken stones. The Raider's voice changes as if he's suddenly possessed by an altogether more malicious spirit. It is a feral growl, filled with malice and though it comes from the mouth of the raider it seems to resonate all around them.

RAIDER

Solomon Kane... You may carve the flesh of this worthless body but it will not tell you what you want to know. I will not let it.

Blood drips from the Raider's mouth, even as he laughs at Kane.

The GIRL watches from her place on the ground nearby, horrified.

Kane shakes the possessed Raider.

KANE

What in God's name are you?

RAIDER

I am nothing in *that* God's name;
I am a servant of the shadows. My master released us from the pit and these human bodies are enough for our needs.

Then Kane sees, on the crest of a distant hill, the OVERLORD, watching silently.

The bloodied raider before him speaks.

RAIDER

Do you believe that your salvation lies in saving this single girl?

KANE

I will find her.

RAIDER

You will fail; slayer of innocents, murderer, *killer of your own brother.*

KANE

I will hunt you down and send your black heart to your master in Hell.

RAIDER

I have no heart. Nor do you.

Kane shakes the body, smashes his fist into it beating it relentlessly now.

RAIDER

My Master sends his greetings
from The Pit. He is waiting for
you.

The Masked Rider on the hill turns away.

As he does so, the puppet body of the Raider shakes and twisted by one final hideous convulsion. Blood pours from his mouth, nose and eyes and after a single agonized scream it slumps forwards. And then, little by little, the Raider's face changes to that of a normal young man. The black blood becomes red once again and he lies still.

Kane rises slowly, unsure as to his plan. Then he hears a muffled sob from the girl.

He goes over to her and gently helps her to sit up.

KANE

You are safe child. The beast is
gone.

GIRL

What was that thing?

He wraps her in his own cloak.

KANE

It's just a man again now but
there was a demon within him.
Are you injured?

GIRL

No.
(a beat)
Thank you for saving me.

She climbs unsteadily to her feet. Kane watches, not sure what to do.

KANE

I'm Solomon Kane; what is your
name?

GIRL

Elizabeth.

KANE

You should rest now Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

I want to go home.

Kane takes her gently by the shoulder.

KANE

Child, they leave none alive.
There will be no home for you to
return to.

She falls silent and then gently begins to cry. This young woman is really little more than a girl. Kane is at a loss know how to comfort her.

CUT TO:

53

EXT. STONE CIRCLE CAMP - LATER

53

KANE has set a small camp fire going and is cooking up some simple food over the flame. Elizabeth sits nearby with Kane's cloak around her.

ELIZABETH

You risk your life for your love.

KANE

My love?

ELIZABETH

This girl, Meredith, that you seek; you must love her very much.

KANE

No. She is... I made a promise.
That is all.

ELIZABETH

I didn't mean to intrude.

He waves her apology away and sets about preparing the camp.

KANE

Tell me what you know of this
evil.

ELIZABETH

My father...my father said the
Raiders were from the west -
Cornwall, perhaps, or Devonshire.
He said there is a sorcerer
raising an army of these Raiders
to take over the land. That
masked man; he is their general -
a demon in a man's body they say
who can control the soldiers with
his mind alone.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH(cont'd)

They burn and butcher at will and more are joining them all the time. How can anyone fight this?

KANE

(quietly)

I can.

MIX TO:

54 EXT. STONE CIRCLE CAMP - LATER. DAY

54

Mist hangs in the air around their tiny camp. The two horses graze placidly nearby.

Kane adds a little more wood to the small camp FIRE. ELIZABETH is asleep huddled before the flames. He watches her for a moment, clearly a little conflicted over something.

Then, quietly, he GATHERS HIS WEAPONS, checks them, and straps them to his horse.

He takes all the food, clothing and other useful items and leaves them by the fire, next to the girl. He takes a PISTOL and POWDER and rests those near to her too.

After another moment of silent thought he walks back to his horse and mounts.

The noise wakes ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH

What are you doing?

KANE

I've left you all the provisions I have. Do you know how to use a pistol?

She scrambles to her feet.

ELIZABETH

Why? You're leaving me? No!

KANE

Elizabeth, you cannot come where I am going. There's danger ahead and... When you have rested, take that horse and head east. Find a church. Beg sanctuary.

ELIZABETH

Please don't leave me. Please. I have nothing left. Please...

Kane is torn between duties but he has no choice.

KANE

I am sorry, Elizabeth. I have to go. May God protect you.

He drives his heels into his horse and gallops away into the mist.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE VILLAGE - DAY

55

The RAIDERS and their WAGON TRAIN have come to a halt outside a small village on the edge of a dark forest.

It is just one of several wagons joining together to form a longer train. A rough platoon of Raiders walks or rides alongside. It may be an army of sorts but it is crude and undisciplined.

We see now that there are DIFFERENT CASTES OF RAIDERS; some are little more than rough looking men whilst others, clearly of higher rank, are far more corrupted and changed. Seemingly the longer they have been fighting, the more strongly the possession takes hold.

MEREDITH is lying on her side at the bottom of a CAGE mounted on the back of a wagon. She is freezing cold, shivering and filthy. There is a DEAD BODY right beside her in the overpacked wagon. She is praying quietly, intensely.

MEREDITH

Heavenly Father, I beseech you to save us from this evil.

(to a companion)

Pray with me. Pray for us all.

CAPTIVE

Slavery or sacrifice; there is nothing else for us.

MEREDITH

Don't give up. We will find the strength to survive this.

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost...

One of the RAIDERS walking near Meredith's wagon, slams the flat of his sword against the cage.

RAIDER

Quiet!

(to his companions)

Clear out the dead!

MEREDITH shrinks back from the front of the cage as the savage raiders fling open the door and DRAG OUT THE BODIES. They are DUMPED by the side of the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - CONT

A DOZEN MEN OF THE VILLAGE are lined up on their knees before the OVERLORD. RAIDERS are gathered around.

Other VILLAGERS are watching from a huddled group nearby. They have the grim resolution of a beaten community as the Raiders take food and water as they please.

On GIBBETS by the side of the road a DOZEN MEN ARE HANGING BY THEIR NECKS.

VILLAGER

Don't join them! Don't do it!

YOUTH

Father! Don't!

One of the MEN on his knees in the line turns to the crowd.

MAN

What choice is there? We must join them or perish.

The OVERLORD stands before this man. Two Raiders at his shoulder speak for him in strange synchronization.

RAIDERS/OVERLORD

Will you serve the Master?

MAN

Y...yes.

The Overlord takes hold of the villager's head between his huge hands. The man SCREAMS for a moment but then begins to change...

...rippling from the Overlord's fingers are creeping tendrils that distort and alter his skin like a FOUL DISEASE overwhelming the human side of him. When the transformation is complete he has the same vacant, corrupted look as the other Raiders.

RAIDER/OVERLORD

Brand him. And these others.

Another Raider draws a burning brand from a nearby fire and presses into the new Raider's flesh. He seems to barely even notice.

A YOUNG MAN - no more than 15 - charges towards the Overlord. He has a short sword raised, ready to strike the Overlord.

YOUTH
Father!!!

With stunning speed the Overlord draws his massive broadsword. In one sweeping motion he SLICES THE BOY in half.

The BOY'S FATHER looks down at the body with no emotion.

CUT TO:

56

EXT. FIELDS - SUNSET

56

KANE rides along what passes for a road but is little more than a muddy track. He's bundled up against the cold; cloak wrapped tightly around.

He slows a little when HE COMES TO A CROSSROADS and checks his direction on a COMPASS. The needle spins crazily, no matter how he holds it.

Ahead of him he sees PEOPLE coming down the road. A CROWD OF RAGGED REFUGEES fleeing whatever evil is beyond. They are hollowed eyed and road weary and not all peasants. Some are clad in finer clothes but all are escaping the terror.

KANE
Greetings friends.

No one speaks. They just hurry past him.

Kane drops from his horse and approaches a MAN and his FAMILY. He takes the locket from his neck, opens it and shows the picture to the refugees.

KANE
This girl; have you seen her?
You? Any of you?

They don't care. Won't look. Others just flow by. Kane tries to show them all but no one cares.

KANE
Stop damn you! Look at it. Look!

WOMAN
If she was taken there is no hope.

KANE

I am hunting those who did this to you. I need to know where they are!

MAN

They are everywhere. Ghouls, creatures and demons are abroad. Every foul thing of the earth has come. No one can fight them.

WOMAN

Pray for your friend; it is all you can do now.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. ROADS - LATER. EVENING

57

There is a shallow FORD that bisects the road. KANE dismounts and leads his horse over to it. He allows it to drink before scooping up a few handfuls of water himself and refilling his water bottles.

Then he sees a PILE OF ROTTING BODIES dumped at the side of the road. Some of the corpses have spilled into the water. Kane spits out the water and empties his bottles again.

KANE

(pulling the horse away)
Stop. Don't drink; it's befouled.
Can you not taste it animal?

As he pulls the reluctant horse away he notices there are SEVERAL PEASANTS standing silent and ghostlike in the hedges and undergrowth nearby.

KANE

I'm looking for this girl...

There is something wrong with these people. It seems as though their humanity has been stripped away revealing something feral and terrifying beneath.

Little by little they begin advancing on him with silent menace. Some have pitchforks, others have axes and others have nothing more than their clawed hands.

KANE DRAWS HIS SWORD and spins to try and keep track of them all.

KANE

Stay back!

His horse bucks and pulls against the reins as Kane struggles to get into a position to remount.

KANE

Steady... woah...

But the HORSE BREAKS FREE of him, knocking him over, and, in a panic the animal runs away, TRAMPLING OVER a pair of the advancing PEASANTS.

Kane, scrambles to his feet and with nothing but his single SWORD and a PISTOL in his belt, readies himself against the ATTACKERS as they silently close the circle now...

The first of the PEASANTS let's loose a terrible scream and CHARGES AT HIM. Kane is ready...

Dropping to his knees he sweeps his blade across his attacker's legs, SEVERING THEM AT THE KNEE. The victim makes no sound and shows no pain. He simply drops to the floor and even with hideous injuries, continues to struggle on.

Kane then turns on the others and, with brutal efficiency, sets about their destruction...

CUT TO:

58 EXT. WAGON TRAIN - NIGHT

58

By the light of burning brands the RAIDER'S WAGONS crawl relentlessly across the countryside towards some unknown destination.

The CAPTIVES are huddled together. Dead and dying along with the silent, terrified living.

RAIDER

Clear out the bodies!

The wasted bodies of the fallen are roughly dragged out of the wagons and dumped carelessly at the side of the road.

MEREDITH is amongst the dead.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

59

KANE walks now. He is bloodied and weary and has lost virtually everything but for his sword, his pistol and the clothes on his back and yet still he strides on relentlessly. Determination written in every line of his face.

Up ahead, on the crest of a hill he sees a BEACON lighting the tower of a BROKEN DOWN CHURCH, offering sanctuary for the night.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. ROADSIDE VERGE - NIGHT

60

The only noise in this still and misty night is the rattle of the carts and breathing of the horses as they fade away into the night.

ON A PILE OF CORPSES:

Just a mound of tattered flesh and corpses with MEREDITH lying amongst them.

CLOSING IN ON HER FACE...

Serene and still. But then...

HER EYES SNAP OPEN.

Barely daring to breathe she looks around. Desperately nervous she looks around for danger.

It seems she is alone but for the dead.

Initially tentative and full of fear she begins to scabble out from the corpse midden. The more she struggles, the more revolted and desperate she becomes...

...Until finally she's screaming as she tears and pulls at the bodies to get herself free.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. DERELICT CHURCH YARD - NIGHT

61

KANE passes through the WOODEN ARCHED ENTRANCE of the church yard. The light of the beacon, still flickers in the crumbling bell tower of the ancient Saxon church. An ECHOING SCREAM carries across the dark countryside, something evil in the distance. Kane hurries towards the church.

GRAVESTONES have been flattened or shattered. There are a COUPLE OF BODIES hanging from a tree in the distance. This place has a real sense of death and decay. Strange noises echo across the countryside.

He cautiously approaches the door and pushes it open.

CUT TO:

62 INT. DERELICT CHURCH - EVENING

62

Kane's feet crunch loudly on the broken masonry that litters the floor.

The roof has collapsed in places, exposing the night sky. Pews are scattered and broken, even the altar is overturned.

Startled BIRDS, disturbed in their nighttime roost, suddenly explode out of the rafters.

SOMETHING IS WATCHING KANE as he explores this desecrated sanctuary.

As Kane approaches the altar, and THE WATCHER COMES NEARER, stalking him from the shadows...

Kane bends to his knees and bows his head before the fallen idol.

The ATTACKER makes its final approach, a wooden club raised, ready to bring down on Kane.

But KANE WHIRLS ROUND AT THE LAST MOMENT and points his pistol right into the face of...

... a PRIEST.

The two are frozen for a moment. This priest is wild-eyed and at the end of his strength. Even if he did strike Kane it would barely register.

Kane slowly lowers his pistol. He raises empty hands.

KANE

You are in no danger from me
Father.

The Priest quivers in fear, the cudgel still ready.

KANE

I wished only for a little refuge
and a moment for prayer.

Slowly, the Priest lowers his own weapon.

PRIEST

F..f..forgive me. I have seen
such things.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. FIELDS - NIGHT

63

Under the light of the full moon, MEREDITH runs headlong through the night.

She stumbles and falls, tripping down a precipitous slope and splashing into A NARROW RIVER...

She forces her way across to the other side. But now exhaustion is catching her and as she struggles up the other side she slides back down the mud bank and into the waters.

Her freezing fingers claw their way up the muddy banks again but she can hardly make any progress, she's so tired and cold...

But A HAND REACHES FROM THE DARKNESS AND GRABS HERS.

A TEENAGE BOY, THOMAS WOOLMAN, is helping her over the top. To Meredith, in her dazed and exhausted state, he looks just like SAMUEL.

MEREDITH
Samuel? Am I dead?

BOY
You ain't dead miss. But we may be if we wait around here much longer. There's terrible things in the dark.

THOMAS helps Meredith to her feet. She can hardly stand but he puts his arms around her and holds her steady.

MEREDITH
Do you know a place I can shelter?

CUT TO:

64 INT. DERELICT CHURCH - NIGHT

64

Kane and the Priest - FATHER MICHAEL, a gaunt, wild haired man, clearly hovering on the brink of sanity and still clad in a torn tunic with stained dog-collar - are eating simple fare around a fire that burns in the corner of the church.

FATHER MICHAEL
Have you come far?

KANE
Aye. Two days' hard ride brought me here but where here is, I do not know.

FATHER MICHAEL
The borderlands of Somerset and
Devonshire.

KANE
(quietly)
My homeland.

FATHER MICHAEL
What?

KANE
I lived in Axmouth Castle as a
boy. It's not so far from here.

FATHER MICHAEL
A sad homecoming for you.

KANE
What happened here? Did the
raiders come?

FATHER MICHAEL
Every foul thing that the light
of Christ kept at bay is
returning. We have burned so many
witches and their familiars but
still they keep coming. One of
them cursed my flock with her
evil, turning them into terrible
ghoulish creatures.

KANE
I met some on the road before.
Flesh and blood but no longer
human.

FATHER MICHAEL
Did you hurt them?

KANE
I had no choice.

FATHER MICHAEL
They are innocent of their
crimes. I have watched men become
monsters before my eyes. They
slaughter each other; fathers
killing their children, brother
murdering brother. Such a hunger
is in them.
This is truly the end of days.

KANE
Do you believe that?

FATHER MICHAEL

I believe that God is testing my faith.

KANE

By cursing us all? Christ and all his Angels are asleep whilst we suffer.

FATHER MICHAEL

Mind your blasphemy! It's as God wants it. He wants to feel our love for him even through our agony.

Kane gets to his feet and paces angrily.

KANE

Feel our love?! How can it be right that this evil is walking amongst us, pouring its poison into the land, when all we have to protect us is...what? Faith? Where are the warriors who will take the fight to them? Why don't *they* walk amongst us just as the foul creatures do? Tell me, Priest; who in the world can fight this Evil?

Kane is caught in a shaft of moonlight which splinters through the broken roof. Sword in hand, pistol in his belt and anger written across his face... ..the answer to Kane's own question is obvious to the priest, even if it is not to Kane himself.

Kane hears a movement and is suddenly alert.

KANE

There is something out there.

FATHER MICHAEL

No son, there is nothing evil out there.

Kane prepares himself for a fight.

FATHER MICHAEL

The evil is here already.

Kane turns to him, confused by this.

KANE

What do you mean?

The Priest limps over to a trap door in the floor of the church. He reaches to the handle and lifts it. Kane picks up a burning brand and approaches.

FATHER MICHAEL

See...

For a moment Kane stares into the BLACKNESS BELOW and sees nothing and SUDDENLY a DOZEN PALE FACES appear, luminous evil eyes, snarling and grasping for him but they can't get out of the cellar.

KANE

My God...

Father Michael giggles a little. It's an uneasy, slightly insane laugh.

FATHER MICHAEL

What was I to do? They were men and women once; People I knew.

KANE

Destroy them, man!

FATHER MICHAEL

I cannot destroy them; I am their shepherd. This is my test of faith; to love even the foulest creatures.

The CREATURES in the cellar are silent but watch Kane with terrible menace and hunger. They have sharp, bloody teeth, their hair is thinning and falling out in clumps, their skin white and waxen.

KANE

Not any more. They are changed... they are creatures of darkness now. I have seen the like before in my travels. Vampires or undead ghouls of some form...You cannot...

FATHER MICHAEL

No! They are my flock and I have a duty of care towards them. I... keep them. I... care for them. I... feed them.

Kane is horrified.

KANE

Feed them? What do they eat?

THE PRIEST SUDDENLY RUSHES AT KANE and SHOVES HIM BACKWARDS towards the OPEN TRAP DOOR.

FATHER MICHAEL

Flesh.

Kane, taken by surprise, stumbles and teeters on the edge of the open hatchway... and it seems that he might just keep his footing until...

...with a bloodcurdling cry, one of the ghouls leaps up and grabs his leg, yanking him backwards.

Kane TUMBLES BACK DOWN INTO THE PIT.

The Priest dashes forward and slams the cellar door closed on the snarling, screeching pack of ghouls.

FATHER MICHAEL

May God have mercy on your soul.

CUT TO:

65 INT. CHURCH CELLAR - CONT

65

As soon as KANE TUMBLES INTO THE DARK, the GHOULS attack him. Their mouths open baring razor edged teeth.

The BURNING TORCH has fallen into the pit with him, its flickering light illuminating the dark space.

Kane cries in anger and pain as he beats off his attackers - they are feral but weak. He grabs the burning brand and springs to his feet, trying to gauge his position.

There are A DOZEN GHOULS all regrouping, ready to attack again.

Kane draws his PISTOL and shoots one in the face. It flies back into the others. He hasn't time to reload again as they attack...

He draws his short sword and begins to hack at them. Weight of numbers and slashing claws force him back and they seem to feel no pain and have no care for their own safety but their blood lust is immense. As one falls, the others begin to tear at it too.

But Kane is pressed back against the crypt walls, fighting for his life now. One leaps right onto him trying to reach his throat, shoving him back hard...

...and some of the MASONRY GIVES WAY BEHIND HIM. The dusty brickwork collapses backwards into an open space beyond.

There's a TUNNEL which stretches away to unfathomable darkness.

Kane knows what he has to do now; Alternately slicing at the ghouls and trying to break open the tunnel entrance.

He shoves the torch at one of the creatures and sets its ragged clothing alight. It screams around the room igniting the others it touches.

This gives Kane just enough time to tumble through the small opening and into the dusty and narrow passageway beyond.

He turns and runs as fast as he can into the distance, his torchlight quickly being swallowed in the gloom.

The surviving GHOULS scramble through the opening after him.

CUT TO:

66 INT. CHURCH - CONT 66

The PRIEST listens, nervously, to the screams and cries coming from the floor beneath him. He seems satisfied that his task is done.

But then a SHADOW FALLS ACROSS HIM. He turns slowly and SCREAMS...as a blade flashes through the air...

HARD CUT TO:

67 INT. BARN - NIGHT 67

The small side door to a BARN is pushed quietly open as the young shepherd boy THOMAS WOOLMAN enters, quickly followed by MEREDITH. She is shaking with cold and exhaustion.

THOMAS

You'll be warm in here.

MEREDITH

Thank you. God bless you.

Meredith finds a bale of hay and settles into it.

Thomas lights an oil lamp and comes near to her. He takes his heavy wool coat and puts it around her shoulders.

THOMAS

Where were you going?

MEREDITH

Anywhere. Nowhere. I escaped from men who'd captured me. Servants of some terrible evil.

(MORE)

MEREDITH(cont'd)

They killed...They killed...oh
Lord...my family.

For the first time the true impact of Meredith's loss seems to overwhelm her. She breaks down into tears.

THOMAS

Those raiders they came to this village too. They spared the families of those men who joined them. Others they simply murdered or took away. My sister was taken and many others.

MEREDITH

I am so sorry.

THOMAS

She did not escape them but you did. None have done that before and survived.

CUT TO:

68 INT. TUNNELS BENEATH CHURCH - NIGHT

68

Ragged, bloody and exhausted KANE is hiding in a dark alcove within the tunnels. He's trying to mask his torch flame and listen to the oncoming SNARLS and FOOTFALLS of the GHOULS.

They're coming ever nearer. Soon they will corner him in his hiding space and so he takes a breath and RUNS OUT into the open CORRIDOR.

They see him and immediately charge after him. The burning torch hardly throws enough light for him to see where he might be heading.

He makes random, careless turns down junctions, totally losing himself in the labyrinth.

The walls of the tunnels are lined with crypts, coffins and piles of bones. All ancient and dusty.

But there is still no way out and he can HEAR THE CREATURES hunting him.

A sudden gust of air makes Kane's brand flicker and he knows which way to go now.

He steps out into another corridor and...

...RIGHT INTO A GHOUL that has been stalking him. Kane turns and manages to skewer it onto his sword and race away.

Ahead of him he sees a shaft of silver moonlight breaking through the exit to the chamber.

TWO MORE GHOULS suddenly leap down in front of him but he doesn't break pace he simply CHARGES RIGHT AT THEM. Shouldering one out of the way and carrying the other with him some distance... his sword having passed through it.

He flings the body to one side and scrabbles through the overgrown exit.

CUT TO:

69

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

69

KANE flops down onto the wet grass and scrambles away. All his attention focused on the exit... but nothing is following him.

Exhausted he lies back and takes a moment to catch his breath.

...a HUMAN HEAD suddenly lands on the ground right beside him. It is the PRIEST'S HEAD.

VOICE O/S

Friend of yours?

Kane turns suddenly to find himself facing FIVE RAIDERS on horseback. He rises to his feet and faces them without fear.

Kane recognizes three of the RAIDERS. They are THE THIEVES WHO ATTACKED him in the woods days earlier but now they are clad in the livery of the raiders. The insignia on their clothes, their manner and weapons different from before.

The Great Bearded attacker suddenly seems to recognize who Kane is. He laughs.

BEARD

Remember this one lads? He's not a fighter, remember?

BEARD swings down off his horse. SKINHEAD and TATTOO drop down too. They approach Kane, slowly, clearly looking forward to toying with him again. The other two Raiders, more corrupted and savage looking than the three, remain on horseback.

KANE

So you have pledged your allegiance to this sorcerer?

BEARD

We want to be on the winning side, see. Malachi will hold all this land soon enough.

KANE

Is that his name; Malachi?

BEARD

They say he's the most powerful warlock that's ever been. But I wouldn't know about that.

SKINHEAD

What you doing here Puritan? Only thing round here is fighting.

TATTOO

And you don't do that do you?

A beat. A smile flickers across Kane's bloodied face.

KANE

Well, you know, I changed my mind about that.

BEARD

What?

Then, swift as some great predatory beast KANE LEAPS FORWARD, swords flashing. He DECAPITATES TATTOO with one swift stroke and in a blur of motion drives his blade into the belly of SKINHEAD.

BEARD just about manages to avoid Kane's returning slicing stroke of his blade. Fast and brutal he attacks Kane. The other Raiders drop from their horses and press in on him too.

Bathed in the silvery moonlight and amongst the hanging mist of the cemetery they fight, though there is never any doubt as to the outcome...

Kane slices the leg tendons of Beard who drops to the ground, screaming then he turns on the remaining two raiders.

ONE IS ALREADY RUNNING FOR HIS HORSE, he leaps on and manages to escape but the other is too slow. Kane snatches up a sword from the ground and hurls it after the running man. It catches him awkwardly across the neck, severing his jugular.

Victorious, Kane stands for a moment, listening to the whimpering cries of the dying and the thunder of horses hooves disappearing into the night.

He turns his attention to BEARD who is trying to crawl away on useless legs. He has crawled near the entrance to the underground tunnels.

Kane grabs Beard and pulls him even NEARER to the tunnel entrance. Clawed hands reach out to grab him. Beard screams in fear.

BEARD
What are they!!?

KANE
They are your brothers.

Kane he takes the locket from around his neck and shows Beard the picture of Meredith.

KANE
This girl; your kind took her.

BEARD
I don't know her.

KANE
This is your only chance to live
out this night, so look
carefully.

He pushes Beard back a little nearer. Several of the creatures take hold of him and try to yank him backwards. Their excited snarling fills the air. Kane sees their eyes shining in the dark tunnels.

KANE
Have you seen her?!

BEARD
Yes! Yes, I saw her.

KANE
Where they're taking her?

BEARD
She's going nowhere.

KANE
Talk in riddles and I'll cut your
tongue from your head!

BEARD
She's dead! She's *dead*.

KANE
What? Liar!

BEARD

No; I want to live! I wouldn't lie. She's dead. I saw her body dragged from the wagon. I was there.

KANE

No! No! NO! This cannot be. She cannot be dead.

BEARD

She is. Now, I told you what you want! Let me go!

Kane releases Beard from his grips. Instantly he is grabbed by the ghouls and dragged back into the catacombs.

Kane simply walks away as Beard's agonized screams echo across the cemetery as he is eaten alive.

Kane seems oblivious to this as he slowly collapses to the ground against a headstone with an elaborately carved ANGEL OF DEATH perched upon it.

FADE TO BLACK:

70 EXT. SMALL MARKET TOWN - DAWN 70

Rising through the mist shrouded countryside are the WALLS OF A SMALL MARKET TOWN.

A FIGURE ON HORSEBACK emerges through the mist and heads slowly towards the gates.

CUT TO:

71 EXT. SMALL TOWN MARKET SQUARE - MORNING 71

There are dozens of stall holders trying to scrape a ragged living in the SMALL MARKET SQUARE. It is filthy, wet and raining but still bustling with bedraggled customers. Amongst them are RAIDERS grouped together drinking and shouting. It seems this town has already fallen into their thrall. The insignia of the sorcerer, Malachi, the same that all these Raiders and their followers wear, flies on a pendant over the town.

A few of the LOCALS move hurriedly aside as a DARKLY DRESSED RIDER leads THREE HORSES through the town gates and into the market square. He ignores the sideways glances and nervous chatter of those he passes. Doesn't care that a few Raiders watch him.

KANE leads the horses through the market to a STABLE nearby.

72

EXT. STABLE - CONT

72

KANE dismounts and leads the horses past a BLACKSMITH and towards the entrance of the stable. The STABLE MASTER comes out to greet Kane.

STABLE MASTER
Good day to you. You'd like to
stable your horses?

KANE
I want to sell them.

The Stable Master notes the Raider's insignia on their tack and saddles. He's suddenly a little more suspicious and frightened.

STABLE MASTER
How did you come by these
animals?

KANE
What does it matter?

STABLE MASTER
They carry the mark of Malachi.
If you stole them...

KANE
You cannot steal from dead men.

The Stable Master now notices KANE'S BLOODY WEAPONS and clothing, suddenly he's VERY nervous. Looks around the town square to see if anyone is watching them.

STABLE MASTER
Did you kill them?

Kane is silent.

STABLE MASTER
We heard of a man who has been
hunting them. You fought them and
won.

KANE
I won nothing.

The Stable Master becomes suddenly conspiratorial. He takes Kane to one side.

STABLE MASTER
You must hide Sir. This town is
theirs; all around here they hold
sway. Everywhere.
(MORE)

STABLE MASTER(cont'd)

And spies work for them,
listening in shadows betraying
any who would fight back. If they
know you are here...

KANE

(too loudly)
I don't care who knows.

STABLE MASTER

But there are also others here
who would fight. They are just
waiting for enough men...

KANE

Then let them fight. Pay me.

STABLE MASTER

Would you not join them?

KANE

No. Now pay me - enough to drink
myself into oblivion.

CUT TO:

73 INT. BARN - MORNING

73

MEREDITH, hidden under a bed of straw, opens her eyes to
the SOUND OF THE BARN DOOR OPENING and VOICES. She is
completely hidden amongst the straw.

JONAH O/S

Is she in here?

THOMAS O/S

Why do we need to do this Father?

Through strands of straw Meredith watches THOMAS and his
father, JONAH, a strong looking middle aged man with a
heavy beard walking alongside. He is clearly angry; he
grabs his son roughly.

JONAH

Because if they find we've been
sheltering her there'll...they'll
burn us out... or worse.

THOMAS

She lost her family.

JONAH

So did we! And I will not lose
anything more to save some
stranger. Now find her.

Meredith shrinks back into the hay as...

Reluctantly Thomas makes his way towards THE HAYSTACK.

THOMAS
Meredith. It's Thomas - come on
out.

He pauses for a moment then, on the urging of his father,
he pulls away the hay...

...but Meredith is not there.

Suddenly a different haystack, right in front of Jonah,
erupts as MEREDITH BURSTS OUT and DASHES FOR A HANGING
PITCHFORK nearby.

She snatches it from the hanger and whirls on Jonah and
Thomas, holding them at bay.

MEREDITH
You betrayed me!

THOMAS
I am sorry.

JONAH
See now, girl...

Meredith backtracks towards a small side door.

JONAH
Listen girl they're everywhere
now. Those who deny them will be
killed; we have to show our
loyalty.

MEREDITH
And sacrifice me?!

JONAH
Yes.

Jonah suddenly lunges for her. MEREDITH DRIVES THE
PITCHFORK INTO JONAH. It skewers him through the arm and
shoulder. He falls backwards, screaming in rage and pain.

Meredith tears open the BARN DOOR...

...And SCREAMS because...

...the OVERLORD IS STANDING SILHOUETTED IN THE DOORWAY. His
massive bulk fills the frame. A cohort of his Raider behind
him.

Instinctively Meredith drives her pitchfork into him. The
sharp prongs penetrate his leather armour and go deep into
his chest.

Fatal for any other man, but the Overlord hardly seems to notice. He yanks the pitchfork from his flesh and grabs her.

Two Raider's speak for the Overlord.

RAIDERS/OVERLORD
My Master has a special
punishment for you. He has need
of your lifeblood.

Meredith fights against his enormous strength, tearing at his mask. A section comes free, exposing a staring, lidless eye and torn, rotting flesh.

The Overlord smashes his fist down onto her. Meredith's world goes black...

CUT TO:

74

INT. TAVERN - DAY. LATER

74

An INNKEEPER makes his way through his CROWDED ALE-HOUSE to a TABLE IN A DARK CORNER. A motley bunch are drinking themselves into a stinking stupor on his ale. Mostly local PEASANTS but there are a HANDFUL OF RAIDERS in here too.

The innkeeper refills a tankard on the table from the gallon flagon he's carrying then withdraws. A HAND shoots out of the shadows and grabs his arm.

KANE
Leave it all.

A bag of coins is tossed onto the table.

LANDLORD
As you wish.

The Landlord leaves the flagon of ale and scoops up the money. He withdraws quickly.

Kane drains his tankard, then refills it swiftly. He's clearly been there a while and is heading for the drunken oblivion he craves.

The locket with MEREDITH'S PICTURE is in his hand.

The rest of the place is loud and busy but Kane simply ignores it. He enjoys the gloomy darkness of his corner.

TWO MEN - GARRICK and TELFORD - push through the crowd towards him. They stop and peer at this drunken man.

GARRICK
Are you certain?

TELFORD
 (looking closely)
 It's him. I knew it.

Kane hardly notices them as they slide in opposite him. Telford is in his early 20's, Garrick a little older. Both are grubby, weary and carelessly dressed but not aggressive. They seem nervous, scanning the room for eavesdroppers. Neither wants to draw attention to himself. They lean in to Kane who finally looks up.

GARRICK
 Sir?

He ignores the newcomers.

TELFORD
 Captain Kane? Don't you remember me?
 (Kane still ignores them)
 I was a mate on the Queen's Ship Fleetway that you captained.

Kane peers at him, drunkenly.

KANE
 Never seen you before.

TELFORD
 We fought in Africa, against the tribes in the cliff caves. Don't you remember?

Garrick pulls Telford to one side.

GARRICK
 It is not him.

TELFORD
 It is. It's Kane. I'll never forget him. This is the man who can lead us, believe me.

GARRICK
 Where can he lead us? To another tavern? Look at him.

Garrick turns back to Kane, still unconvinced.

GARRICK
 (quietly)
 Hey; drunkard. My friend here says you are the greatest warrior he ever saw. I don't believe him.

KANE

I told you, I don't want...

TELFORD

A cohort of Malachi's raiders rode out at dawn; they were hunting a man who has been harrying them for these past days. Was it you?

Kane looks up, slightly.

TELFORD

(urgently and a little loud)

There are those of us here who would rally to you Captain Kane.

GARRICK

(to Telford)

Keep your voice down; there are others who would betray us.

KANE

What do you mean, 'a man like me'? A failure?

TELFORD

No; you're a brave man, a warrior. I know what you can do Captain, I have seen it.

Kane suddenly grabs Telford across the table and yanks him close.

KANE

You don't know what you're talking about. I am *nothing*.

GARRICK

He's no use. Leave him to his drink.

TELFORD

No! Captain Kane, we need a leader. We have to fight back.

It is clear that people have overheard them now.

KANE

Then fight!

Kane stumbles to his feet. He falls a little but rights himself.

TELFORD

Kane...

KANE

I swore to find her and I failed.
My life is over.

And with that, Kane staggers into a GROUP OF DRINKERS who shove him away aggressively and he topples over, overturning a table and falls, unconscious to the floor. The LANDLORD looks down on Kane. He notices that some of the Raiders nearby are taking an interest. The LANDLORD covers this quickly.

LANDLORD

This drunkard has had enough;
take him to his bed lads.

CUT TO:

75

INT. INN. COMMUNAL BUNKHOUSE - NIGHT

75

KANE sleeps in his clothes on a rough straw mattress. His few possessions are piled carelessly near his bed. There are a handful of OTHER DRUNKS sleeping off their booze.

Slowly, the DOOR to the BUNKHOUSE creaks open. Six dark, SHADOWY FIGURES waiting in the darkness. Hushed whispers, inaudible instructions but then one voice a little clearer.

VOICE

There. Kane is over there. He's
the one I saw.

FIVE FIGURES stalk across the room. A sleeping DRUNK wakes...

DRUNK

What are you...?

HIS THROAT IS CUT.

The FIGURES SURROUND KANE'S BED, swords in hand, ROPES and SHACKLES in others. They position themselves carefully.

One stumbles, makes a noise...

KANE, alerted, rouses from his slumber but is too slow... He fumbles for his sword only to have it kicked away.

The ATTACKERS GRAB HIM...

CUT TO:

76 EXT. ROAD. TRAVELLING SLAVE WAGON - MORNING 76

MEREDITH now bloodied and beaten, is once again a prisoner in a cage. Others are crammed in as before but now she is tied to the bars by heavy ropes and unable to move.

She slumps against her bonds, hardly registering the troughs and pot-holes the wagon hits.

CUT TO:

77 EXT. MARKET SQUARE - DAWN 77

CLOSE ON: GARRICK'S FACE - SCREAMING in agony. With every BLOW OF THE HAMMER he cries louder. His HANDS are being NAILED TO A WOODEN CROSS by a RAIDER.

The STABLE KEEPER is nearby him, unconscious and bloody - already pinned to the wood. OTHERS too are lined up; anyone who might have been involved with them is being crucified in the town square. TELFORD is not there though.

A PARTY of RAIDERS and LOCALS are raising the crosses. The market square has been trashed, any stalls that were left have been shattered, others are burning.

The silent OVERLORD watches from his horse as the first of the crosses are raised. The cries of pain are unbearable.

The TOWN LOCALS have been herded into a group. Raiders with their weapons ready face them but no one is going to fight.

A POSSESSED RAIDER speaks with his MASTER'S VOICE. It echoes unnaturally across the town square.

RAIDER/OVERLORD
(talking to the
townspeople)

This is the fate of those who would defy us. These traitors in your midst have brought about your destruction. There will be no mercy.

The OVERLORD turns to see...

...KANE BEING DRAGGED OUT OF A NEARBY BUILDING by his CAPTORS. He is not struggling, seemingly resigned to his fate.

The Raiders haul Kane across the square, literally dragging him over the stones and casting him to the ground before the Overlord who regards him from behind his expressionless mask. He drops from his horse and approaches Kane.

RAIDER

This is the one Master, the one
who hunts us. The rebels want him
as their leader.

The Overlord leans down to Kane, reaches out with a gloved hand and raises his face to his own. The Overlord's eyes stare keenly from the mask. He is so close to Kane now that he can whisper IN HIS OWN VOICE. It is a frail, rasping whisper. He is almost tender as he speaks.

OVERLORD

Can you hear me Solomon?

Kane stares up at the monster before him.

OVERLORD

Do you know me?

KANE

I know you for the foul servant
of evil you are.

OVERLORD

He cannot be defeated - even by
you. Join us.

KANE

I am going to kill you all.

OVERLORD

You cannot kill one who is
already dead. Goodbye brother.

The Overlord stands suddenly and turns and strides away from Kane any hint of humanity or connection is lost.

KANE

Brother?! What do you mean? What
do you know of my brother?!

The Overlord ignores him and once more he speaks through his minions.

RAIDER/OVERLORD

(to the crowd)

This man cannot save you from us.
He is nothing!
Crucify him.
Burn this town to ashes.

Amidst the screams of protest and fear of the townspeople, the Overlord climbs onto his horse and thunders away, taking many of his warriors with him.

CUT TO:

78 EXT. VILLAGE WALLS - CONT

78

The OVERLORD leads his men away. As they pass the gated entrance a GROUP OF SLAVE CAGE WAGONS that have been waiting outside the town are whipped into action.

MEREDITH IS IN ONE OF THE CAGES.

79 EXT. MARKET SQUARE - CONT

79

Under the light of a blood-red dawn KANE is taken and shoved forward through the crowds. The Raiders kick and punch him. Some of the crowd are silent whilst others are shouting and jeering.

ONLOOKER

He brought this on us! It is his fault!

In the background PEOPLE are SCREAMING as soldiers set FIRE to the houses.

KANE ignores it all. He has already given up; there is nothing more he can do now.

They TIE A ROPE AROUND HIS CHEST, holding him to the cross and stretch his arms onto the beams. Then the long iron nails are laid against his palms and POUNDED THROUGH THE FLESH. He grits his teeth against the agony but makes no sound.

RAIDER

(to his companion)
He's tough. They always scream.

COMPANION

Did you see the Master? He fears this man above all others.

RAIDER

Best make sure he suffers then.

The pair continue to SMASH THE NAILS into Kane's body. With each brutal HAMMER BLOW the SCREAMS Kane can hear all around him finally begin to fade. The leering, laughing faces of the Raiders, their punches and blows mean nothing any more. He is dying...

His vision flickers to BLACK for a moment...

He regains consciousness again as HIS CROSS IS RAISED TO VERTICAL... His body sags down against the ropes holding him to the main vertical beam. His arms pull against the nails through his palms. Blood runs down his arms.

But when he opens his eyes and looks down THE WORLD HAS CHANGED...

HE IS IN HELL.

It is the same MARKET SQUARE, still burning, people still screaming but everything is heightened. He can see the DEMONS twisting and sliding within the bodies of the Raiders like foul parasitic creatures feeding on the pain and fear. The VILLAGERS are screaming and twisted in tortured agony. Demons tear at them as their town burns. Dante could not have imagined anything worse.

Only now does Kane start to SCREAM...

CUT TO:

80

EXT. ROAD. SLAVE WAGON - MORNING

80

MEREDITH looks up from her stupor as they pass the entrance to the town.

The billowing smoke from the burning buildings smothers their way in a thick pall and as they pass through the broken walls of the market town are revealed.

And in the town square are FIVE CRUCIFIED MEN.

She cannot help but look at the horrific image and sees...

...KANE ON THE CROSS.

She hears his screams.

MEREDITH
Solomon! Solomon!

She screams now and tears at the bonds. Rocking the whole cage. A Raider smacks the cage with his cudgel. The prisoners shrink back in fear.

RAIDER
Silence!

But Meredith ignores him, growing more hysterical with every moment.

ANOTHER RAIDER
(to the drivers)
Get us away from here!

The horses are whipped and the train picks up speed. Clattering away and increasing pace.

MEREDITH
Kane!! SOLOMON KANE!!! Please!
Kane!!!

CUT TO:

81 EXT. SMALL TOWN MARKET SQUARE - CONT 81

KANE is still staring down at the vision before. Then he hears Meredith's cries, faintly at first as if they are simply another part of his dying moments but then cutting through more clearly.

MEREDITH O/S
Solomon! Solomon Kane!
Please...God save him....

Beyond his vision of hell he can see MEREDITH'S WAGON outside the town gates.

KANE
(barely a whisper)
Meredith.

She is alive. He has not yet failed.

MEREDITH
Solomon!

KANE
Meredith!

CUT TO:

82 EXT. ROAD - CONT 82

MEREDITH is screaming and fighting as the wagon train moves away from the village. Slowly she is losing sight of Kane but doing everything she can to retain sight until the last possible moment, even as the Raiders are screaming at her for silence.

83 EXT. SMALL TOWN MARKET SQUARE - CONT 83

KANE watches as Meredith's wagon thunders out of sight.

KANE
Meredith! No!!

Kane closes his eyes, grits his teeth and summons every last drop of strength he has...

...And with quivering muscles he begins to TEAR ONE ARM FROM THE CROSS. He pulls his wrist forwards, the NAIL SLIDING THROUGH HIS FLESH.

He screams in soul shattering agony...

The RAIDERS below him stand, frozen... unable to comprehend what is happening.

And as he screams Kane let's his weight drop against the rope holding him up and TEARS HIS OTHER ARM FREE.

84 EXT. ROADS - CONT 84

MEREDITH still trying to see Kane and the village, finally loses sight of them. She slumps against her own bonds.

85 EXT. VILLAGE - CONT 85

KANE has dropped to the ground now. He is stunned and bleeding, trying to gain his breath and work through the agony.

A few of the Raiders have stopped, amazed, to watch him as he struggles to a kneeling position, blood pouring from his wounds. Kane stares at them with cold fury. But he can see more than just the Raiders - he can see within the more corrupted Raiders, there are DEMONIC CREATURES, like a parasite writhing within its host. Evil eyes stare at him from behind the human masks.

Summoning incredible willpower, Kane, picks up an abandoned sword and readies for a fight.

Instead the RAIDERS TURN AND FLEE.

KANE

(shouting after them)

Tell your Master I am coming!

Tell him I will wipe him and his

servants from this earth.

The Raiders who are running from Kane head towards the town gates...

Then, just as they pass through the entrance they are SUDDENLY ATTACKED by a HANDFUL OF MEN who appear from behind the town walls. The Raiders hardly have time to defend themselves and are BRUTALLY CUT DOWN.

Exhausted, Kane barely notices as these rebel fighters approach him. At their head is the young man from the bar - TELFORD.

Telford hurries towards Kane even as Kane begins to falter and drop back down to his knees.

FADE TO BLACK:

86

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

86

Rising up from his darkness he hears the VOICE first. An old woman's voice, incanting in an ancient tongue. Maybe Celtic maybe older even than that.

OLD WOMAN O/S
(in Celtic)
A elfyntodd dwyr sinddyn duw
cerrig yr fferllurig nwyn;
os syriaeth ech saffaer tu
fewr echlyn mor, necrombor llun

KANE slowly opens his eyes to see - by the light of a flickering fire - an ANCIENT CRONE peering down at him and anointing him with liniments.

TELFORD O/S
(hushed whisper)
He was a murderer, I know, but
don't we need someone like him?

ANOTHER VOICE O/S
You said he killed his own
brother.

Huge SHADOWS of other people flicker against the ceiling of the CAVE he is in. The whole place is lit by fires and burning brands.

TELFORD O/S
I do not *know* that. It was just a
rumor aboard the ship.

Beyond the old woman stands TELFORD and a DOZEN OF HIS COMRADES. All serious looking men. Exhausted, battle weary soldiers, talking quietly.

KANE
(to the Crone)
Keep your pagan magic away from
me.

The wounds on Kane's wrists and feet have been bound with leaves and healing pastes.

OLD WOMAN
(to Kane)
My pagan magic is more ancient
than your Christian god.

KANE

It is evil, witch.

OLD WOMAN

Not all witches are evil. And there are those who name you evil Kane. You who have one foot in the realm of the dead now. Did you cross over? What did you see?

He doesn't reply.

OLD WOMAN

Your eyes see into the shadows now.

KANE

What riddles do you speak?

OLD WOMAN

You can see the demons that walk amongst us. Are *within* us. A gift and a curse.

KANE

Get away from me.

She slowly rises to her feet and shuffles away from him.

OLD WOMAN

You will meet your brother again soon enough, Solomon Kane.

KANE

What do you know of my brother?

OLD WOMAN

Is that not what you desire? To pay for you sins?

She passes Telford as he approaches.

OLD WOMAN

(to Telford)

I have done what you asked; he will be well now.

TELFORD

What do you see of our future?

OLD WOMAN

He will lead you into blood and darkness; are you ready for that?

She pulls his hand away from her and continues into the darkness.

CUT TO:

87 EXT. CAVE [ESTABLISHING] - DAWN 87

The entrance to THE CAVE is well hidden against a wooded hillside. Heavy rain and mist make it even harder to discern amongst the leaves and undergrowth.

CUT TO:

88 INT. CAVE - CONT 88

KANE climbs to his feet, ignoring TELFORD and the OTHERS. He stumbles a little in the half light but starts gathering up some supplies and weapons.

TELFORD

What are you doing?

A young fighter CALDICOTT - not much older than Samuel was - tries to help him but Kane shrugs his aid away.

KANE

Leaving.

CALDICOTT

Why?

TELFORD

You are barely healed and there are too few of us just yet.

As Kane reaches for swords and pistols, Telford stops him. Kane grabs Telford and pins him up against the cave wall. A blade on his throat in a flash.

Everyone tenses. Swords grabbed, people press in - unsure what to do.

KANE

I do not ask you to come with me.
I do not want you to.

A great brute of a man, MCNESS, speaks.

MCNESS

Aye, but we will. We're here to fight with you. Telford has promised us you will destroy this evil.

Kane looks at Telford.

TELFORD

That's why you're here; to kill Malachi?

KANE

Yes.

TELFORD

Then we can help you. Lead you to him. Help you find her.

After a long pause Kane lowers his blade and relaxes.

CUT TO:

89

INT. CAVE - LATER

89

Kane now sits with the others chewing on some bread.

KANE

Tell me what you know of this Malachi.

TELFORD

From his castle overlooking Axmouth he is...

KANE

Axmouth Castle?

Kane is shocked.

FLETCHER

Aye Axmouth; it's a foul, place. Do you know it?

KANE

Axmouth Castle was... my home. I have not seen it for many years but I...

(almost to himself)

Have I come so far simply to...simply to return home?

FLETCHER

It may have been your home but you can be sure it will not be like any home you remember. The village is naught but a ghost town, abandoned to the darkness. The land all about is frozen and dead.

KANE

How did this happen?

TELFORD

Malachi opened a doorway to the underworld. Fed with the blood of his victims he draws forth every evil thing to corrupt the land.

CALDICOTT

They say he sold his soul.

TELFORD

He's in league with a great evil now and builds an army to carry him to power. The demons he brings from hell use the bodies of the raiders.

KANE

I have seen them; coiled inside the soldiers like maggots in flesh.

There is a sudden DISTURBANCE by the entrance to the cave. Everyone reaches for their weapons.

VOICE O/S

Hail friends. Put down your arms.

MCNESS

Merton. Harris. Smith; how fares it?

TELFORD

What news brothers?

THREE MEN are entering. Shaking rain from their long coats, handing over weapons and talking with their comrades in low voices.

The leader of these new arrivals, MERTON, comes into the circle of firelight.

MERTON

We followed that last slave wagon the borders of Axmouth. I'm certain we can get through; there are so few guards now. His arrogance is such that he fears no attack. I...

Kane stares at Merton who sees this and offers his hand in greeting.

MERTON

Captain Kane, I'm glad to see you well again; I'm Jack Merton.

But WHAT KANE SEES is something beyond the human figure of Merton; he sees a shifting, shadowy creature within the human skin, peering out with fiery red eyes.

Holding his gaze steadily Kane rises and takes Merton's hand.

MERTON

What's wrong?

Then, without a word, Kane suddenly YANKS MERTON TOWARDS HIM, draws a pistol from his belt and FIRES INTO HIS CHEST.

The report of the gun is deafening and is followed by turmoil. Merton clutches his chest and sinks to his knees in agony.

McNess grabs Kane and hauls him backwards, throwing him to the ground.

Half a dozen swords are pointed at Kane's throat as Merton dies where he fell.

CALDICOTT

What have you done?!

OTHERS O/S

Kill him! Kill him now!

Fearlessly Kane pushes the threatening swords to one side and rises to his feet.

KANE

This man, Merton, he was possessed of Malachi's evil.

TELFORD

He was our friend; our comrade.

KANE

Could you not see what was within him? He was one of them.

MCNESS

I fought alongside him. He is no traitor.

Kane strides over to Merton's body.

KANE

He was a traitor to you.

Kane tears Merton's clothes open to reveal the SYMBOL OF THE RAIDERS BRANDED ONTO HIS FLESH. There is a stunned silence.

KANE

Your friend died long ago but his
flesh was being used. You could
not have known.

CALDICOTT

How did you know?

KANE

I can see them. As clear as you
are to me now, I can see the evil
inside them.

TELFORD

All that we planned is known by
our enemy.

FLETCHER

Then we have lost. How can we
fight this power?

Kane surveys the men before him. Though they are fierce
and determined, they are really little more than farmers
and peasants. And now they are confused and nervous.

But Kane alone is undaunted.

KANE

Gather your weapons.

FLETCHER

We are not ready.

KANE

Neither are they.

MCNESS

We are too few.

KANE

I have taken cities with fewer.
Telford, tell them, you know it
is true.
Gather your weapons; we ride out
now.

MIX TO:

Heavy, dark rain clouds hang low over the valley. There is
no life here. The whole world seems trapped in the iron
fist of mid-winter and permanent twilight. Freezing rain
lashes down. In Kane's memory this may once have been rich
in life and joy but now it is a black, skeletal place.

In the crook of the valley a SMALL TOWN lies silent. And in the distance, on a hill, is the grey, glowering form of AXMOUTH CASTLE. Brooding over the whole valley. Beyond the castle, the sea crashes restlessly in the harbour.

The only sign of life is a SMALL GROUP OF RAIDERS returning to the castle with a WAGON OF CAPTIVES. Tiny against the landscape, they pass a sentry post just outside the village.

CUT TO:

91 EXT. VILLAGE GUARD POST - CONT

91

TWO of MALACHI'S RAIDERS, bundled up against the cold, stand guard by a low wall. They wave the approaching Raiders and their wagon full of captives through.

SENTRY RAIDER
Any trouble?

WAGON LEADER
There is no fight in these people.

SENTRY RAIDER
Do not be so certain of that.

The sentry throws back his hood - it is KANE dressed as a Raider. He draws two pistols and shoots the leader of the wagon raiders.

Instantly TELFORD, MCNESS, SMITH, FLETCHER, HARRIS, CALDICOTT and five others - BRADFORD, COOPER, HAWKSTONE, GILLIGAN and SOFTLEY - rise up from behind the low walls and undergrowth. With pistols flaring and swords swinging they engage the remaining FOUR WAGON RAIDERS. Quickly overwhelming them.

McNess, preferring a CUDGEL to anything more subtle batters one to a screaming, bloody death before beginning to strip him of his clothes.

MCNESS
Do we really have to wear these?
They stink. These men were
little were animals.

FLETCHER
McNess is an animal already.

KANE
They were like you once,
remember.

As Kane surveys the dead the CAPTIVES IN THE CAGED WAGON begin to scream for help. Arms outstretched, begging for mercy.

CALDICOTT hurries to unlock the cage. Kane slams the door closed again.

CALDICOTT
You won't free them?

TELFORD
We must let them go.

KANE
A party of Raiders returning without prisoners? We will arouse suspicion.
(to the prisoners)
You have suffered but find strength for just a little longer. We will put an end to this horror.

CUT TO:

92

EXT. APPROACH TO THE CASTLE - LATER

92

Heavy rain and thick mist make the going difficult as KANE and his MEN, dressed as a raiding party, slowly approach the ominous and intimidating entrance to the castle. There are SIX RAIDERS, as before - the others are now within the slave cage itself hiding silently amongst the other captives.

KANE and TELFORD are taking the lead. Telford stares up at the imposing castle.

TELFORD
(whispering)
Your childhood was here? That explains a great deal.

KANE
It was different back then but never a very happy place, even when my father was Lord.

So near to the castle entrance now. Too late to turn back as the DOZEN GUARDS by the PORTCULLIS GATE see them approaching.

MCNESS
We can take these easily.

KANE

We want is to get inside the gates, not start a battle outside which we cannot win. Keep your mouth shut and your head down.

They approach, heads bent low, slave cage full of prisoners.

93 EXT. CASTLE GATES - CONT

93

At an agonizing crawl, Kane and his comrades pass by the castle guards. These Raiders are different from the others: less human, even more corrupt and misshapen.

As Kane looks at them he sees the evil within, shining through their eyes. He can almost feel them staring back into his own soul.

McNess and Fletcher have hands poised over their pistols.

With every step Kane feels they'll be discovered and attacked but they are not.

The PORTCULLIS GATE IS RAISED without a question and they are allowed into the inner courtyard.

94 EXT. INNER COURTYARD - CONT

94

The PORTCULLIS is lowered behind them with a rattle of CHAINS as they enter the DESERTED COURTYARD.

A LONE GUARD waves their wagon over to the dark entrance to the castle dungeons. It is eerily silent now apart from the rattle and slap of the horse and wagon on the cobblestones.

Kane looks around, the first time he's been home for so many years.

KANE

(quietly, to himself)
I remember it. My home.

FLETCHER

Malachi's lair is in the Great Hall.

KANE

(indicating)
It is that way, then.

Suddenly KANE SEES A SMALL FIGURE looking down on them from a balcony window. It is THE WITCH who slaughtered the village. She grins at him with her pointed, crooked teeth showing and then darts away.

TELFORD
(seeing the Witch)
Kane...

KANE
I know. Ready?

Kane draws his swords just as the courtyard is suddenly FILLED WITH GUARDS rushing towards them.

Striding amongst them comes the OVERLORD carrying his huge broadsword with him. He lunges for SMITH and HAWKSTONE. They attack him but he is swift and deadly. Their blows are deflected with ease and both are cut down.

The Overlord turns his attention to GILLIGAN and the youth, CALDICOTT. KANE sees this and charges through the fray.

As the Overlord sweeps down a killing blow on Caldicott Kane brings his two blades together to block it.

KANE
(to Caldicott)
Run; you cannot win this.

The Overlord shoves Kane's blades aside and returns with a flurry of blows from his own weapon. He is incredibly swift, slashing at Kane's arm and leg.

Kane stumbles and slips to the ground, just rolling away from a killing blow to his head.

TELFORD
This way men!

Telford leads his men into the castle itself, finding cover inside. The guards follow them.

Kane and the Overlord close on each other again.

Both are well matched but the Kane is being forced back with each step.

Kane manages a slashing cut across the Rider's body but it draws no blood and seems to make little difference to him.

Kane knows he is in trouble now and is looking around now, trying to find a way out. He ducks a low blow and makes a dash for a low wall. He dives over and finds himself tumbling down some STONE STEPS leading to an OPEN DOORWAY.

CUT TO:

95 INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - CONT 95

KANE dashes through the open doorway, slamming and barring the door behind him and then sprints down the narrow corridors. He's looking around him, moving fast, trying to get his bearings after all these years.

96 INT. OTHER CORRIDORS - CONT 96

Ducking down side entrances and other passageways until the sound of combat and pursuit are far behind.

He stops for a moment and gains his breath. Then he HEARS A SOUND. Not combat; something else... something plaintiff and desperate; the sound of prisoners.

KANE
The dungeons.

CUT TO:

97 INT. DUNGEONS - CONT 97

KANE, alone, peers out from the shadows and down a long, low roofed hallway into the dungeons. He's trying to remember where to go, making several false turns through doorways and down steps.

The SUDDEN SOUND of running feet and shouted instructions force him to take a side route and scurry down some stairs into the darker levels.

98 INT. LOWER LEVEL DUNGEONS - CONT 98

MOANS and CRIES of pain and anguish emanate from the tiny cells. Water runs down the walls mingling with effluent and other wastes. It is foul.

Kane peers through each tiny doorway portal looking for Meredith.

KANE
Meredith?

Suddenly a GUARD APPEARS FROM AROUND A CORNER. KANE is on him in an instant, blades flashing across his throat. Blood sprays a nearby wall.

HE GRABS THE HEAVY KEYS from the dead man's belt and begins to unlock the doors.

The CAPTIVES inside cower away from this crazed and bloodied man who suddenly appears before them.

KANE

You are free! Run! Go! Go now.

He opens every door he can, heedless of the noise now. But none of the prisoners are Meredith. He grabs one of them.

KANE

Where are the others? Is this all of you? Meredith?!

He shoves the picture locket into the prisoner's face.

KANE

Did you see here? Where is she?

PRISONER

I do not know Sir. Please. I do not know.

Kane flings open all the doors he can find and then finally comes to THE LAST CELL IN THE BLOCK. At first it appears dark and empty. He turns away, ready to move on but he hears a cough and notices a movement in the shadows.

He steps into the cell...

99

INT. CELL - CONT

99

There is a WIZENED OLD MAN lying on a bed of filthy wet straw. Kane approaches him.

KANE

You are free. Quickly; leave this place.

The old man simply stares at him. His breath wheezing slowly from his open, ragged mouth. He hardly seems well enough to move.

KANE

If you don't want your last days to be spent here you must leave now, old man.

OLD MAN

I cannot leave.

KANE

Let me help you then.

Despite his urgency Kane kneels to help him but realizes that HE IS CHAINED TO THE WALL.

KANE

Why are you chained here?

OLD MAN
For my sins. I cannot leave.

KANE
I think, perhaps, I can break
these chains.

Kane draws a pistol.

OLD MAN
Even without these chains I would
stay.

KANE
Dear God why?

OLD MAN
It is my home.

KANE
Your home? This place is no one's
home.

OLD MAN
It was mine once.

Kane suddenly stops and stares hard at the old man. He moves to see him from a better angle, to allow some light to fall on his face. Kane is incredulous.

KANE
Father?

Now the old man regards Kane with the same astonishment.

OLD MAN
Solomon?

The old man can hardly form words. His eyes fill with tears.

OLD MAN
I... I thought you lost to me
forever.

He reaches out a shaking hand to touch the face of his long-lost son.

OLD MAN
You were just a boy when...

Kane begins to tear at the chains. Hauling on them with all his might but making no difference.

FATHER KANE

You will never break these chains; they are forged from dark magic as much as metal.

KANE

Tell me then how can I free you?

FATHER KANE

You cannot free me. Do not try.

Kane's father coughs. His weak body wracked with spasms of pain. Kane cradles his father in his arms.

KANE

I have so much shame for what I did. I never meant for Marcus to fall...I never meant for him to die.

FATHER KANE

Die? He did not die Solomon. He survived.

KANE

Marcus lives? I spent all these thinking I had killed my own brother.

FATHER KANE

He has a life still; if you can call it life.

KANE

What do you mean?

FATHER KANE

He was so badly injured by the fall but he did not die. Alive in a way; his body did not die but his mind, his soul, were lost and no surgeons or priests could help. And so... so... I brought the sorcerer here.

KANE

Malachi? You brought him?

FATHER KANE

I sought him out and he came with promises of power and healing. I offered him everything I had, just to bring Marcus back to me. I couldn't lose both my sons.

The old man takes a pause now. He hardly has the strength to continue.

Kane can hear the noise outside growing. Fleeing prisoners and the shouts of guards. He knows time is running out.

FATHER KANE

And he did Solomon; Using his mirrors and magic, Malachi reached into the darkness and brought Marcus back. But he was changed; he had such darkness, such violence and power. He spoke using others, possessing them, forcing them to his way. His face was so damaged by the fall; he hid himself behind his mask and served only the will of the sorcerer. For all these years we lived in fear of him and Malachi.

KANE

That masked rider... he is... my brother?

FATHER KANE

Aye; That creature is Marcus or once was. I don't believe there is anything of my son there now. It is a demon wearing the flesh of your brother, nothing more. Malachi used my son to open a way for his creatures to come through.

Another coughing spasm takes the old man. When he recovers he can hardly speak.

FATHER KANE

Now you must do one thing for me...

KANE

Just ask it and it will be done.

FATHER KANE

End my life.

KANE

What? No!

FATHER KANE

I invited the sorcerer in. While I'm alive that freedom holds. That is why I am kept thus. He will never let me die. Kill me and you may hope to drive him from this land.

KANE

Father I...

FATHER KANE

Do it! We both have our sins to answer for. I am ready to answer for mine now.

Kane draws his pistol. He is in a world of confusion and pain. The old man grabs Kane's shaking hand and holds the pistol to his own temple.

FATHER KANE

Free Marcus from his slavery.

They hold each other's gaze for a moment and then Kane PULLS THE TRIGGER.

CUT TO:

100 INT. CASTLE CORRIDORS - DAY

100

KANE strides down the wide stone corridor, undaunted and unafraid now. He knows where he is going. There are SEVERAL DEAD GUARDS lying on the floor behind him.

KANE

Brother!! BROTHER!!

Closed double doors to the GREAT HALL are at the end of the long hallway ahead of him.

Then, off to one side down another long wide hallway, he HEARS FIGHTING.

Looking down he sees TELFORD, MCNESS, FLETCHER and just two others fighting desperately against a horde of the guards. They are bloodied and struggling; soon to be overwhelmed but fighting onwards.

FLETCHER SCREAMS in agony as he is cut down by the hideously misshapen creatures that protect this place. Telford sees Kane at the other end of the corridor.

TELFORD

Kane! For God's sake, help us!

ANGLE ON KANE:

Kane runs to help them. Both pistols firing he takes down two of the enemy and then engages with his two blades.

The old Kane of speed and savagery is fully returned as he turns and thrusts.

KANE

Is this all of you?

TELFORD

Caldicott is alive perhaps, and
Smith but the others...no.

Fast and lethal as he is, there are simply too many guards.
The survivors are driven back into the main corridor before
the doors to the Great Hall.

Though they snarl and cackle they keep their distance,
rightly nervous of him.

KANE

My father is dead! I am the Lord
of this castle now; you have no
claim here!

Behind him, the doors to the Great Hall swing slowly open.

THE OVERLORD stands silently, sword in hand. Even the
misshapen guards fall silent.

Kane turns.

KANE

(quietly)

Brother...

(to Telford, urgently)

Free any other captives, get them
away from here. The girl from my
locket, Meredith, find her, free
her.

TELFORD

Kane...

KANE

Do as I order!

TELFORD

What of you?

KANE

You will not see me again; I have
to pay for my sins.

Telford, McNess and the two others make a sudden break
through the guards who make no attempt to follow - all eyes
are on Kane and their Master.

KANE

I do know you brother.

No reply from the silent figure.

KANE

I know you can speak. Again I ask; do you know me brother?

Then, suddenly, ALL THE GUARDS SPEAK AS ONE - with the voice of the MARCUS.

GUARDS/MARCUS

You are my enemy.

Kane spins to confront them but they do not move. He turns back to Marcus and advances still. Though he seems almost nervous. His hand on the hilt of his sword shakes so slightly. The beads of sweat on his brow catch the torchlight from the walls and each step taking him ever nearer to his true fate.

KANE

I am not your enemy. The fiend who did this to you is our enemy.

Without another word Kane's brother steps back into the great hall and is swallowed by the shadows.

Kane cautiously, follows.

101 INT. GREAT HALL - CONT

101

KANE stands in the flickering firelight of the great hall. Drapes cover the windows, but there is plenty of light from the candles and burning brands that fill the space.

Hanging from the walls and standing on plinths around the floors are LARGE BLACK MIRRORS. They all have elaborate etchings on the glass; writing in arcane languages and symbols. Very much like those on Kane's own body.

With his vision, he can see the demonic creatures writhing and twisting within their glass prisons. They are pressing up against the surface, clearly trapped but eager to be free.

The DOORS SLAM CLOSED behind Kane. He is trapped.

There is VAST FLAT STONE ALTAR LIKE A WHEEL in the centre of the hall where THE CLOAKED FIGURE OF A MAN is crouched over the BODIES tied down to the stone. The shadows seem to be drawn to him, a darkness that clings and circles about him. There's the GLINT of A KNIFE in his hand.

KANE

Malachi!!

The SORCERER turns to Kane. He speak with surpassing smoothness - his voice is velvet yet mocking, seductive and powerful.

MALACHI

Welcome home Solomon. Do you like what I have done with the place?

KANE

It will look better with your head on a spike over the gates.

Malachi suddenly slips away from the altar and VANISHES INTO THE SHADOWS.

Kane, swords ready, waits for a sudden attack but none comes. Nervously he approaches the altar.

Channels have been cut into the stone to allow their blood to flow into a DEEP WELL that seems to have somehow grown from the foundation stones. A pulsing sound, like a giant heartbeat, comes from within - along with the sounds of souls in tormented agony. The place is crusted with the blood of hundreds. Body parts and corpses are hanging from the walls amongst demonic symbols and writings.

KANE

Dear god, how could this happen?

Then he sees MOVEMENT ON THE ALTAR. A victim is still alive. He hurries to help them and sees...

...it is MEREDITH.

She is barely conscious; battered and bloody. Her clothes are torn, her ankles and wrists tied down amongst the other victims.

KANE

Thank God. Meredith?

She opens her eyes.

MEREDITH

I prayed you would come for me.

KANE

I swore I would.

He cuts one hand free and starts on the other when...

...he suddenly winces in PAIN as A SWORD BLADE pierces through his shoulder.

MEREDITH

Solomon!

The blade is yanked out again roughly. Kane can hardly get his breath through the pain as he turns and sees his BROTHER.

ANOTHER DEADLY BLOW SWEEPS IN. Instinctively he raises his own weapon and blocks the strike but it sends him reeling backwards.

Meredith desperately unties her other bonds.

MARCUS advances mercilessly as Kane limps away.

KANE

Marcus... listen; if you can hear me...Brother! You do not have to do this...

Marcus attacks furiously, stabbing and slashing at Kane who defends himself and backs away.

KANE

Where is your master? Is he hiding in the shadows?
(shouting out)
Is this how you pay for your power? With the blood of innocents?

Malachi's voice echoes through the great hall.

MALACHI O/S

All power is paid for with the blood of innocents. You know that better than any.

The figure of MALACHI, the SORCERER, appears at the end of the hall. Swathed in dark cloth and drawing the shadows with him as he moves.

MALACHI

See who is here for you Kane.

Malachi pulls back a huge cloth that covers a VAST BLACK MIRROR. Four times the height of a man, it too is etched in the spells and symbols of the others. But it is what is waiting inside that takes Kane's breath...

A DEMON is there. Huge but trapped behind the magical surface of the mirror; it is like a trapped beast, pushing at the surface that bulges and ripples, barely holding back its enormous power.

MALACHI

This demon will not fail to take your soul back to Hell.
And just a little more blood Kane, and it will be free.

Kane is frightened now. Desperate. He turns back to Marcus, urgently.

KANE

Our father is dead! Malachi has no control here any more.

MALACHI O/S

Remember Solomon, your brother is the heir. And I am his master.

His brother closes on Kane again but now Kane draws his second sword and fights back with everything he has.

ON MEREDITH:

MEREDITH HAS FREED HERSELF and scrambles away, watching in horror as events unfold.

ON KANE:

Kane backing away from Marcus down a corridor of BLACK MIRRORS. He ducks beneath a devastating roundhouse sword swing that shatters a BLACK MIRROR, sending shards everywhere. The broken demon within screams as it vanishes.

MALACHI O/S

The mirrors! No!

ON MEREDITH:

She stumbles to the doors of the hall. She pulls it open only to reveal the horde of GUARDS pressing in. The leaders of the Guards hold the SEVERED HEADS of TELFORD, McNESS and the others before them.

Meredith screams and retreats.

ON KANE: CORRIDOR OF MIRRORS

Marcus swings his massive sword back and forth at Kane who ducks and steps back each time. And each time another mirror smashes, sending another demon back to hell.

Then suddenly Kane thrusts hard with his own swords penetrating his brother's flesh. But no blood comes out and the warrior shows no sign of his injury.

Marcus grabs Kane and draws him close, into a deadly embrace. The life is slowly squeezed from him.

Up close, Kane can hear his brother's rattling breath and strange rasping sounds coming from behind the mask.

KANE

Forgive me for what I did to you.

Kane struggles against the impossible strength of his brother, scrabbling at his armour and finally getting a hand to his mask...

KANE

I would see your face one last
time brother.

As he TEARS THE MASK AWAY Marcus HURLS Kane away.

Kane falls to his knees but looks up at his brother,
horrified at what he sees.

KANE

My god...

It is clear that his brother is nothing more than an
animated corpse. One side of his face is smashed in and his
jaw is mostly torn away. A LIDLESS EYEBALL stares out from
a disfigured and distorted face. The flesh is white and
bloodless with tears in the skin stitched and poorly
repaired.

KANE

(yelling to Malachi)

What have you done to him?!

(to Marcus)

Brother please, let me kill this
man who has cursed you. I will
lay your soul to rest.

Is there just a flicker of something human within Marcus...
Slowly, lowers his sword and relaxes his fighting stance...
But Malachi smothers it quickly.

MALACHI

Kill him slave! I command you. I
order the demon within you;
destroy him.

Almost involuntarily Marcus begins to surge towards Kane
again.

As the ferocious sword blow sweeps down, Kane grabs a tall,
flaming torch and drives it into Marcus's chest. With all
his own weight behind it Marcus stops dead.

The flaming brand burst on his clothing, igniting him in
seconds. Soon MARCUS IS ENGULFED IN FIRE.

BUT IT DOES NOT STOP HIM.

The REAPER is pushing ever harder against his mirror prison
walls. With every violent blow on the glass it bulges out
more every time.

ANGLE ON MEREDITH:

She is backing away from the guards as they close in on
her... right into MALACHI. He sweeps her into his cloaked
arms...muffling her screams.

MEREDITH

Solomon!

MALACHI

(to Meredith)

Just a little more blood.

ANGLE ON KANE:

But Kane sees this.

KANE

No! Meredith!

KANE is focused on Meredith but just in time he realises that Marcus is right behind him. His sword arcs down towards Kane who dodges out of the way. Kane parries more blows as the burning man presses towards him.

ON MEREDITH:

Malachi is dragging Meredith towards the Reaper's giant mirror. She's struggling and fighting him hard.

ON KANE:

Kane once again presses in on Marcus, relentlessly forcing him back towards the sacrificial table.

The room is beginning to ignite now, drapes and fabric flare up. Tables and chairs catch as the two fight.

ON MEREDITH:

Malachi finally overpowers Meredith. He takes her arm and slashes the flesh with his knife.

Her blood splashes onto the Reaper's mirror. Immediately it begins to MELT THROUGH THE GLASS, creating an opening. The BEAST BEGINS TO SLOWLY TEAR OPEN the rent in the glass.

ON KANE:

Kane now presses hard on the weakening Marcus. He's cutting and slicing at him and smashing each and every mirror they pass. The howls of the demons fading within.

Kane sees the Reaper tearing through the glass. The SOUND of it like a SHRIEKING WIND filling the hall. The flames all around being sucked towards it like a vacuum.

Finally Marcus sinks to his knees. Through the fire that burns him, stares at Kane. Marcus speaks in his faint, weak voice.

MARCUS

Kill me Solomon; End my torture.
I beg you.

Kane draws his strength together and finally sees something akin to recognition in his brother's eyes.

KANE

Rest in peace brother.

KANE SLICES MARCUS'S HEAD FROM HIS SHOULDERS. The DEMON that possessed his body SQUIRMS OUT OF THE RAGGED HOLE IN HIS NECK. Kane can see it clearly.

KANE

These eyes of mine see you for
what you are.

He stabs the demon and it dies, screeching, beneath his twisting blade.

MALACHI

No!

INSTANTLY ALL THE GUARDS AND RAIDERS BEGIN TO FALTER and collapse as the demonic power that drives them fades.

Kane charges forward to confront Malachi now. Behind him the Reaper in the mirror is beginning to enter this world.

Malachi pulls Meredith to him, knife to her throat. Kane stops dead.

MALACHI

This is how the boy died. I saw
that through your brother's eyes.
You begged for his life but did
nothing.

KANE

I will not let it happen again.

MALACHI

You have no choice. Your soul is
forfeit. I called Him here to
claim you.

KANE

Let her go.

MALACHI

I think, just one more drop of
blood will do it.

KANE

Stop.

Kane lowers his swords to the ground.

MEREDITH
Kill him Solomon.

KANE
Let her go.

MALACHI
Why do you care for her? You came here to save your soul.

KANE
She is my soul.

Kane whips out the FLINTLOCK PISTOL that has been tucked into his belt, levels it at Malachi and fires.

The bullets hits him square between the eyes, SPLATTERING blood and gore onto the mirror.

Meredith twists round and violently shoves Malachi backwards and he falls INTO THE GLASS, tumbling backwards in the black void.

Instantly the REAPER is utterly free to step through into this realm. Its cloven foot steps through the glass and crashes onto the stone castle floor. The shrieking wind rises in tone.

Kane dashes forward and pulls Meredith to safety, backing away from the DEMON as it pulls itself into their world and draws itself fully upright before them.

They stand, rooted to the spot. Meredith, terrified but Kane fearless and unwavering before it.

MEREDITH
Dear God, what will we do,
Solomon?! Please! We must run!

KANE
No. Wait. Trust me.

And even as the terrifying, predatory face of the Reaper glares down at them, a thousand cracks begin to appear on it. Seconds later the DEMON SHATTERS, its myriad pieces are sucked back into the black mirror surface and then that too, folds and bends back in on itself until it fades to a singularity and then vanishes. Nothing but the ornate frame remains.

The shrieking wind fades to an echo in the great hall as Kane folds Meredith into his arms. Finally she looks up at him.

MEREDITH

How did you know?

KANE

Your father; told me that if I saved you my soul would be redeemed. I believed him.

FADE TO BLACK:

102 EXT. HEADLAND - SUNSET

102

KANE, his wounds bandaged and his clothes repaired, bows his head in prayer as he kneels before TWO FRESH GRAVES on the windswept cliff top overlooking the endless expanse of ocean. The last resting place of his Father and Brother.

Finally he stands and reaches for the TRAVEL BAGS that are nearby. A horse, ready for travel, is grazing calmly nearby. Behind the him the CASTLE that was his home dominates the horizon. A figure is racing towards him.

MEREDITH

Solomon!

He turns to her and waits silently as she approaches.

MEREDITH

Solomon, where are you going? I don't understand why you're leaving.

KANE

I'm sorry.

MEREDITH

But you won; you defeated them.
(still nothing from him)
This is your home.

KANE

It was once.

MEREDITH

It can be again. We can make it a home together.

Kane looks down the cliff to the sea and the jagged rocks below.

KANE

This is where my brother fell.
(a beat)
What I did to Marcus here, began this journey.

MEREDITH

Your journey is over Solomon.

KANE

It's not over. Not yet.

(a beat)

All my travels, the things I've seen, the things I've *done*... through this I have found my purpose. I know why I am here.

She doesn't understand. She doesn't want to. Kane comes close to her now.

KANE

There are evil creatures walking this earth, Meredith. They bring such pain and suffering and there was never a man who could fight them. But I can. I can. It is my gift and I will hunt them down and send each and every one back to hell.

Kane looks down at Meredith. For a brief moment there is a longing in his eyes, she sees this and moves closer.

MEREDITH

Please don't go.

Gently he pulls away.

KANE

I have to.
One day I promise I'll come home again but not until my work is done.

He turns from her and slings his bags onto the horse. His swords and brace of pistols are visible now as he pulls himself up onto the saddle.

Without looking back he rides away.

Meredith watches for a long time, until Kane is lost against the darkening horizon.

FADE TO BLACK.

CREDITS ROLL.