

"DRAGONSLAYER"

Screenplay by

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**SHOOTING DRAFT**

**FADE IN:**

**CASTLE - NIGHT**

at  
stonework  
up the  
to  
light

Now comes the moon riding over the horizon. Upon a hill  
the edge of the wood squats a castle, its crude  
bathed in cold silvery light. Queer carvings and runes  
decorate the ponderous gate. Heavy vines are climbing  
walls. The castle is old, its unfamiliar form testament  
an ancient mind and an ancient craft. Flickering candle  
dances on a leaded windowpane.

arched  
with

Inside, the corridors are dark and silent. Under low  
ceilings the uneven floors are paved with stone blocks.  
Perched over lintels and crouched in niches are icons  
strange animal heads.

**HODGE**

vegetables  
flickering  
gently.

A sleep on a straw palette in a room strewn with  
and crockery is Hodge, a wrinkled old retainer. A  
candle and empty jug are beside the bed. He is snoring

**CONJURING ROOM**

stuffed  
glass  
An

This circular chamber at the heart of the castle is  
with parchments, scrolls, dusty books, bronze braziers,  
retorts, chemical salts, birds both stuffed and caged.

In iron candelabra stands on a work table, tapers burning.  
no, the soft glow it seems that the room is unoccupied, but  
for moving in the background is a shadowy figure, preparing  
a magical deed. Feet are positioned carefully within a  
pentagram chiseled into the floor. A scroll is  
consulted; up comes an arm and a voice blurts out:

**VOICE**

Omnia in duos: Duo in Unum: Unus in  
Nihil: Haec nec Quattuor nec Omnia  
nec Duo nec Unus nec Nihil Sunt.

Nothing happens.

**VOICE**

Come on, candles, out!

much as But the little flames stand at attention without so  
a tremble.

**VOICE**

In Volunta Divina et Verbum Magi:  
Lux! Exstinguat!

forward It's no use. There is a sigh and the figure moves  
face into the light. Revealed in the glow is the discouraged  
of Galen Bradwardyn, sorcerer's apprentice.

**TOWER**

circular Carrying the candelabra, the youth trudges up a  
staircase.

**TURRET**

the The highest point of the castle is a turret, open to  
old stars and the night air. Here, more magic is afoot. An  
from a enchanter, Ulrich, Magister Ipsissimus, pours water  
at silver ewer into a stone bowl. As the surface ripples  
disappear he leans forward and gazes into the pool. All

and  
from  
deepens as  
in  
the

once his face hardens as the distant sounds of screams  
thunder reach his ears. Lights and shadows, reflected  
within the basin, play across his face. His frown  
the sound of his own voice comes to him from the vision  
the water -- Draco draconis -- suddenly squelched by  
roar of flame and an ugly snarl.

holds

At that moment Galen reaches the top of the steps and  
up the candelabra.

**GALEN**

Vide, Magister. There's something  
wrong.

of the  
aback

Ulrich, startled from his trance, slaps the water out  
basin and turns to confront his student. Galen is taken  
by the old man's grim countenance.

**GALEN**

What's the matter? What's happened?

**ULRICH**

I've just seen something. Something  
of consequence to you.

**GALEN**

To me?

**ULRICH**

(calm)  
Yes. My own death.

extinguish

With a distracted gesture he causes the flames to  
themselves.

**ULRICH**

Perhaps we had better hasten your  
training.

**CUT TO:**

**BARNYARD - DAY**

and  
morning  
toward

Outside the castle wall Hodge is feeding the chickens  
ducks. He straightens up and squints through the early  
mists. On a distant hillock two figures are moving  
the woods.

**ULRICH AND GALEN**

guides  
into the

Hobbling slowly with the aid of a pair of canes, Ulrich  
his pupil across a wooden bridge and along a stream  
forest.

**ULRICH**

(stern and troubled)

This wood, these leaves, the birds,  
the very dome of heaven, once they  
all rang with one great chord: and  
philosophers like me kept it all in  
tune. Now, new voices are singing  
new songs.

(sharply)

Have you mastered the threefold  
transmutation?

**GALEN**

Of course.

**ULRICH**

(skeptical)

You have?

**GALEN**

Well, almost.

**ULRICH**

It's very difficult. Have you  
committed to memory undying the Codex  
de Profundis?

**GALEN**

(a shrug)

The first two chapters.

**ULRICH**

It's long. And what about the Ritual  
of Banishment as prescribed by my  
late master Balisarius?

**GALEN**

To tell the truth, I haven't dared try it. What's the point, anyway?

**ULRICH**

The point? The point is you don't know it, and you're no magician without it. It was my hope to school you, to mold your faculties and wits... I still believe you have some talent. Somewhere.

**GALEN**

I hate books. I hate drill. I want a real task.

**ULRICH**

There's no time now. When I'm gone, half the powers in the universe will vanish with me. And what's the use of a few lingering skills if they're left in the hands of a child?

(pause)

Listen!

**GALEN**

I don't hear anything.

Ulrich gauges the young man standing before him and makes a silver chain with an amulet dangling from it. He drapes it around Galen's neck.

**ULRICH**

Here, wear this.

Galen instinctively wraps his hand around the jewel. He cocks an ear.

**GALEN**

Voices, singing on the road.

He hastens forward to a promontory, eager to have a look. Ulrich does not follow. Instead, doffing his cloak, he whirls

the

it before him, where it magically floats a few feet off ground. Awkwardly, the old man clammers aboard.

**GALEN**

I don't see anything.

over

He turns back, but the wizard is gone. A shadow falls him. He looks up. There, two hundred feet above the tree tops his master is soaring on the wind.

tree

**AIRBORNE**

and

The old conjurer squints into the distance. Miles away far below a company of drab walkers winds along the of the forest. They are singing a mournful round.

margins

**GALEN**

He gawks skyward. Suddenly, the old man leans down and addresses him.

**ULRICH**

(a shout)

We have visitors!

**CUT TO:**

**ROTUNDA - NIGHT**

hall

Clustering together in the center of a wide reception is a contingent of weary peasants, awkward amidst the dusty rugs, drapes and heavy furniture. Their leader is a fineboned youth, not yet twenty. Like the others, he is uneasy; his name is Valerian. Hodge enters and sets a tray of mead before them. He leaves without a word. The visitors stare glumly at the refreshment, but are too timorous to go near it.

dusty

fineboned

his

before

glumly at

**CONJURING ROOM**

sorcerer  
hem

Galen helps Ulrich prepare for the audience. The  
peers at himself in a full-length mirror, adjusting the  
of a black robe.

**ULRICH**

Looks forbidding enough, don't you  
think?

**GALEN**

Here are your sticks.

**ULRICH**

No -- they'll think me infirm. You  
know, Balisarius wore this whenever  
he changed lead into gold. He could  
really do that, you know. I never  
could. Too bad -- you'd stand to  
inherit some real wealth.

**GALEN**

You're in a morbid frame of mind.  
What's all this about dying? You  
don't even look sick.

**ULRICH**

(tying on a sash)  
You still wearing that amulet?  
(Galen nods)  
Good. Don't lose it. It still belongs  
to me.

onto

He backs away from the mirror and fits a silver coronet  
his head.

**ULRICH**

Now, adeptus minor, get yourself a  
handful of that sulphurous ash over  
there...

The sorcerer starts down a circular stone staircase.

**THE ROTUNDA**

Galen  
pressed  
Ulrich.

The visitors watch warily as a door swings open and  
makes his entrance, his face expressionless and hands  
together. He looks rather young to be the famous

wide. Galen allows a moment to go by, then throws his arms

Ka-whump! and Ulrich appears in the doorway in a smoky fireball. Alarmed, the visitors retreat.

**ULRICH**

Nunc habemus lux!

Pffst! around the room candles flare in their niches.

**ULRICH**

Et calor!

Ulrich  
toward  
In the fireplace, the birch logs are suddenly ablaze.  
totters to the hearth and extends long bony fingers  
the warmth.

**ULRICH**

Welcome to Cragganmore. I am Ulrich.  
Which one of you calls himself  
Valerian?

his  
The travelers are suitably dazzled by the magician's performance. The young leader of the party screws up  
courage and speaks.

**VALERIAN**

That would be me. We are here on  
behalf...

**ULRICH**

I know why you're here. You're a  
delegation from Urland, from beyond  
Dalvatia. Let's see the artifacts.

motions to  
over  
contents on  
The travelers exchange nervous glances. Valerian  
one of his companions. The man steps forward and hands  
a leather pouch. One by one, Valerian places the  
the table for Ulrich's inspection.

**VALERIAN**

A bone. Scorched. A rock, fire-  
blackened.

(pause)

Scales.

shimmering At this, Ulrich advances and closely examines three  
irridescent disks as big as saucers.

**ULRICH**

All right. How did you come by these?

**VALERIAN**

(proudly)

I found them. At the mouth of the  
lair.

**ULRICH**

(grim)

What else?

appears Valerian reaches under his jerkin and withdraws what  
to be a curved sword. He jabs it into the table.

**VALERIAN**

A claw.

**ULRICH**

That's no claw. It's a tooth. By the  
gods!

bleakly at He runs a finger along a serrated edge and gazes  
his visitors.

**ULRICH**

And you want me to do battle with  
that?

Valerian has lost all trace of timidity.

**VALERIAN**

Who else can we turn to? We all know  
what we're dealing with here. This  
is a basilicok.

(he takes a step  
forward)

A cockatrice.

(another step, bolder)

A dragon.

(he leans close to  
Ulrich)

This is no stag, no bear, no natural  
creature. This is one of your kind.  
And only a necromancer such as

yourself can rid us of it.

**ULRICH**

Did you try the Meredydd sisters?  
What about Rinbod? I've heard it  
said he killed a dragon once.

**VALERIAN**

They're all dead. You're the only  
one left.

With a sigh, Ulrich lowers himself into a chair. He  
rubs his withered legs and shakes his head.

**ULRICH**

It's a long way to Urland.

**VALERIAN**

Every quarter, upon the solstices  
and the equinoxes there's a new  
victim.

Greil, a grizzled peasant, speaks up.

**GREIL**

My daughter, for one.

**OTHER TRAVELERS**

My sister... cousins...

**ULRICH**

All women?

**VALERIAN**

Girls. Virgins, to be exact, chosen  
by lot.

and Galen edges over to the table and inspects the scales  
tooth.

**GALEN**

Master, don't you think --

**ULRICH**

Silence!

He broods for a long time.

**VALERIAN**

Are you afraid of dragons?

**ULRICH**

No. Sorcerers and dragons go back a long long time together. If it weren't for sorcerers, there wouldn't be any dragons.

(pause)

All right. I'll go.

**CUT TO:**

**COURTYARD - DAY**

grey  
box,  
crutches.  
The travelers are making ready for departure in the light of dawn. As Hodge stuffs provisions into a wicker Ulrich wraps padding on a newly fashioned pair of

**ULRICH**

I know of this dragon. Vermithrax Pejorative: she's four hundred years old. As far as I can tell she's the last of her kind. Very appropriate that I'm the one to finish her off, don't you think?

(he tries out the crutches)

There. Flatten the highest mountain. What say you, Galen?

(no answer)

Speak up.

(still no answer)

You, Hodge.

packing.  
Hodge mutters something inaudible and grimly keeps

**ULRICH**

(to Galen)

While I'm gone see you keep your nose in your books and your hands out of my reagents. Leave my instruments alone too.

master  
sullenly.  
Galen crouches against the castle wall; he regards his

**GALEN**

Look at yourself. How far will you get like that? A league, two leagues?

**ULRICH**

I'm not worried about the road.

**GALEN**

(sarcastic)

Why don't you wave your hands around and summon up a coach-and-four?

**ULRICH**

Don't mock me.

Galen gets up and calls out to the Urlanders.

**GALEN**

You pilgrims: You're used to lotteries. Why not draw straws to see who'll be first to carry ironshanks here.

This is too much for Hodge.

**HODGE**

Hold your tongue. If the master's got a mind to go, he'll go.

Galen approaches the old sorcerer.

**GALEN**

Send me. You're always saying I need seasoning. I need a test. Let me go.

**ULRICH**

You're not ready.

**GALEN**

I'm ready for anything.

**ULRICH**

(wan smile)

Don't be so hasty. Your time will come.

pack,  
The walkers are ready to set forth. Hodge picks up his steps forward and pulls open the great gate.

**HORSEMEN**

their  
step  
Three mounted men are outside the gate, helmets on heads, swords on the belts and longbows across their shoulders. They look formidable. The Urlanders take a backward.

**VALERIAN**

Tyrian!?

coat  
saddle.  
Tyrian is a lean, heavily bearded nobleman. There is a of arms on the shield strapped to the pommel of his

**TYRIAN**

(amiable)

Good morning, all.

**VALERIAN**

We're not afraid of you. Give us the road.

**TYRIAN**

Why, the road is yours. All the way to Urland. It's a long journey, isn't it? But when you're in search of a sorcerer, I suppose no distance is too great.

his  
arm.  
Sensing trouble, Galen moves forward. Ulrich touches

**ULRICH**

(under his breath)

Say nothing.

obeys.  
Hodge takes it upon himself to deal with the strangers.

**HODGE**

What do you want with us?

**TYRIAN**

Well, like my good friends here, I've come for a bit of black magic. No doubt you've heard of our troubles at home. This is Cragganmore, is it not?

**HODGE**

Aye, this be the place of Ulrich.

Tyrian dismounts and saunters up to the old magician.

**TYRIAN**

And here we have the mystical presence himself, no?

**HODGE**

You'd best keep your distance -- and your manners.

**TYRIAN**

If he's ready to lay a dragon in its grave, he's got nothing to fear from me.

(turns to the Urlanders)

I've no more love for that creature than you lot. Nor has the King. But, before you stir things up, don't you think it a good idea to see you've got the right man for the job?

**HODGE**

Aha -- it's a test you're looking for. We don't do tests.

**TYRIAN**

I'm sure you don't. They never do tests -- and not many real deeds either. Oh, conversation with your grandmother's shade in a darkened room, the odd love potion or two... but comes a doubter, well then, it's the wrong day, the planets are not aligned, the entrails aren't favorable, we don't do tests.

**VALERIAN**

We've got no doubts. We require no test.

**HODGE**

And you're not going to get one.

When Ulrich finally speaks, his voice is low and authoritative.

**ULRICH**

(to Galen)

Go to the conjuring room. The iron

box. Fetch me the dagger within.

Galen's eyes widen with alarm.

**ULRICH**

The dagger. Be quick.

at Galen dashes into the castle. Ulrich gazes almost shyly  
Tyrian.

**ULRICH**

You shall have your test.

### **CONJURING ROOM**

and Galen comes puffing up the steps, locates the iron box,  
flings it open. Amidst the tawdry paraphernalia of a  
covered professional magician is an ivory-handled dagger  
see with runic inscriptions. Galen eagerly examines it to  
handle, how the blade might twist aside or collapse into the  
but it is all too genuine. A murder weapon.

**ULRICH'S VOICE**

(impatient)

Where are you, boy? I'm waiting.

courtyard. Galen throws open a window and looks down into the  
He displays the dagger.

**GALEN**

Not this one, was it?

**ULRICH**

The very one. Let it fall.

it Galen hesitates, then tosses it. Tumbling end over end,  
hand arcs downward. The old conjurer calmly stretches out a  
Ulrich and plucks it neatly out of the air. Galen watches as  
exposing passes the weapon to Tyrian and strips back his robe  
the a bony chest. Galen knows what's coming. He rushes for

own  
slams  
climb

door. He's only a step away when it bangs shut of its  
accord. He sprints for a second exit. Whack! This door  
shut too. Locked in. Quick, back to the window and  
down the vine... Smack! the heavy shutters seal him in.

**ULRICH AND TYRIAN**

dagger

Ulrich takes Tyrian's arm and guides the point of the  
to his breastbone.

**ULRICH**

Vita regula, vita hieratica!

the  
muffled  
lips.

Everyone is filled with dread. Hodge is shaking. From  
castle come the rattling of shutters and Galen's  
cries. A sick sarcastic smile has crept over Tyrian's  
He tenses himself to thrust.

**ULRICH**

Go on. Don't worry, you can't hurt  
me.

**CONJURING ROOM**

in the  
grisly  
movement  
sorcerer  
moment,  
that  
fall in  
and  
horror.

Galen stops hammering and presses his face to a crack  
shutter. Below he can see the participants in this  
drama. He holds his breath. Tyrian makes a sudden  
and buries the blade in Ulrich's chest. But the  
stands unbent, seemingly unhurt. Then, after a long  
he slowly sags forward over the dagger and the hand  
holds it. Tyrian shrinks back and allows the body to  
a heap. Very quickly he remounts. In another moment he  
his companions are gone. The others are riveted in  
Hodge sinks to his knees and wails his grief.

the  
themselves

Galen turns away from the window and gazes blankly into  
gloomy conjuring room. Click! The doors unlatch  
and swing open.

**CUT TO:**

**FUNERAL PYRE - DAY**

world,  
chest.  
look on,  
the  
to  
producing an  
intense

Ulrich, principal magician and sorcerer of the western  
reposes on a hardwood pyre. His hands are folded on his  
His face is peaceful. While the visitors wordlessly  
Galen touches a burning brand to the kindling. At first  
fire catches normally enough, but when the flames start  
envelop the body they suddenly turn pale green,  
unearthly roar. The onlookers back away from the  
heat.

**GALEN**

back

The erstwhile apprentice stands his ground, blinking  
tears, his face weirdly illuminated by the fire.

**CUT TO:**

**CONJURING ROOM - DAY**

magical  
of  
bidding  
last  
Galen.  
jaw,

Galen sits alone amidst the museum-like collection of  
apparatus. He stares at the amulet, considering its  
significance. His reverie is interrupted by the murmur  
voices below. At the window he looks down to see Hodge  
farewell to the delegation from Urland. Valerian is the  
to leave. He pauses at the gate and glances up at  
Then he moves on. The young student of magic sets his  
suddenly filled with resolve.

man's  
and  
the  
cages  
owl.

Moving through the room, he busies himself with the old effects. He scoops up the loose books and parchments locks them into trunks. He drapes muslin cloths over alchemical devices. He sows a handful of salt over the pentagram inscribed in the floor. Finally, he opens the and releases the crow, the falcon, and the great horned owl.

#### **COURTYARD**

scraping  
remains of  
traveler's

Hodge is up on the burned out funeral pyre, anxiously ashes and small bones into a leather pouch -- the Ulrich. Up behind him comes Galen, now clad in a cloak, with a pack on his back and a staff in his hand.

#### **GALEN**

Hodge -- what are you doing?

Hodge quickly conceals the pouch.

#### **HODGE**

Just making my farewell, thank you very much.

Galen  
oaken

He quickly climbs down, picks up his pack and follows out through the gate. As the door is pushed shut a huge timber falls into place, barring the castle against the uninvited.

#### **CUT TO:**

#### **HILLTOP - DAY**

turn  
hilltop  
of the

Galen and Hodge labor to the crest of a grassy hill and to look back across a wide valley. There on another on the far side sits Cragganmore, lit by the red rays setting sun. Galen removes the amulet from his neck and clutches it in his fist. Hodge is bug-eyed to see it.

**HODGE**

Be careful with that! You don't know what you're doing.

**GALEN**

Stand back!

He raises his hands toward the castle and calls out:

**GALEN**

Cragganmore! Domus non i am! Silva celet!

**CRAGGANMORE**

stretch,  
over the  
up  
and the  
century's

The vines on the castle walls begin to twitch and magically brought to animate life. They flow upward masonry, branching out and covering every surface, then onto the roof. Finally only the tops of the chimneys highest turrets stand above the green carpet. A growth in a matter of seconds.

**GALEN & HODGE**

fearful  
has

On their hilltop the old retainer gives the youth a look. Galen is too flushed with excitement over what he done to notice.

**DISSOLVE:**

**FOREST PATH - DAY**

under

Galen and Hodge trudge along an overgrown cart-track under an arch of trees.

**HODGE**

Oh, it's a vale of tears in which we dwell. It doesn't matter who you are, a king in his robes, a peasant in his rags, when your time comes, no magic can save you...

**GALEN**

I guess...

hovering

The apprentice's mind is elsewhere: he's got a coin in mid-air above his palm, bobbing gently as he walks.

**HODGE**

...the kindest lord a man could ask for... now he's gone. Ye gods he was fussy about his bath. And you'd think he could boil his own eggs with the snap of a finger, but no, he had old Hodge do it, of course.

(snurfling)

Up before five I was, mucking out the cages, slopping the pigs, and never once got so much as a thankyou or a pat on the back...

(through tears)

I'm going to miss him.

**GALEN**

Me too...

He plucks a low-hanging leaf, waves a hand over it, and watches it turn into a spray of daffodils.

**HODGE**

No you don't. All you care about is the tricks and knavery. Well, you don't pull any wool over these old eyes. It'll be a mighty long walk before you fill his shoes, you mark my word.

**GALEN**

What's the matter, Hodge, pack too heavy? Here.

and

clutches

He gives the pack a slap. It flies out of its harness floats alongside them. Hodge snatches it back and it tightly.

**HODGE**

Careful with that!

**GALEN**

Too cold, is it?

A great coat drapes itself over Hodge's shoulders.

**HODGE**

Stop it!

**GALEN**

Too warm?

The greatcoat disappears, as do the rest of his  
garments,  
leaving him in his smalls.

**HODGE**

(spluttering)

Stop it, I say! Out of respect for  
the master!

Suppressing a grin, Galen mercifully waves his hand and  
restores Hodge to his usual costume.

**GALEN**

I've got as much respect for the  
master as anyone, old man. But --  
then again, I'm master now.

**CUT TO:**

**TRAVELERS' CAMP - NIGHT**

The Urlanders are gathered around a fire, sharing a  
meager  
supper. The man named Greil pokes at the stew-pot.

**GREIL**

I left my farm with seeds unplanted,  
calves unborn, nothing but a wife to  
chase down the strays, and for what?  
A funeral, that's what.

He walks up and down behind Valerian.

**GREIL**

Because some people said, find a  
magician. Not just a local fellow,  
an import, a good forty leagues from  
home. An all-powerful necromancer.  
Ha -- some necromancer!

Malkin, an older man, speaks up.

**MALKIN**

Hold your tongue, Greil. Sit. Eat.

**GREIL**

I'll not sit. I'll not eat. See you the Great Bear. His tail points east. It's the equinox. Have you forgotten? Or rather not think about it?

**VALERIAN**

(miserable)

He's right. I brought us here for nothing. May the gods help whoever's daughter it is tonight.

Two  
silence,  
into the  
Galen

There is a noise from the darkness beyond the campfire. of the men get to their feet and listen. At first then more rustling. Without a word the two men dart bushes and haul two interlopers before the company: and Hodge.

**HODGE**

Good morrow, good morrow. Peace be with you.

**GALEN**

Easy now. We mean no harm. We've been looking for you.

**GREIL**

(growl)

Well, you've found us.

**GALEN**

(brushing himself off)

More the other way around, I'd say.

**VALERIAN**

What do you want?

**GALEN**

A few words, that's all. You were looking for a conjurer.

**VALERIAN**

He's dead.

**GALEN**

Right. Requiscat in pace.

(he takes a deep breath)  
Ecce: magister novus!

**GREIL**

How say you?

and Galen surveys the puzzled faces. He draws himself up  
plunges in:

**GALEN**

My lord Ulrich is no longer. All that you asked of him, you may now expect of me. The dangers he would face, I will now conquer. The task he would undertake I will now fulfill. I am Galen Bradwardyn, inheritor of Ulrich's craft and knowledge, and I am the Sorcerer you seek.

eyes. There is a moment of depressed silence. Hodge rolls his  
are Greil starts to chuckle, then to laugh. Soon the others  
laughing too.

**GREIL**

Well, that's a handsome thought, O wizard of wizards. But if there's one thing our friend Tyrian has shown us, it's to beware the pig in the poke. Who's got a dagger?

**HODGE**

No tests!!

**GREIL**

Call it proof, then.

Valerian Someone brings out a dagger and hands it to Greil.  
pushes it away.

**VALERIAN**

We've seen enough tests.

But Greil persists, waving the knife at the group.

**GREIL**

Well I haven't. All I've seen is death. Death in our families, death on the road, and tonight, death at

home.

Valerian  
followed  
sprawling.

He lashes out with the knife. Galen jumps back, but steps in, delivering a quick kick to Greil's gut, by a right to the jaw that sends the bigger man sprawling. He takes the knife.

**VALERIAN**

What's come over you, anyway? Have you lost your wits?

the

He propels Galen out of harm's way and sits him down on other side of the fire. Greil nurses his jaw.

**GREIL**

I don't like it. Young snot-nose comes in here for sport at our expense. We're on a fool's errand, but we don't have to listen to this. I don't want to hear any more about sorcery. I don't want to hear any more about spells.

Valerian hands Galen a plate of food.

**VALERIAN**

You must be hungry.

**GALEN**

(nods)  
What's the matter with him?

**VALERIAN**

It's not just him. It's all of us. It's the equinox.

They both look up at the moon.

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY - NIGHT**

of  
the

The moon shines down on the far reaches of the Kingdom of Urland, coldly lighting a barren landscape filled with

ground.  
armed  
is  
refuses

skeletons of dead trees, blackened rock and bare  
Advancing across this mournful terrain is a troop of  
men leading a blindfolded horse and tumbril. The horse  
skittish. Finally, in spite of shouts and lashings, it  
to go further. The leader, Horsrik, barks out an order:

**HORSRIK**

Close enough! Bring her out!

from  
tunic. Her  
is  
crack  
By

A young woman, no more than seventeen, is brought forth  
the cart. Long black hair falls down over a white  
dark eyes dart fearfully around in her pale face. She  
half-carried, half dragged to the edge of a steaming  
in the ground where she is manacled to a wooden post.  
lantern-light, Horsrik reads from a parchment scroll.

**HORSRIK**

Now be it known throughout the  
kingdom, that this maiden, having  
lawfully been chosen by a deed of  
fortune and destiny, shall hereby  
give up her life for the greater  
good of Urland.

glances

There is a low rumble; the earth shakes. Horsrik  
nervously around. He carries on by rote.

**HORSRIK**

By this act shall be satisfied the  
powers that dwell underground and  
the spirits that attend thereto. In  
gratitude for this sacrifice His  
Majesty has declared the family --  
what's the name? --

Beneath  
mouth

He prods the girl, but she is too terrified to speak.  
them, the earth seems to groan. Smoke issues from the  
of the pit. One of the nervous witnesses leans forward.

**RETAINER**

Plowman! The family Plowman!

**HORSRIK**

(rushing it)

-- the family Plowman to be free of obligations, taxations, levys and imposts for a period not to exceed five years...

The horse suddenly rears, and blindfold notwithstanding, gallops off, dragging the tumbril over the rocks. The men behind Horsrik break ranks and scatter.

**HORSRIK**

-- ordained and signed this day, etc., Casiodorus, in his glory the reigning king of this our realm... his seal, his mark, duly read by Chancellor Horsrik in his holy name.

Now Horsrik joins the flight, chasing his men back over the murky horizon.

**THE GIRL**

She strains against her manacles, cocking her head to listen as the rumblings below subside. Presently the steam and smoke blow away and she can see the horse pawing and stamping a hundred yards distant, the wheel of the cart jammed between rocks. Summoning up a wild will to live, she squeezes her hands against the cold iron rings. No use. She spits on her wrists and twists desperately. Blood starts. One hand slips free. She looks at the horse. The animal tosses off its blindfold and looks back at her. Now she strains again and pulls her other hand free. She wipes the blood on her frock and sprints toward the horse. But she doesn't get there. The earth abruptly shifts from under her feet, tumbling her among

huge  
whinny,  
She

cracked and steaming rocks. When she raises her head a shadow has fallen over the horse. There is a piteous then a roar. The girl's face is suddenly lit by flames. scrambles to her feet and rushes back the other way.

#### **THE CHASE**

direction.  
rapier-

The girl hasn't taken a dozen steps when something huge hurtles forward and blocks her way. Something scaly and glittering. She whirls and stumbles off in a new This time she's cut off by a monstrous claw tipped with like talons. She screams and crawls away. Another claw prevents her escape.

#### **THE CREATURE**

comes  
serpentine

Membranous wings fold down against the night sky. Up the silhouette of a reptilian head swaying on a neck. There's an angry hiss. A sheet of flame envelops everything.

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**FADE IN:**

**FOREST - DAY**

drink  
points

Tyrian kneels beside a mountain waterfall, having a while his men hover in the background. One of them down the slope.

**MAN**

There. I see them.

look.

Tyrian wipes his mouth unhurriedly and strolls over to Far below, half hidden by trees, the little company of Urlanders winds its way through the forest.

A frown creeps over Tyrian's face.

**TYRIAN**

Who's that old man?

**MAN**

Where? Which one?

**TYRIAN**

That one. That's the man from Cragganmore. Now what's he doing here?

**MAN**

Filling in for the chief, I reckon.

**TYRIAN**

(weary)

What a pity.

**CUT TO:**

**HODGE**

one  
out  
that  
falls

Hodge marches along with the rest. When he's sure no else is looking he burrows into his garments and brings out the leather pouch containing Ulrich's ashes. Reassured it's still with him, he tucks it away again. Galen falls into step.

**GALEN**

What have you got there?

**HODGE**

None of your business.

**GALEN**

A little gold, eh? What do you say I change it into lead?

**HODGE**

Save your jokes for someone else. Me, I don't care for braggarts.

They pass Valerian, who has dropped out of line.

**HODGE**

And I don't care for frauds.

**GALEN**

I'm no fraud.

**HODGE**

Call it fool then. Upstart. Whatever pleases you.

**GALEN**

Hodge, nobody forced you to come along.

**HODGE**

Oh, I'm here of my own free will, all right. We each do the master's bidding in our own way.

**GALEN**

Well, if he told you I needed wetnursing, why don't you just turn yourself around and go back home.

Hodge snorts and fusses with his pack.

**HODGE**

Home, is it? You've seen to that, haven't you? Gone to seed, I'd say...

He glances over and discovers Galen missing.

**GALEN**

Pretty  
hears  
pushes

He walks back along the trail, looking for Valerian. soon the rest of the travelers are out of sight. He the sound of a splash. He turns off the trail and through some shrubbery.

**FOREST POOL**

into  
edge.

Under the oaks and hickory, a forest stream has widened a quiet pool. A pile of clothes lies on a rock at the edge. Out in the middle, Valerian is treading water.

**GALEN**

You're too far behind us. Come on out.

**VALERIAN**

You go ahead, I'll catch up.

**GALEN**

Not a good idea to get separated.  
Let's go.

**VALERIAN**

Right. I'll be along.

Feels  
clothes.  
Galen leans over and splashes some water on his face.  
good. He shucks his pack and starts to throw off his  
Valerian doesn't like it.

**VALERIAN**

That's all right. Don't come in.

swims  
But Galen is now naked and walking into the water. He  
out toward Valerian.

**VALERIAN**

(edgy)

You better get back to the group,  
they're probably worried.

Galen keeps swimming.

**VALERIAN**

I prefer to swim alone, if you don't  
mind.

hear.  
But Galen has slipped beneath the surface; he doesn't

**UNDERWATER**

world.  
feet  
Valerian  
Galen works his way through the murky green underwater  
Suddenly, he stops short and stares. He's only a few  
from Valerian's dangling legs. He gasps in surprise.  
is no boy.

**ON THE SURFACE**

sputtering.  
Galen comes shooting to the surface, coughing and

**GALEN**

By the gods!

Valerian is pale and frightened.

**VALERIAN**

Stay away.

She propels herself backward, then turns and swims for shore.

**ON THE SHORE**

Galen and Valerian have taken refuge behind separate bushes.

Briskly they pull on their clothes.

**VALERIAN**

I suppose you'll tell everyone. Go ahead, I don't care. It's a relief.

**GALEN**

I'm not going to say anything.

**VALERIAN**

I don't blame you. I was stupid. Careless. A silly woman!

**GALEN**

(feeble bluff)

Take it easy. I knew the moment I saw you. I've known the whole time.

**VALERIAN**

You never knew a thing. No one knew. Not since I was born. Go on, run off and tell them. It'll make a great story.

**GALEN**

Don't worry. No one's going to find out. Just tell me: why?

**VALERIAN**

Ask my father.

They finish dressing in silence. Finally:

**GALEN**

The lottery! Daughters are chosen, but sons are not!

**VALERIAN**

That's right. Unless you have plenty

of gold or property.

**GALEN**

What do you mean?

**VALERIAN**

If you're rich enough, your name  
never goes in.

(bitter)

My father is poor. So are a lot of  
fathers.

once He studies her. She jams a hat down over her head and,  
more the young man, stalks off.

**THE VISION**

his Galen walks down to the edge of the pool to retrieve  
to pack. As he leans over he catches sight of what appears  
whips be a reflection in the water: Tyrian on horseback. He  
vision, he around, but no one is behind him. Riveted by the  
the hurries along the bank to follow it. After a few paces  
arrow blurry figure dismounts, unslings a longbow, nocks an  
and draws the string taut.

**GALEN**

(horrified)

No!

**FOREST**

walking Galen sprints through the trees. Up ahead is Valerian,  
resolutely.

**GALEN**

No!

Galen She glances back at him and grimly keeps on walking.  
shoots past her and on into the forest.

**GALEN**

Hodge!

**TRAVELERS**

Urlanders  
unsteady  
down  
Galen  
distance.

Galen races up the trail rounds a bend and sees the coming toward him. Hodge precedes the group with an gait. He sees Galen, raises up his arms and flops face on the trail. A long arrow protrudes from his back. Galen kneels beside him. The uneasy company keeps its distance. Hodge struggles to speak.

**HODGE**

Galen? Can you hear me?

**GALEN**

I hear you.

**HODGE**

You know, somebody shot me, but I can still talk. There's something that has to be done.

**GALEN**

I know.

**HODGE**

Not that cockatrice. Ulrich's ashes. Here.

go.  
Hodge's hand comes out from under his coat gripping the leather pouch. Galen tugs at it, but Hodge can't let

**HODGE**

Take it. Sorry, you'll have to peel it loose.

Suddenly  
him  
near.  
Galen pries the sack out of Hodge's clenched fingers. the hand comes up, grabs Galen by the hair, and pulls

**HODGE**

(a croak)  
...burning water... find the lake,  
throw it in...

**GALEN**

(holding up the pouch)  
What are you doing with this, Hodge?

**HODGE**

...burning water...

He dies. Galen frees himself from his grasp.

**GALEN**

Hodge, don't die. Listen to me. You're  
not going to die.

hand  
Galen is frantic. He pulls out the amulet and wraps his  
around it.

**GALEN**

Excede, mortem! Revoca, vitam!  
(he shakes the body)  
Excede, mortem! Revoca, vitam!

to  
drops  
his  
looking  
But Hodge has passed on, and Galen's magic has no way  
reach him. Suddenly the youth cries out in pain. He  
the amulet and looks at his palm. The device has burned  
flesh. Now he becomes aware of troubled Urlanders  
over his shoulder, witness to his failure.

**CUT TO:**

**LAKE - DAY**

The  
by a  
the  
imposter  
Wind whips the leaden wave tops on a vast rainy lake.  
travelers are rowing across in an open longboat, aided  
tattered lateen sail. Valerian mans the steering oar at  
stern while Galen broods in the bow. He feels like an  
in their eyes.

**FJORD**

cliffs  
beach the  
The boat pulls into a long narrow waterway with granite  
on either side. Moving through swirls of fog, they

and

boat and step out onto a craggy shore. Greil leans over  
kisses a rock.

**GREIL**

Urland!

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY - DAY**

through a

The travelers descend a mountain pass and emerge

the

wrack of cloud into a gray and cheerless region. Fire-  
blackened trees dot the barren landscape. As they reach

pace.

flatlands, the Urlanders instinctively pick up the

trots

Galen slows to inspect the weird surroundings. Valerian  
past him.

**VALERIAN**

Come on. Don't dawdle here.

Galen falls into step with her.

**GALEN**

The whole kingdom like this?

**VALERIAN**

No. We're near the lair. Keep moving.

Galen looks around with new interest.

**GALEN**

Where?

**VALERIAN**

Over there. Doesn't matter. We're in  
no danger if we just pass through  
quickly.

Galen stops. High on the slope beside them is a gaping  
fissure.

**GALEN**

I see it. Let's have a look.

**VALERIAN**

No!

But Galen is already toiling up the incline.

**VALERIAN**

Greil! Malkin! Help!

The travelers turn to see what's the matter.

**THE LAIR**

with  
thoughtfully.  
faces

Galen approaches the lair, pausing beside a wooden post  
iron manacles dangling from it. He fingers them  
Malkin, Greil and Valerian rush up behind him, their  
drawn with worry.

**GREIL**

Look, you don't have to do this. We  
know you're a fine young magician.  
None better. There's no need to prove  
it to us.

**GALEN**

Are there other entrances?

**VALERIAN**

No. One's enough.

**GREIL**

Come on. The road's this way. We'll  
tell everybody how close you got.

**GALEN**

(coolly)  
No smoke. How do you know it's in  
there?

**GREIL**

Don't be a fool. Come away now and  
live to tell about it.

hasten  
frustration  
picks

Instead, Galen starts into the crack. Greil and Malkin  
away, but Valerian lingers, watching in mounting  
as Galen probes further and further into the lair. She  
up a fistful of stones and throws them at him.

**VALERIAN**

Go ahead! You're going to die! What  
a fine trick that will be!

But Galen is lost in the gloom. She flees.

#### **UNDERGROUND**

hot to  
Galen's  
the  
the  
A

Galen puts his hand on the rugged wall: the rocks are  
the touch. Something glinting on the floor catches  
eye: an irridescent disk, a dragon scale. It flashes  
colors of the rainbow as Galen examines it. All at once  
ground shudders; chunks of rock fall from the ceiling.  
A pall of smoke billows up from the depths.

#### **OUTSIDE**

in a  
throws  
the  
amulet

Galen staggers out of the fissure coughing and gagging  
swirl of smoke. There is no sign of the Urlanders. He  
down his pack, climbs onto a huge boulder and surveys  
massive cliffs rising behind the lair. He grasps the  
and closes his eyes.

#### **GALEN**

Now, great mountain, hear my command:  
Terra lapsus consignet latibulum  
draconis! Evanescat latibulum  
draconis!

#### **LANDSLIDE**

the  
of the  
Boulders the  
magician.  
Even as  
One

With a thunderous splitting sound, the entire top of  
cliff pitches forward and topples onto the lower half  
mountain, sweeping tons of debris into the air.  
size of houses bound down the mountain toward the  
Eyes wide with awe, he turns and runs for his life.  
he careens down the slope, chunks of rock rumble past.  
catches him at the knee and sends him flying.

dust  
the  
who  
covered  
look at

He covers his head and joins the landslide. Finally the lifts and he finds himself in a gully face to face with cowering Urlanders. They look with real fear at the man just conjured up the Apocalypse. Tattered and torn, with dirt, Galen climbs up out of the shelter for a look at his handiwork.

#### **LANDSCAPE**

dragon's  
granite.  
stupefaction.  
win  
the

The territory has been drastically transformed: the lair is now buried beneath hundreds of tons of broken granite. The Urlanders look upon the new landscape with stupefaction. Galen grins a triumphant split-lip grin that fails to win them over. Presently they back away and run off down the trail, Valerian in their midst. Galen's grin fades.

#### **CUT TO:**

#### **VILLAGE - DAY**

and  
outbuildings  
door-  
there  
troop

The Village of Swanscombe is little more than a rough ready collection of thatched huts and mud-daubed outbuildings surrounded by cultivated fields. Dogs sleep in open doorways; chickens peck around the communal well -- but there are no people in evidence as Valerian and her company troop into town.

#### **VALERIAN**

blacksmith

She trots across the square and enters a deserted blacksmith shop.

#### **VALERIAN**

Father? Hello?

becomes She goes over to the forge. Hot coals are burning. She aware of a sound -- voices -- chanting.

### **SQUARE**

joined She walks across the square toward the voices. She is puzzled by Greil, Malkin and the other travelers, all of them voices by the desolation. As they approach the grange hall the open grow louder. They seem to be singing. The main doors and briefly and three villagers scamper out, dripping wet look at wrapped in white muslin. Valerian and her companions each other in astonishment.

### **IN THE GRANGE HALL**

is In a wooden cistern in the middle of the hall a woman pulled to being held under water. After a few moments she is fingers: the surface by a tall red-haired man with long bony wooden Brother Jacopus Januensis, a Carthusian monk. There's a around cross on his chest and a mad look in his eye. Gathered child, him are the missing villagers, every man woman and in here to be baptised and sing a few newly-learned hymns praise of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **BROTHER JACOPUS**

Now are you cleansed of your sins!  
Now are you born again, purified in  
spirit, into the fellowship of Jesus  
Christ!

Valerian The travelers enter and mingle with the congregation. scans the crowd until she locates her father, Simon, a balding sturdy journeyman. He's overjoyed at her return and gives her a hearty embrace.

**SIMON**

Welcome back, my son.

**VALERIAN**

Father, what are you doing? Have you all lost your minds?

**SIMON**

Some have.

He points to the monk, who is dunking a screaming infant and carrying on about the Bishop of Rome.

**SIMON**

It's this monk. He can read and write, and talk too, I'm afraid.

**VALERIAN**

And they listen?

**SIMON**

Shh! They think this a holy place, a tabernacle.

**VALERIAN**

This is the granary. What kind of welcome is this? I've got news of the sorcerer and news of the dragon.

**SIMON**

You were brave to go, you and your friends. But nobody cares. Listen -- he knows what they want to hear.

**MONK**

Brother Jacopus strides back and forth before the assembly in an inspired state.

**BROTHER JACOPUS**

The man who walks with Christ is not a man to fear a dragon: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil! You say you are preyed upon by a foul beast. Yes, but what is the nature of this beast? It comes to you on bat's wings and clawed feet, does it not? It breathes fire, does

it not? And it lives under ground.  
This is no dragon. This is Lucifer!

**VOICE**

Whoever it is, he's dead.

tattered,  
This is Galen, who has just stepped into the hall,  
bedraggled and triumphant.

**BROTHER JACOPUS**

Nay, brother! It is not as easy as  
that. Allegiance to Christ, to be  
sure, but also prayer and confession.  
These are the arms by which Satan  
may be put down.

**GALEN**

You're talking about superstition,  
friend. None of that has anything to  
do with what I, Galen, have already  
achieved.

He marches to the center of the gathering.

**SIMON**

(to Valerian)

You brought this stranger?

**VALERIAN**

Ulrich's apprentice. He's a braggart,  
but it doesn't matter.

**GALEN**

People of Urland! Send a messenger  
to the king. Vermithrax is dead.  
Crushed by the power of the moon and  
the stars! Laid low by ancient wisdom.  
Dropped into the Abyss by mystical  
practice.

**BROTHER JACOPUS**

Spoken like a pagan. Every word as  
reprobate as it is false!

(holding up his cross)

Solum in hoc signo vinces!

**GALEN**

Nihil plus mysterium!

He gestures boldly and a fireball crackles at the  
monk's

feet. The holy man scurries back. A hush falls upon the congregation.

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY - DAY**

the  
dragon's  
whipping  
The  
monk is mightily displeased.

A procession of curious villagers winds its way into badlands. They gather on a promontory overlooking the lair. They stand there for a long time, a chill wind whipping their garments, trying to understand what's happened.

**BROTHER JACOPUS**

Praise God! Blessed is he that is  
humble before the Lord!

**VALERIAN**

Your god had nothing to do with it.

Indeed, Galen's act is already the stuff of legend:

**MALKIN**

We saw it with our own eyes. He flew  
to the mountain top. He was a bird.  
He brought forth lightning. I saw  
it.

spot  
they  
to  
converts

Some of the younger villagers scamper forward to the spot where the cave had its opening. With yells and whoops they beat the ground with clubs. In the crowd Simon begins to smile, then to laugh. Soon he leads the villagers in a tumultuous cheer. Brother Jacopus and some of his converts drop to their knees and pray.

**CUT TO:**

**CELEBRATION**

square

The inhabitants of Swanscombe have decked out the town square

merrily  
flows

and are making a night of it. By torchlight they dance  
to jigs and reels provided by the local fiddlers. Ale  
freely from oak casks.

#### **VALERIAN'S HOUSE**

clothing.  
mirror,  
Her

Valerian is kneeling before a trunk full of women's  
She pulls out a long simple frock, goes to a crude  
and holds it up against her body to gauge the effect.  
father comes up behind her. He is angry and frightened.

#### **SIMON**

Put that away. What if you were seen?

#### **VALERIAN**

I'm going to be seen. I want to be  
seen. Tonight the world finds out  
that you never had a son.

#### **SIMON**

No, you mustn't do that. It's too  
soon. We've got to think about this,  
we've got to make a plan.

#### **VALERIAN**

Father: the danger is over.

He sits on the bed and puts his head in his hands.

#### **SIMON**

I know. What am I going to say to my  
friends who still mourn for their  
lost girls.

#### **VALERIAN**

You'll say you did what you had to.  
This is a time for celebration --  
and forgiveness.

to be

He looks up at her, trying to imagine what it's going  
like having a daughter.

#### **CELEBRATION**

not a

Galen is surrounded by a crowd of wide-eyed kids and

out of  
feels  
standing  
Valerian  
through  
to  
with

few adults, entertaining them by pulling duck's eggs  
their ears and causing coins to disappear. Presently he  
the attention of his audience shift away to someone  
behind him. He turns to find a shy but determined  
sweetly decked out in her blue frock. A buzz goes  
the crowd. Valerian blushes and wavers: she seems ready  
bolt for home. But Galen takes her by the hand, and  
conspicuous politesse leads her to the dance.

#### **DANCE**

young  
too

It's forward, back and around sixth-century style: the  
sorcerer can't take his eyes off his partner. But she's  
shy to return his gaze.

#### **GALEN**

Looks like you've been up to a little  
sorcery yourself.

Valerian doesn't know what to say.

#### **GALEN**

Or is it witchcraft?

She still doesn't reply. It's all she can do to keep on  
dancing.

#### **GALEN**

What's the matter? A real woman never  
stops talking.

#### **VALERIAN**

I think it was much easier being a  
boy.

#### **SIMON & GREIL**

step

They stand on the sidelines, watching the young couple  
to the music.

#### **SIMON**

The damndest thing is, she was twice

the man of anyone else in the village.  
Now she's twice the woman.

**GREIL**

(grim)  
Would that I had been as clever as  
her father.

**SIMON**

Come now, Greil. Don't begrudge a  
life spared.

**GREIL**

I begrudge nothing. But I wonder at  
what we have seen and how it was  
done.

**SIMON**

You were there.

**GREIL**

I saw what I saw. But this jack-anapes  
was barely ready to carry his master's  
chamberpot. Isn't it strange that at  
the very moment the beast is put  
down we should have a holy man here  
in the village?

**SIMON**

You don't believe that superstitious  
Christian rot, do you?

**GREIL**

(defensive)  
It is said God works his wonders in  
mysterious ways.

**CELEBRATION**

While the proud Simon dances in the background with his  
daughter, a group of tipsy villagers clusters around  
Galen,  
raises  
music  
broken  
horsemen  
They  
belching forth a drinking song. The young magician  
his own mug and joins in on the chorus. Abruptly the  
stops. The singing dies away. The ensuing silence is  
by the sound of galloping hooves. Presently three  
appear at the end of town: Tyrian and his henchmen.

makers.  
Tyrian  
way.

guide their horses forward into the midst of the merry-  
Tyrian dismounts and looks around in his usual friendly

**TYRIAN**

A celebration! Don't stop on my  
account. You -- musicians, more music!

Tyrian  
head.

The musicians leave their instruments in their laps.  
draws himself a measure of ale and raises it above his

**TYRIAN**

A toast! To the deed of the day! You  
see, good news travels fast. The  
King himself has already heard it.  
And like yourselves, tonight he's  
overcome with joy.

**MALKIN**

What would you have of us then?

**TYRIAN**

Not a thing. It's this one.  
(he gestures toward  
Galen)

The King would meet our new benefactor  
and offer his gratitude to the man  
who succeeded where so many have  
failed.

**GALEN**

(sobering up)  
What sort of gratitude? A knife in  
the belly? An arrow in the back?

of  
Tyrian's smile freezes on his face. He steps in front  
Galen, towering over him.

**TYRIAN**

My young friend, I'd as soon dispatch  
you as I did the others, and for the  
same reason. But his Majesty would  
like a cozy chat, and commands  
otherwise.

**VALERIAN**

Don't go, Galen. Cast a spell and  
turn them into toads. It should be

easy; that's what they are.

costume  
Tyrian regards her coolly, taking in her change of  
and its meaning.

**TYRIAN**

Well, well: still plenty of cheek  
under those skirts, it seems.

decides  
smiles at  
Having buried the dragon under a mountain, Galen  
he's not worried about an appearance at court. He  
Valerian.

**GALEN**

Don't worry. I'll be back.

**CUT TO:**

**RIDERS**

central  
distant  
the  
Three horses gallop through the moors and fens of  
Urland. Galen is tucked up behind Tyrian. On the  
horizon, the battlements of the King's castle glow in  
slanting light of a new day.

**CUT TO:**

**THRONE ROOM - DAY**

daylight  
In  
There is  
fifties,  
Tyrian.  
pours  
Within the castle is a great hall with shafts of  
poking in through narrow windows set high in the walls.  
the middle of the room stands a carved oak throne.  
Casiodorus Rex, King of Urland, a bearded man in his  
as spare and somber as the room in which he sits. He is  
flanked by a few servants, assorted courtiers and  
Standing before them all is Galen, looking unhappy. He  
a pitcher full of water into a small glazed goblet.

**GALEN**

One of the best things about the water here in Urland is that there's so much of it -- look at that!

Water continues to pour into the goblet without overflowing.  
Galen takes a sip.

**GALEN**

Mmm. Good. But not cold enough. Perhaps I could borrow a scarf from his Majesty.

The King makes no sign. Galen approaches stiffly, takes a scarf and retreats.

**GALEN**

I cover the goblet, so... remove, so... and behold: winter in a mug!

And he's done it: he turns the goblet over and a small chunk of ice hits the floor. The royal reaction is equally frosty.  
Galen is bombing, and he knows it.

**GALEN**

All right. How many of you have ever seen a table fly?

He mutters an incantation. In the audience, Tyrian notes that Galen has his hand wrapped around the amulet. There is a loud clatter as the heavy oak table before the throne begins to jitter and buck. As the wine spills and plates go flying, the King wearily raises a hand.

**KING**

Enough! That's fine.

**GALEN**

Wait, it'll rise now.

**KING**

Don't bother. Not necessary.

The table cracks in half and dumps a mess of fruit and

crockery at the onlookers' feet.

**KING**

Tell me: the landslide -- it was accomplished this same way?

**GALEN**

Yes.

**KING**

I see. And having rendered such unique service to our kingdom, what would you claim as a reward?

**GALEN**

Please -- no payment. I have always found magical practice to be its own reward. I seek only some yet greater challenge.

his This handsome sentiment doesn't go over any better than tricks.

**KING**

Did you ever hear of King Gaiseric? Of course not, you weren't even born. He was my brother, a great King and a valiant man-at-arms. When he ascended to the throne, the dragon was unbridled. No one knew where it might strike next. So he brought forth his broadsword and his spear, assembled a company of his best fighters and went out to do battle.

(pause)

He was never seen again. But his attack provoked the most terrible reprisals: whole villages incinerated, entire crops burned. Death, famine, horrible.

The King grimaces as the memories come flooding back.

**KING**

(quietly)

How did you arrogate to yourself the role of savior?

**GALEN**

I was invited.

**KING**

Not by me. Did you ever consider the consequences of failure?

**GALEN**

What failure? What's the matter with you people? You want the dragon back?

**KING**

Then the beast is dead?

**GALEN**

Yes, of course. Dead.

**KING**

We shall see.

**CUT TO:**

**DUNGEON**

Two guards thrust Galen into a narrow cell and slam the barred door shut. The young sorcerer waits until they're safely out of sight, then takes out his amulet. He ponders it for a doubtful moment. Suddenly a gloved hand darts in and whips it off his neck and out through the bars.

**TYRIAN**

Thank you.

He makes an ironic salute and leaves. Galen sits down heavily and stares at the stone walls.

**CORRIDOR**

Unseen by Galen, a figure clad in silk and lace skitters down a murky dungeon hallway and peers around a corner. Stealing a look at Galen is the Princess Elspeth, a fey beauty in her early twenties. After a moment, spooked by some imagined noise, she flits away.

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY - DAY**

ruined  
each  
These

Dark clouds slide across a pale sun, throwing the land below into shadow. Soon fat droplets of rain are splattering on the rocks above the dragon's lair. With tiny splash there is a sizzle and a puff of steam. rocks are hot!

**CUT TO:**

**DUNGEON**

Inside,  
on  
window  
center of

Outside the barred window, a steady rain is falling. Galen uses a chunk of limestone to inscribe a pentagram on the floor of his cell. He marks runic signs on the sill and lintel. Then, positioning himself in the center of the mystic symbol, he raises his hands and spreads his fingers.

**GALEN**

(authoritative)

Cubiculum gravis aperat!

the

There's a long moment when nothing happens. A very long moment. Finally, a thoroughly frustrated Galen leaps to window and rattles the bars.

**GALEN**

Open up, dammit! Fenestra gravis aperat! Asser gravis aperat! Divinitus!

**VOICE**

Salve, magistrum iuvenilum.

outside  
bars.

Startled, Galen whirls around to find Elspeth standing his cell. She hands some food and blankets through the bars.

**ELSPETH**

I've studied Latin. Greek, too. Me appelo Elspeth, filia regis.

angelic. Galen looks her over. He's never seen anyone so

**GALEN**

How do you do.

**ELSPETH**

Please don't think ill of us. My father is a wonderful man, a wise man. The lottery was his idea.

**GALEN**

I see.

**ELSPETH**

You don't understand. From the moment it began, the dragon was tame. The kingdom prospered.

**GALEN**

And only a few had to be sacrificed.

**ELSPETH**

Yes, that's true. Isn't it better that a few should die that many might live?

**GALEN**

Depends on who does the dying.

**ELSPETH**

Oh, but we all take our chances. My father is a just man. My name is entered on the lists, along with every other young --

**GALEN**

Virgin?

**ELSPETH**

Maiden.

**GALEN**

If you say so.

**ELSPETH**

What do you mean?

**GALEN**

(sighs)  
Nothing.

**ELSPETH**

I've participated in every drawing since I came of age.

**GALEN**

Maybe.

**ELSPETH**

It's true. You don't believe me. You think I'm lying. Well I'm not.

**GALEN**

I'm sorry. I heard a rumor. Families with money, that sort of thing.

**ELSPETH**

Don't listen to rumors. They're lies. I have to go now.

**GALEN**

Wait -- how long do I have to stay in here?

**ELSPETH**

Until we know. Not long. Goodbye. Vale. Dormi bene.

She slips away down the corridor.

**LIBRARY**

piled  
and

King Casiodorus and Tyrian are huddled over a table high with manuscripts and papers. Tyrian clears a spot sets out a stack of lead bars.

**KING**

That's enough. Let's not be greedy here.

bars

The King picks up Galen's amulet, and holds it over the in his clenched fist.

**KING**

Now then: I, Casiodorus Rex do hereby command thou base metal to change thy essence and become gold.

him.

There is a rustle of skirts and Elspeth appears behind

**ELSPETH**

Father?

**KING**

Not now. Tyrian, remove all but one bar. We'll try it one at a time.

**ELSPETH**

Father: did you know that some families have paid bribes to stay out of the lottery?

The King and Tyrian glance up at her.

**KING**

Nonsense. By the power of this amulet, justly wielded by my hand in accordance with the laws of Umland, now lead be thou gold.

cry and

The lead remains unchanged, but the King gives out a drops the amulet.

**KING**

I'm burned! What devilish thing is this?

**ELSPETH**

Have you ever kept my name off the lottery list?

**KING**

That'll be all, Tyrian. You may withdraw.

pick up  
book

Tyrian bows and exits. The King uses his sceptre to the amulet and chain. He conceals it in a hollowed-out and places the volume on a shelf among many others.

**KING**

Now, my dear, what's troubling you?

**ELSPETH**

Answer my question: am I not exposed to the same risk as every other man's daughter?

rain  
The King paces over to the window and stares out. The  
has stopped.

**ELSPETH**

Well?

**KING**

(finally)  
Your father loves you very much.

Elspeth sways in dismay.

**ELSPETH**

(a wail)  
It's true! What have you done to  
me!?

**KING**

Who fills your head with such ideas?

and  
At that moment a tremor passes through the room. King  
daughter look at each other in alarm.

**DUNGEON**

Puzzled, he  
tremor  
bouncing  
The same tremor shakes the bars in Galen's cell.  
rolls off his straw palette and gets to his feet. The  
dies away. Suddenly a violent shaking hits the cell,  
Galen off the walls.

**CUT TO:**

**VILLAGE SQUARE**

panicky  
Swanscombe is gripped by the same earthquake. Dodging  
barnyard animals, Valerian and her father join other  
frightened villagers in the center of town.

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY**

grinding  
tumble

Above the dragon's lair, boulders are shifting and together. Massive chunks of stone break loose and down the incline.

**CUT TO:**

**GALEN**

the  
his  
out.

The shaking has stopped. Rock dust filters down from ceiling. Galen picks himself up and stares: the door to cell is off its hinges and is sagging open. He darts

**CORRIDOR**

stops.

Galen dashes along the hallway, rounds a corner and At the other end of the passage is Tyrian.

**TYRIAN**

You little meddler! It's alive!

Tyrian

He draws his sword and advances. Galen warily retreats. breaks into a run. Galen turns and sprints away.

**COURTYARD**

around  
Tyrian

Unruly horses, terrified by the quake, rush blindly the courtyard. Hostlers try vainly to catch them. leans down from an upstairs window.

**TYRIAN**

Close the main gate! Quick!

of  
one

The men below scramble for the gates. Galen bursts out hiding, sees the untended horses, and swings aboard as goes past. A cry goes up from the guards.

**TYRIAN**

There! Stop him!

second  
horse  
pikes.  
animal  
the

Galen rides like mad for the exit, but he's a half-late: the doors boom shut in his face. He wheels the around. The King's men are coming toward him with Digging his heels into the horse's sides, he urges the back across the courtyard, up the steps and right into building!

#### **THRONE ROOM**

throne  
soldiers.

Galen gallops into the empty chamber, knocking over the and vaulting a table. Hot on his heels are armed He kicks the horse again and shoots under an archway.

#### **KITCHEN**

when  
cooks  
the

The kitchen is already in chaos from the earthquake Galen charges in on his wild steed. Food, utensils and go flying. He reins in, ducks his head, and squeezes horse out into a narrow hallway.

#### **HALLWAY**

contingent  
them

He clatters down the passageway. But here comes a of footmen from the opposite direction. Galen rides into the walls!

#### **STAIRS**

against  
with

The horse scrabbles up the stairs, Galen tucked low its neck. On the upper landing he comes face to face Tyrian and more soldiers.

#### **TYRIAN**

Get him! Stab the horse!

Galen jerks the animal around and plunges back down the stairs.

**LIBRARY**

Galen  
King  
Whinnying and blowing the horse bursts in, a wild-eyed still in the saddle. He finds himself confronting the and his daughter.  
Casiodorus grabs Elspeth and retreats into a corner.

**KING**

Tyrian! Tyrian!

Tyrian sweeps in with his men. The doors slam shut.

**KING**

So much for your magic! So much for your sorcery!

horse's  
moment  
The  
dodging  
sees  
he  
Galen is trapped. Just as Tyrian reaches for the reins, the animal rears up, rolling its eyes. At that the floor heaves and cracks in a new series of shocks. The men at arms go down like ten pins. Tyrian reels back, dodging stone blocks loosened from the ceiling. As the shaking continues, a weakened section of wall gives way. Galen sees daylight! Without even waiting for the quake to cease, he prods the horse across the room and through the wall to freedom.

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY - DAY**

promontory  
is a  
Valerian  
Jacopus  
The unnerved citizens of Swanscombe gather on the overlooking Galen's landslide. Every few seconds there is a new shudder and more rocks pour down the long slope. Valerian stands trembling with her father. Presently Brother Jacopus elbows his way forward.

**BROTHER JACOPUS**

Listen to me, my brethren. The moment

of our fear is the moment of our triumph. This is a sign from God. Follow me, and our faith will send this creature straight to hell.

one  
One or  
silently.  
Holding a cross before him, he starts up the slope. No follows. They haven't been Christians all that long. two near Valerian get down on their knees and pray Greil looks things over.

**GREIL**

You call yourselves Christians?

He strides after the monk. But he's the only one.

**NEAR THE LAIR**

sandals  
and  
The determined monk has arrived at the epicenter. His are smoking on the hot gravel. Sweat shines on his face neck.

**BROTHER JACOPUS**

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Thou makest me to lie down in green pastures. Thy rod and staff they comfort me...

crossing  
Greil toils up the slope a hundred yards back. He's himself, but he's carrying a sickle.

**VERMITHRAX**

tossed  
wing.  
toward  
There is a thunderous noise. Part of the mountain is into the air. Up from the depths comes a huge shining Then a neck uncoils and a head appears. It tips down the tiny human.

**BROTHER JACOPUS**

(firm)

...for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever -- amen.

wavers. At the base of the slope the villagers scatter. Greil

**BROTHER JACOPUS**

Unclean beast, get thee down! Be  
thou consumed by the fires that made  
you!

out a The dragon's head sways back and forth, then belches  
a waterfall of flame. It engulfs Jacopus and sends him to  
a better world, if there is one.

**CUT TO:**

**HILL ROAD - NIGHT**

brooding Horse and rider race across a night landscape under  
light. At clouds. Up ahead, the sky glows with an angry red  
across a the crest of a hill Galen reins in and looks down  
Swanscombe. long valley. There, miles away, is the village of  
fires Many buildings are ablaze. As he watches in horror,  
can see spring up in the fields and trees. Intermittently he  
skyward, the silhouette of the dragon as it spreads destruction.  
silence. Finally the creature swoops up and away. Galen stares  
him losing sight of it in the clouds. For a moment,  
feet Then, with a thunderous rush of air that almost blows  
from the saddle, the dragon reappears and hurtles a few  
over his head! It is gone in an instant.

**CUT TO:**

**VILLAGE - NIGHT**

animals Half the buildings in the town are on fire. Desperate  
walks villagers dash here and there, herding children and  
to safety, trying to save their household goods. Galen

in  
who  
As  
aside.

woodenly into the confusion, leading his horse, taking the scope of the disaster. He comes upon a line of men have formed a bucket brigade. He attempts to join up. soon as he is recognized, he is shouldered roughly

**MAN**

Get away, you little bastard. We've had enough help from you.

shies  
him,  
broom and

Galen staggers back, reaching for his horse. The animal and trots off. A middle-aged woman appears in front of her face contorted with rage. She swings a flaming catches him on the back of the head. Galen reels away.

**WOMAN**

This is your doing!

way

Galen looks up and sees a couple of burlies moving his with boards in their hands.

**BURLIES**

Get him! He's back!

and  
Greil.

Before they can get too close, Galen runs down an alley bumps smack into a glassy-eyed, haunted man. It is

**GALEN**

Greil -- help!

**GREIL**

May the Lord forgive you for what you have done.

building.

He pushes past. Galen ducks behind a smoldering

**VALERIAN'S HOUSE**

standing.  
of

The roof has burned off, but at least the walls are Valerian is wrestling charred timbers out of the center

hammering on  
him

the room. She is covered with soot. There is a  
the door and Galen barges in. He slams the door behind  
and puts his back against it.

**GALEN**

It's me. Are you hurt?

**VALERIAN**

Where have you been? Doesn't matter --  
listen: Quick! Make it rain. That'll  
put the fire out.

**GALEN**

I can't.

**VALERIAN**

Then get the animals back. They're  
all running loose. There's people  
been hurt. Stop their pain. You can  
cure them. And we'll need food...

**GALEN**

I can't do it.

**VALERIAN**

(this stops her)  
What? Why not?

Galen's hand moves up to where the amulet used to hang.

**GALEN**

I just can't.

**VALERIAN**

But you're a sorcerer.

**GALEN**

I'm no sorcerer. Whatever power I  
might have had, it's gone.

**VALERIAN**

It can't be!

**GALEN**

I know: I'm an imposter. A fraud. A  
fake. I'm sorry...

her

For a moment, Valerian is too stunned to speak. Then  
face colors.

**VALERIAN**

You're sorry?! Listen to that! The damn thing is loose, we're all on fire and you're sorry!

Galen sinks to the floor and sits in the ashes.

**VALERIAN**

You didn't have the faintest idea what you were doing, did you? You're a fool -- and I'm a bigger one for bringing you here.

She snatches up a pitchfork and glowers at him.

**VALERIAN**

I don't want you in this house. Get out.

strings  
sight  
lowers

But Galen still sits there like a puppet with its cut, every dream of glory utterly crushed. This piteous touches Valerian's heart. Her gaze softens. She slowly the pitchfork.

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**FADE IN:**

**TOWN SQUARE - DAY**

the  
men  
Valerian is

A knot of villagers lead Tyrian and his henchmen across square directly to the blacksmith's shop. The King's dismount and pound on the door. It swings open. standing there.

**TYRIAN**

Where is he?

**VALERIAN**

Not here. I can't help you.

he's

A cry goes up from the villagers. They know damn well in there.

**VALERIAN'S HOUSE**

Aided  
premises,  
flour  
eye  
search.

Tyrian pushes Valerian aside and steps into the room.  
by some townfolk, his men proceed to ransack the  
overturning barrels, sticking their swords through  
sacks, poking through the tumbledown thatch. Valerian's  
falls on Malkin, who has involved himself in the

**VALERIAN**

You too?

**MALKIN**

(returning her look)

Damn right.

where  
an  
watches  
Tyrian  
Simon.

Finding nothing, the group pushes into the metal shop,  
Simon is hammering an iron wheel rim back into shape on  
enormous anvil. He lays down his tools and grimly  
the men go through, overturning benches and tables.  
props a leg up on the anvil and addresses himself to

**TYRIAN**

As the proud new father of an eligible  
daughter who was some-how overlooked  
all these years, it may interest you  
to know that the King has called for  
a new lottery.

**SIMON**

But it's months til the solstice.

**TYRIAN**

In view of what's happened, we all  
know what's required.

**SIMON**

I've never taken part in your cursed  
lottery, and I'll have nothing to do  
with it now.

**TYRIAN**

You were very clever. But she'll take part, like all the rest. No exceptions.

places. The search party has exhausted the room's hiding

**HENCHMAN**

Nothing. If he was here, he's gone now.

pulls Tyrrian nods and leads the way out. Simon catches up and Tyrrian aside at the door.

**SIMON**

All right. I know what you want. How much?

**TYRIAN**

Are you offering me a bribe?

**SIMON**

Yes.

**TYRIAN**

Don't waste your time.

(pause)

You could never afford it.

of He spins on his heel and joins his men as they ride out  
are town. Valerian and Simon watch them go. When the riders  
stout out of sight, they return to the shop. With a couple of  
poles, they strain to lift the anvil off its base.  
Finally it topples over. Valerian slides the base aside,  
revealing a trap door. She raises it and a cramped Galen unfolds  
himself from the space below. On his face is a curious look of  
determination.

**GALEN**

Smith -- have you ever forged a weapon?

**WEAPONS**

rakes,  
Galen  
of  
carefully,

Simon is going through a cabinet, tossing out hoes,  
sickles, scythes, plow blades, and a knife or two.  
examines them doubtfully. Now Simon produces an armload  
swords. Galen is impressed; he looks them over  
testing and rejecting them in turn.

**GALEN**

These are your sharpest?

center  
brings the

Simon plucks up one of the swords, carries it to the  
of the room. He lays a horseshoe on the anvil. He  
sword down -- whack! -- and cuts the horseshoe in half.

**SIMON**

Even Tyrian carries one of these.

Galen hefts it dubiously.

**GALEN**

It's sharp -- but it's not sharp  
enough.

concern.

Valerian has been watching all this with growing

**VALERIAN**

Not sharp enough for what?

**GALEN**

For what I'm going to do with it.

**VALERIAN**

Nothing's that sharp.

from  
of  
blade  
out.

Simon gnaws his lip. Reluctantly, he brings a long box  
the bottom of the cabinet. He opens it. Lying on a bed  
silk is an exquisite two-handed broadsword. The flat  
gleams like a mirror. Galen reaches in and lifts it

**SIMON**

The best I ever made.

Valerian is as awed as Galen.

**VALERIAN**

It's beautiful.

his

Galen brings up a finger to test the edge. Simon grabs  
hand away.

**SIMON**

Don't do that!

(he looks at Valerian)

Girl-child, when you were born I  
knew I had to do something, so I set  
about the task of fashioning an  
extraordinary weapon: I had the skill  
to make it --

(bleak pause)

-- but not the nerve to use it.

plants

She looks at him with affection. Leaning forward, she  
a kiss on his bald pate.

**VALERIAN**

I'm thankful for that.

(to Galen)

No man should choose a senseless  
death.

**CUT TO:**

**STREAM - DAY**

mossy

of

Galen, Valerian and Simon tramp through a glade to a  
bank. There a wide stream flows lazily under a canopy  
trees.

**VALERIAN**

If it's me you're worried about,  
don't. So my name has been entered,  
what of it? There are hundreds of  
girls. My name just won't be drawn.  
I know it won't.

tip

the

Galen walks out into the shallows and pushes the sword-  
into the sandy bottom, angled so that the edge splits

current.

**GALEN**

Valerian, this isn't just for your  
sake.

see

He walks back to shore. All three watch the sword to  
what will happen.

**SWORD**

the

Galen

Big flat oak leaves are gliding along the current. Very  
slowly, they go by the sword, some of them very close.  
Finally, one of them floats against the leading edge of  
blade and without a ripple is cleft in two. Simon gives  
a significant look.

**VALERIAN**

I don't care. It doesn't matter.  
What you want to kill isn't flesh  
and blood.

**SIMON**

Oh, it'll bleed, all right.

**VALERIAN**

How do you know? No one's so much as  
even scratched it.

doubt.

They look to Galen. The apprentice's face is full of

**GALEN**

I'll need the amulet.

**CUT TO:**

**KING'S CASTLE - NIGHT**

with

the

Valerian,

wide-

Carrying torches to light their way, families -- some  
maiden daughters -- gather from all over the country in  
courtyard of the King's castle. Simon is there with  
and so is Galen, disguised in rough farm clothes and a

topped  
another  
decorated  
front  
supervises  
carrying a  
pour  
the  
Trumpets  
onstage:  
nudges

brimmed hat. Like many others, he carries a stick with a bleached skull -- to all appearances, just participant in this weird pagan ritual. A barrel with flames and dragon's wings sits on a raised dais in front of the main entrance. Horsrik, the King's herald, supervises preparations for the lottery. Armed guards appear carrying a sealed chest. Horsrik breaks the seal and the guards pour the contents -- hundreds of wooden tiles, each bearing the name of a potential sacrifice -- into the barrel. Trumpets blare and drums roll and the royal party strolls onstage: the King, his daughter, courtiers and Tyrian. Valerian nudges Galen.

**VALERIAN**

(pointing)

Look at her. The Princess.

**GALEN**

I know. We've met.

Valerian gives Galen a sharp look. Horsrik unrolls a parchment.

**HORSRIK**

(reading)

People of Urland: whereas the peace of the kingdom has been disrupted by the mischief of an interloper; and whereas this interloper being fled; now therefore, his majesty the King hereby proclaims the sum of thirty ducats to be paid to anyone producing the miscreant Galen Bradwardyn, fraud enchanter, to our satisfaction.

for the  
uneasy.  
below

Galen pulls his hat low over his eyes. As the moment drawing approaches, Valerian becomes more and more uneasy. She pushes forward through the crowd until she's just below

them  
better  
retinue are

the barrel. She eyes the people around her. Some of  
seem equally worried, others -- the better dressed and  
fed -- are smug and complacent. The King and his  
serene. A chant goes up from the crowd:

**CROWD**

Stir the tiles! Stir the tiles!

chant  
Horsrik picks up a wooden staff surmounted by a carved  
dragon's head and stirs up the names. This done, a new  
goes up:

**CROWD**

Bare the arm! Bare the arm!

from  
excitement.  
pushed  
At a signal, a guard comes forward and cuts the sleeve  
Horsrik's right arm. He holds it high. The crowd surges  
forward. The atmosphere is full of dread and  
Valerian looking pale and determined, is jostled and  
to the edge of the platform.

**CROWD**

Draw the name! Draw the name!

comes,  
fate. An  
Urland  
The moment has come. Down goes Horsrik's arm and up it  
holding one little wooden square, one young woman's  
expectant hush falls over the mob. The virgins of  
tremble and wait.

**HORSRIK**

Now, my countrymen, hear me: behold,  
for I am chosen. I shall die that  
many may live. I shall lay down my  
life for family and fellows. I shall  
go to my grave for the love of our  
King and his wise policy. And my  
name is --

sound  
sweat  
He looks down at the tile to read the name, but no  
comes to his lips. He looks back at the crowd, a cold

bring  
breath.

breaking over his face. He swallows, but still can't  
himself to speak. At his feet, Valerian is holding her  
A new chant goes up.

**CROWD**

The name! The name!

tile, his  
He

By now Horsrik is trembling. He stares down at the  
mouth set in a grim line. The King is getting annoyed.  
gestures and the crowd falls silent.

**KING**

Read the name.

**HORSRIK**

(mastering himself)

The name is: Princess Elspeth Ulfilas,  
filia regis.

of  
Valerian; she  
shows  
snatches

There is a moment of profound shock. Then a low murmur  
wonder moves through the crowd. Galen looks at  
sags with relief. The King turns to his daughter. She  
nothing. He rises from his chair, comes forward and  
the tile from Horsrik.

**KING**

That's not the name. It's been  
misread.

Valerian will not stand for such hypocrisy.

**VALERIAN**

There's no mistake! The name's been  
chosen -- let it stand!

**KING**

No, the good Horsrik has misspoke  
himself.

(he looks at the tile)

In fairness to this individual, whose  
name I can't make out, we'll destroy  
this tile.

elbow. He quickly tosses the wood chip into a brazier at his

Led by Valerian, the crowd cries out in protest.

**VALERIAN**

No! What better name than your own  
kin? At last we see justice done!

**KING**

Silence! We will have a new choosing.  
I will draw the name myself.

He reaches into the barrel and extracts another tile.

He looks at it and his eyes widen. Betrayed, he swivels to  
face his daughter. The din of the crowd reaches a crescendo.

**CROWD**

Let it stand! Let it stand!

fingers, Elspeth takes the tile from her father's nerveless  
looks at it with satisfaction and holds it aloft.

**ELSPETH**

The name is as you heard it and as  
Horsrik read it: Elspeth.

daughter's The King moils through the tiles, finding his  
name again and again.

**KING**

The lottery is invalid. Another and  
another. What treachery is this?

looks at Valerian, chanting with the rest, falls silent. She  
Elspeth with sudden interest and respect, then awe.

**ELSPETH**

Hear me, good people! It is true,  
that my name appears on many of the  
lots. This does not falsify the  
drawing, it certifies it! I have  
learned that my name has been kept  
from jeopardy in all the drawings in  
the past. So I have put my name among  
the rest many times -- once for each  
risk that, over the years, you took  
and I did not.

The crowd is dumbfounded. Gradually voices erupt in a cacophony of shouts, whistles and excited conversation.

Galen  
stable.

sees his chance: there's an unguarded door near the  
He drifts toward it and slips inside.

#### **THRONE ROOM**

over  
Finding  
and

Galen pokes his head in: the room is empty. He scurries  
to a chest, flings it open and starts rummaging.  
nothing he moves on to a cabinet. He breaks the lock  
pries it open. Again, nothing.

#### **CASTLE CORRIDOR**

down  
is a  
Galen  
moves.  
better  
behind

Galen can hear the voices in the courtyard as he rushes  
a hall. Suddenly he stops short. There in front of him  
guard leaning out a window to watch the proceedings.  
hovers on the verge of panic as the guard abruptly  
But the man is only headed for another window and a  
view. Galen manages to fall into step an arm's length  
him and slip by without a sound.

#### **LIBRARY**

crazily  
is  
reveals  
everything,  
where

Galen enters the library, his enormous shadow dancing  
on the torchlit walls. Hurrying through, his attention  
drawn to some open books on a table. Closer inspection  
magical writings and symbols. Galen paws over  
suddenly aware that he must be close to the amulet. But  
is it?

#### **COURTYARD**

back in

As the crowd disperses Valerian watches Elspeth walk

the castle, lofty and composed. She looks for Galen and discovers he has gone.

**LIBRARY**

all  
the  
drawer

By now, the room is in total disarray. Galen has opened the chests and trunks and knocked half the books from the shelves. No amulet. He's feverishly working on a locked drawer when a voice interrupts him.

**KING**

Don't go to all that trouble.

doorway.  
split in  
timbers.  
the

Galen whirls around to find the King standing in the doorway. The monarch looks shattered. Galen edges toward the wall and finds that it has been shored up with timbers. At that moment Tyrian comes through the door, sizes up the situation and draws his sword.

**GALEN**

I'm unarmed. If you want a fight, at least give me a weapon.

**TYRIAN**

(pushing by the King)  
I think not!

**KING**

Stop! Don't harm him.  
(to Galen)  
And you -- don't run away... please...

equally  
remaining

The King's voice is cracking. Galen and Tyrian are taken aback. The King searches through the books on the library shelves.

**KING**

(shaky)  
I've always had the greatest admiration for the black arts. You chaps with your mysterious spells... I didn't think it would be necessary, you see. Vermithrax is an old dragon.

And that, I thought, was the beauty  
of my plan -- buying time. We'd wait  
her out. I'd live to see the end of  
her.

(firm)

That's still going to happen.

The King finds the book and takes the amulet out. With  
trembling hands, he passes it to Galen.

**TYRIAN**

Sire!

**KING**

He shall have it.

(pleading)

It's my daughter. Save her, I beg  
you.

**CUT TO:**

**VILLAGE - DAY**

The people of Swanscombe are clearing up the rubble and  
beginning repairs on their dwellings. Standing in their  
midst,  
charred  
lecturing every passerby, is Greil. He holds up the  
remains of Brother Jacopus' wooden cross.

**GREIL**

Holy of holies -- he did not die in  
vain. Can you hear me, brothers?

Some workmen go by lugging new thatch. Malkin is with  
them.

**MALKIN**

(gently)

We hear you, Greil.

**GREIL**

Well and good, but I'm Greil no  
longer. Call me Gregorius, after the  
Bishop of Rome.

Malkin and the others stop to listen.

**GREIL**

I saw him die. Like Our Lord Jesus  
on the cross he was, scourged by

evil. But he showed no fear. Such is  
the power of the Holy Ghost.

**BLACKSMITH SHOP**

looking out

Galen lurks in the shadows of Simon's metal shop  
on the square where Greil is holding forth.

**GREIL**

Of what avail is magic? The old gods  
died with our daughters. From whence  
comest my help? My help comest from  
the Lord!

into  
heat

Galen quietly shuts and bars the door. He moves deeper  
the gloomy workroom where Simon is pumping a bellows to  
up the forge. Galen looks at the coals.

**SIMON**

Good and hot.

**GALEN**

Don't bother. That's not the kind of  
fire we need.

in  
and

Valerian is staring at the sword, sitting on the anvil  
its silk wrapping. Galen uncovers it, holds it high,  
puts his hand on the amulet.

**GALEN**

Nunc, per Potestatem Hermeticum --  
ex flammis, ferrum sangrinarium!

outward  
white.  
corners.  
takes up  
their  
out

The sword starts to hum and to heat up. From the hilt  
the blade glows brighter and brighter: red, orange,  
It lights up the room, throwing long shadows into the  
Galen lays the white hot steel on the anvil. Simon  
his hammer and begins the reforging. Valerian sees  
resolve. After watching for several moments she slips  
the side door, looking sad.

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY - DAY**

lair  
from  
rock  
than  
mouth of  
hiss!  
shadows is  
stubby  
to  
little

Clouds scud low over the lifeless region. The dragon's  
now has a newer, bigger entrance. Vapors drift upward  
it. Down the slope a lonely figure works its way from  
to rock: it's Valerian with a wicker basket on her arm,  
searching for dragon scales. The basket is already more  
half full when she finds herself ominously near the  
the cavern. She's about to turn back when she spies a  
particularly large and beautiful scale just a few yards  
further on. As she reaches for it, there is a sudden  
She jerks her hand back and freezes. There in the  
a baby dragon, a basilisk, all coppery bronze with  
winglets. As she backs away, she sees two more come up  
join the first. They watch her retreat through wicked  
green eyes.

**CUT TO:**

**STREAM - DAY**

sword.  
walks to  
down  
results.  
they  
Such  
not a  
agog

On the mossy bank Galen and Simon unwrap the reforged  
Now the blade carries a faint blue halation. Galen  
the middle of the current and once again stabs the tip  
into the sand. Then he rejoins Simon onshore to await  
This time, as the oak leaves approach the sharp edge,  
gently but definitely veer sideways to avoid contact.  
is the power of the sword that even after many leaves,  
single one has come close enough to be sliced. Simon is  
and even Galen seems satisfied. They clasp hands.

**SIMON**

An edge like no other on this earth.

**GALEN**

Well done, Simon. Thank you.

Simon hands him a bundle of fighting equipment.

**SIMON**

(grave)

I'll say goodbye to Valerian for you. I'm sorry she's not here, but you know how she is.

**GALEN**

I understand.

They look at each other for what could be the last time.

**SIMON**

Fare thee well.

The old man departs. Galen unfolds the bundle and brings out its contents: mail hauberk with coif, studded leather gloves, padded jerkin, a scabbard and a small wooden shield. He lays them out on the stream bank, then strips off his tunic and kneels down to splash some water in his face. As the cups the water between his hands, an image comes alive and shimmers on the surface: Valerian, stripping off her own clothes, shyly turning toward him, solemn and romantic.

**VALERIAN**

Galen.

It's as if the vision is speaking to him, but it's not. He spins around and sees her standing there, fully clothed, and possessed of a brisk and businesslike air.

**VALERIAN**

Here.

She throws down a shield. It's remarkable in its construction -- overlapping layers of iridescent dragon scales have been ingeniously fastened to a leather-clad frame.

**VALERIAN**

It's a shield. I made it. Might keep the fire off you. Might not. You know, you're an idiot. You're going to die tonight. You'll be ripped limb from limb. This is the last time I'll ever speak to you.

He Galen turns the shield over and over, marveling at it. fixes her with a piercing look.

**GALEN**

Thank you.

**VALERIAN**

(rushing)

Another thing. That thing isn't alone up there. There's little ones. Young, I think. I don't know how many.

She's She shudders. Galen's eyes are still fastened on her. and fighting to retain her hard manner, but the agitation and dread are plain.

**GALEN**

Hatchlings. They'll have to be killed too. Anything else?

can't Valerian wants to be bold, but on this final point, muster the courage.

**VALERIAN**

(tiny voice)

You're in love, aren't you?

**GALEN**

(slowly nodding)

Yes.

**VALERIAN**

That's all right. I understand. She's very beautiful, very brave.

**GALEN**

Who is? What do you mean?

**VALERIAN**

Your Princess. But I don't care. It doesn't change the way I feel.

(firm)

Listen to me, Galen Bradwardyn, sorcerer's apprentice; you're going to be dead, the dragon will be worse than ever, there will be more lotteries, and I'm not a boy any more.

**GALEN**

And you'll be eligible because --

**VALERIAN**

Because I'm still a virgin, and I want you to do something about it.

her  
Galen takes her in his arms; she is trembling. He tilts  
face up toward his and kisses her.

**GALEN**

I am in love. But not with the Princess.

ripples  
Their image is reflected in the waters. Through the  
clothes.  
she is visible pulling briefly away to remove her

overarching  
From afar, they are two tiny figures under the  
oaks and willows. They embrace and sink down into the  
deep  
grass beside the water. The leaves continue their  
unhurried  
course downstream.

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY - NIGHT**

dragon's  
finish  
A cold wind whistles through the rocks near the  
lair. By the light of a flickering torch two workmen

pair  
coming  
the  
Elspeth  
Bringing up  
post.  
Horsrik  
begins

driving a heavy post into the ground. As they affix a  
of iron manacles they see the torches of a procession  
up the slope. They hurry down to meet it. Horsrik is in  
lead, followed by soldiers and royal attendants.  
rides in the tumbril behind a blindfolded horse.  
the rear is Tyrian. At last the cart can go no further.  
Elspeth alights and leads the rest of the troop to the  
As the soldiers put the irons around her wrists,  
unrolls a parchment, turns his back on the wind and  
to read:

**HORSRIK**

Now be it known throughout the  
kingdom, that the Princess, having  
been chosen by a deed of fortune and  
destiny --

middle  
cries  
of  
as if  
startled

Horsrik blinks. There's a black stain growing in the  
of the parchment; all at once it bursts into flames. He  
out and flings the document away. There follows a flash  
light and a puff of smoke and Galen is standing there,  
he had materialized out of thin air. Horsrik and his  
men backpedal down the slope.

**HORSRIK**

No fire, I beg you.

Galen raises his hands in a menacing gesture.

**GALEN**

Be gone!

soldiers

That's enough for Horsrik and company: he and the  
depart.

**HORSRIK**

(over his shoulder)  
I declare these proceedings duly

ordained...

sorcerer: Only one man remains behind the challenge the young  
Tyrian. He draws his sword.

**TYRIAN**

I knew I'd find you here. Well, I'm not as sentimental as some. The kingdom, every one of us, need this sacrifice. If you intend to interfere, you'll have to kill me.

**GALEN**

I've got plenty of reasons to kill you that have nothing to do with this sacrifice.

air Galen draws his own sword. As it emerges into the night  
it seems imbued with a blue phosphorescence.

**TYRIAN**

Most impressive. Can you use it?

Elsbeth twists around in her chains.

**ELSPETH**

Let it be! Please! Tyrian is right -- it's our only hope!

wavers,  
his  
Tyrian  
drops  
steel  
counter-  
backs  
Galen starts to reply, but as soon as his attention  
Tyrian is lunging toward him, sword point directed at  
neck. Galen barely manages to parry the thrust before  
is at him again, blade swinging toward his knees. Galen  
the tip of his sword to catch the blow. When the two  
edges connect, sparks fly. In a series of thrusts and  
thrusts, each accompanied by a shower of sparks, Tyrian  
Galen up the mountain.

**ELSPETH**

Tyrian -- both of you -- run! Flee!  
It's coming!

moan  
rising

Sure enough, at that moment the earth gives out a low  
and undulates in a sickening movement. Vapors begin  
from the lair.

**TYRIAN**

In a trice! This is no swords-man.

slope.  
he  
chains.

He might be right, for Galen turns and bolts across the  
When he reaches the post with Tyrian two steps behind,  
whirls and brings his blade down on Princess Elspeth's  
The chains part in an explosion of sparks.

**GALEN**

Run! Get out of here!

down to  
the

The Princess darts from the piling as Tyrian swoops  
continue the attack. Galen dodges and the stake catches  
Tyrian's blow. The earth shakes again. Galen glances at  
Princess.

**GALEN**

No! Stop! What are you doing?

she  
smoking  
dismayed  
into

Elspeth is not running away down the mountain. Instead  
is walking, slowly and deliberately, right into the  
cave. Swoosh! Tyrian's sword comes down again. The  
sorcerer ducks back and Tyrian's blade again bites deep  
the wood.

**TYRIAN**

You've failed, my friend, and I thank  
the gods for it. Come out from behind  
that post.

grits  
it as  
slows

It's now or never. Elspeth is no longer in sight. Galen  
his teeth, grasps the sword with two hands and swings  
hard as he can in a wide arc. The blade never even

clean  
eagerly  
startled  
eyes  
backward --

down as it sails right through the post, lopping it off. The glowing sword flashes above Galen's head and buries itself in Tyrian's chest. The King's man is as by the amputated piling as he is by his own death. His roll up in his head, his knees buckle and he topples the blade sliding free.

#### **DRAGON'S LAIR**

holding  
blue

Smoke swirls at the mouth of the cave as Galen enters, his sword before him, lighting his way with its faint glow.

#### **GALEN**

Elspeth!

mountain is  
with  
insects  
getting  
sound  
squealing.  
he  
The  
rounds a

The floor of the cave as it winds down into the paved first with rock, then with dragon scales, then bones. With each footfall, clusters of mysterious scuttle away. Galen pauses to mop his brow; it's hot. A sound echoes up from the depths, a grinding like the gnashing of teeth, followed by hissing and Galen grips his sword tighter and pushes on. Suddenly stoops and picks up an embroidered slipper: Elspeth's. grinding sounds are louder. He hurries forward and corner. He stops and gags.

#### **BASILISKS**

- are  
feeding  
groans:

Two disgusting little reptiles -- like scaly raccoons -- perched on the corpse of Princess Elspeth Ulfilas, contentiously on choice bits of the royal flesh. Galen

monsters.

hisses a  
slices it  
around  
one,  
be a  
comes  
it  
across  
creature's

he lashes out and his sword beheads one of the tiny  
The other one buzzes its half-formed winglets and  
hot stream of air. Galen brings down the sword and  
in half. Eyes riveted on Elspeth's remains, he edges  
the carnage and backs away. Hissss! -- there's a third  
lurking in the shadows, munching on something; it might  
hand. Galen shrieks and jumps away. The little creature  
at him and clamps its jaws on his leg. Galen stabs at  
repeatedly. Finally it lets go, and flails and flops  
the bloody floor, ululating its death agony. As the  
last mewlings echo down through the cavern, the ground  
quivers. Bits of stone fall from the ceiling.

#### **LAKE OF FIRE**

are  
before,  
sweat  
further on  
flickering  
vista  
surface  
is a  
chimneys.  
the  
The  
stones

Galen works his way down a narrow passage whose walls  
alive with insects and beads of sulphurous water. As  
he holds the sword in front of him; he marvels at its  
increasing brightness. The heat is increasing too;  
mats his hair and runs down his face. A few yards  
the sword starts pulsating. Now the walls take on a  
rosy sheen and the passage widens into an underground  
of staggering immensity: an underground lake, its  
bubbling and torn with sheets of flame. Arching over it  
vault of stone, penetrated here and there by natural  
The dimensions of this internal world are unknown --  
fiery lake disappears into half a dozen side chambers.  
one clear path is accessible only by a series of flat

and

leading across the hot liquid. Galen grips his sword resolutely hops from rock to rock.

### **VERMITHRAX**

stepping

over his

Galen

shield,

on

under

lipless

hinges

the

tube of

scale

life.

his

clothing

with

He's halfway across when the earth rumbles and the stones teeter beneath his feet. A fiery wave washes legs, leaving his boots smoking. Another tremor knocks to his knees. As he scrabbles to pick up his sword and the great head of Vermithrax rises up out of the depths its long neck. It gazes at him through huge pale eyes armored lids. A tongue flicks out and runs around its mouth. The head sways from side to side. The mouth open, the nostril-like igniters come on and touch off jet of gas squeezed up out of its innards. A roaring flame engulfs Galen. He crouches behind his dragon shield which deflects the fire just enough to save his life. The dragon pauses to take a breath. Galen springs to feet, and bounds back the way he came, his skin and singed. Flames lick at his back as the dragon lets fly a second burst.

### **TUNNEL**

tunnel,

dragons. A

clawing

surveys

low,

Coughing and weeping, Galen staggers up through the nearly tripping over the body of one of the baby few seconds later, Vermithrax follows, squirming and its way upward. When it reaches its dead offspring it the scene with expressionless eyes. Bringing its head it sniffs and nudges at the lifeless little ones.

### **AMBUSH**

the  
point  
and  
is an  
and  
half  
and  
movements  
him,  
him.

At that moment Galen leaps out from behind a niche in the tunnel wall and lunges forward. Striking sparks, the point of his sword slides across the dragon's plated cheek and stabs deep between the scales of its heavy neck. There is an unearthly shriek and the creature flicks its head back and upward. Galen goes sprawling and finds himself holding half a sword. The rest is buried in the beast's neck, and Vermithrax doesn't like it. It flings its head this way and that, knocking rocks loose from the ceiling. Its movements cause the ground to quake. As boulders tumble around him, Galen drops to the floor under his shield. Dragon flame reaches through the cascading debris and washes over him.

### **CUT TO:**

### **DAWN**

dragon's  
- the  
charred  
picks  
sees

Valerian roams the rock-strewn slope not far from the lair. Presently she comes upon a once-familiar object - the fire shield. Half the scales are gone, the rest are charred and curling. Grimly, she moves on. A few paces away she picks up the blunted sword. She scans the rocks and finally sees what she's looking for.

### **GALEN**

charred,  
him  
her.

He's lying face down behind a boulder, his clothes patches of skin scorched. He looks dead. Valerian rolls onto his back. She gasps: the eyes are open, regarding her.

### **GALEN**

Still alive.

**CUT TO:**

**BLACKSMITH SHOP - DAY**

his Simon is standing by the anvil with the broken sword in  
hand, lost in thought.

**HOUSE**

He's In the adjoining house Valerian tends Galen's wounds.  
propped up on a palette enduring the application of  
poultices.

**VALERIAN**

You know what we have to do.  
(he looks at her with  
dull eyes)  
We have to leave Urland.

He winces in pain.

**VALERIAN**

Not because of what happened. I  
brought you here -- it didn't work --  
now I'm taking you away. Do you  
understand?  
(Galen does not react)  
You said you loved me. Is it true?  
If it is, it's the only good we've  
done. Let's not lose that too.  
(pause)  
Galen?

tears. He seems miles away. She turns aside, on the verge of  
Simon is standing there, still holding the sword hilt.

**SIMON**

She's right. What kind of a life  
could you have here? It's too late  
for me, but you're young enough.  
(he shows them the  
sword)  
You know what I think? Magic is dying  
out, fading from the world. But that  
makes me happy. That means the dragon  
will be dying too.

and Galen looks at him; he has heard everything. He sits up fondly regards Valerian.

**PACKING**

item Galen packs her belongings into a rucksack. The last in is her blue frock, carefully rolled. Beside her, Galen dons clean traveling clothes. He stiffly crosses the room and drags his pack out of the corner. He sorts through the effects, and amidst the clothing and supplies discovers the leather pouch containing Ulrich's remains. He contemplates it.

**VALERIAN**

What's that?

**GALEN**

Nothing. I was just thinking -- poor Hodge.

ties He tucks the pouch away, throws some clothes on top and the satchel shut.

**CUT TO:**

**STREAM - DAY**

young Beside the quiet stream Simon bids farewell to the shallow couple, embracing each in turn. They slosh across the water and follow a path into the woods.

**CUT TO:**

**VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY**

to Greil is standing outside the half-burned grange hall, summoning the Christian faithful. He proclaims the call

townsfolk

worship by hammering on a small bell. One by one the  
arrive. Among them is Simon, looking bereft.

**CUT TO:**

**FOREST PATH - DAY**

Valerian and Galen trudge along side by side.

**VALERIAN**

How's your leg?

**GALEN**

Hurts. That thing was small, but its  
teeth were sharp.

**VALERIAN**

At least you killed it. You got all  
the young.

This is small consolation, and Galen sighs.

**GALEN**

But the big one's alive. Somewhere  
down in that burning lake.

**VALERIAN**

Don't think about it. You had your  
fight, and you're still here. That's  
more than anyone else can say. Let's  
think about what lies ahead.

longer at

She reaches out to take his hand. But Galen is no  
her side. She stops and looks back.

**GALEN**

He's

inspiration

his

back,

Galen has come to a halt in the middle of the path.  
staring into the middle distance with a sudden  
bubbling in his brain. He flings off his sack, drops to  
knees and tears through the contents. Valerian comes  
baffled. Galen's gear is strewn all over the trail.

**VALERIAN**

What are you doing?

leather

Galen comes up with what he's looking for -- the sack. When he replies, it is not to her, but to Ulrich:

**GALEN**

You old trickster! The burning water!  
The lake of fire!

**VALERIAN**

Galen, what are you saying?

He regards her with astonishment.

**GALEN**

He had it planned. He knew this was going to happen.

**VALERIAN**

Who did? What happened?

**GALEN**

We've got to go back, I want to talk to him!

the He heads back down the trail, leaving his belongings on road.

**VALERIAN**

Where are you going?

She hurries after him.

**CUT TO:**

**GRANGE HALL - DAY**

burned- Greil, a.k.a. Gregorious, stands in the center of the filling out granary, delivering a sermon. Behind him, men are the baptismal cistern.

**GREIL**

The Church is mother to us all. Not just one lonely orphan who has lost his way, not just a few, but all of us that believeth in Him. When enough voices come together in prayer, He shall hear, we shall live and the

beast shall die.

fabulous  
In the gathering Simon ponders the hilt of his once  
sword. With its blade shortened, it looks a lot like a  
crucifix.

**CUT TO:**

**DRAGON COUNTRY - DAY**

manage,  
Galen bounds up the rocky slope as fast as he can  
trailed by a desperate Valerian.

**VALERIAN**

Galen, stop! Please, I beg you!

fury,  
But Galen pays no attention. In a burst of speed and  
Valerian comes up behind and tackles him.

**VALERIAN**

Stop! I won't let you kill yourself.

Galen waves the leather pouch in Valerian's face.

**GALEN**

He couldn't walk -- he knew he  
couldn't make the journey. So he had  
us make the journey for him! Don't  
you see?

He jumps up and runs to the mouth of the lair.

**VALERIAN**

(pursuing)

No!

She tackles him again.

**VALERIAN**

All right, all right. You're going  
in there, I'm going too.

**GALEN**

(brought up short)

What? Why? No you're not, this is my  
job. Absolutely not.

lair. But Valerian springs to her feet and starts into the

**VALERIAN**

I'm not afraid. And you're not going to stop me. After all -- I've been a man longer than you have.

near Galen pauses long enough to snatch up a discarded torch her. the remains of the wooden stake, then charges after

**UNDERGROUND**

Galen Running footsteps resound in the steamy passageway and the comes around the corner holding his torch high to light way. Valerian stumbles after him. He grabs her hand.

**GALEN**

Stay close.

Down and down they go. Soon they reach Elspeth's body.

**VALERIAN**

What's that?

**GALEN**

Never mind. Come on.

see. But she pulls the torch from his hand and goes over to

**GALEN**

All right. Wait here.

see He darts off. In the flickering torchlight Valerian can the Princess' remains all too clearly. She suppresses a scream.

**VALERIAN**

Galen? Galen? Where are you?

doesn't No answer. The torch reveals several passages. She know which one to take.

**LAKE OF FIRE**

on  
water  
and  
dragon.  
stones to  
pouch.

The passage widens out and once again Galen is standing  
the shores of the lake of fire. He looks around. The  
is rolling with bubbles of gas, and flames run hither  
yon across the surface, but there is no sign of the  
Gathering his courage, he hops across the stepping  
the middle of the lake. There he hurriedly opens the

**GALEN**

*Ex favilla, vita nova!*

Ulrich's  
there  
no  
another and  
Still no

Gripping the amulet with his free hand, he scatters  
ashes in a wide arc over the burning water. Instantly,  
is an ominous rumble and the earth gives a shrug. But  
wizard appears. No dragon, either. There follows  
stronger quake. Galen crouches to keep his balance.  
wizard.

**OUTSIDE**

daylight.  
against  
Squinting  
what

Thoroughly bewildered, Valerian stumbles out into  
She wanders a few yards down the slope and collapses  
the stake. Something is strange: it's getting dark.  
up at the sun, she frowns in puzzlement, then gazes at  
is happening.

**ECLIPSE**

slides  
crepuscular

Slowly and ponderously the black disk of the moon  
over the face of the sun, plunging the world into  
half-light.

**CUT TO:**

**GRANGE HALL - DAY**

sudden The congregation is confused and frightened by the  
darkness.

**GREIL**

Be calm. He watcheth over us! And  
this is His sign! Let us pray! Our  
Father who art in heaven...

well. The faithful bow their heads and join in. Simon as

**CUT TO:**

**LAKE OF FIRE**

stares The earthquakes have subsided; the water is calm. Galen  
themselves bleakly into the flames. As he watches, they gather  
becomes into a lazy spiral. Gradually the spiral speeds up and  
as a vortex. Now the flames become tinged with green, and  
takes the cavern moans with the sound of rushing air, a form  
supine shape at the crest of a jet of flame. It is Ulrich,  
as upon his pyre, reforming before Galen's eyes.

**GALEN**

Ulrich! Magister! Over here! I can  
see you! Over here!

**ULRICH**

(looks at him)  
Not so loud. I'm not deaf, you know.

strides He slowly raises himself into an upright posture and  
through the flames.

**ULRICH**

Sic redit magus ex terra mortis.

The apprentice throws himself at his master's feet.

**GALEN**

Wonder of wonders -- you're back! I  
thank the powers that made me!

**ULRICH**

Glad to see you, too. You didn't bring along anything to eat, by any chance?

**GALEN**

Food?

**ULRICH**

No? Oh well, no time anyway.

**OUTSIDE**

anxiously  
from  
Valerian is standing in the unearthly twilight,  
peering into the mouth of the lair. Suddenly she is hit  
behind by a gust of wind. She does not turn to see the  
enormous Vermithrax alighting silently behind her.

**GALEN & ULRICH**

Ulrich raises Galen to his feet.

**ULRICH**

Come along. There's much to be done.

**GALEN**

Wait, I have something to tell you.

**ULRICH**

It can wait.

**GALEN**

No it can't. Listen: I thought I was a sorcerer -- but I wasn't. I thought I had power -- but I didn't. I thought I was you -- but I'm not.

He hangs his head. Ulrich regards him steadily.

**ULRICH**

Well said. Now hurry.

the  
tunnel.  
He leads the way across the rocks to the shore and into

**VALERIAN**

is  
stands  
sways  
Valerian  
her  
but a  
direction

Time seems to have come to a stop. Overhead, the moon  
locked in front of the sun. At the lair, Valerian  
frozen as the dragon leans over her. The great head  
from side to side. The jaws hinge open. Suddenly,  
recovers herself and makes a run for it, leaping and  
scrabbling over the rocks. A plume of flame licks at  
heels. She sees a protective crevice and heads for it,  
winged claw drops to block her way. She changes  
and is cut off again. Cat and mouse.

#### **VERMITHRAX**

hopeless  
beast  
catching a  
the

The pale yellow eyes stare implacably down at the  
victim. The igniter jets come on, then off, as the  
suddenly stiffens. The head rotates, almost as if  
new scent. Finally the eyes focus on the entrance to  
cavern.

#### **ULRICH**

regarding

There is the sorcerer, leaning on Galen, coolly  
the creature. The old man's expression hardens.

#### **ULRICH**

Draco draconis...

flaps  
with a

The dragon lifts its wings as if to menace them, then  
twice and is airborne. The thing shoots overhead and,  
rush of wind, flies off into the gloom.

#### **IN THE ROCKS**

Valerian struggles out of her hiding place.

#### **VALERIAN**

Galen!

Ulrich Galen runs to her. They embrace. When they look up,  
is at their side.

**ULRICH**

Where's my amulet? Give it to me,  
please.

finds Galen's hand locates the jewel under his shirt. He  
himself reluctant to part with it.

nearby With a hurricane howl, a column of flame touches down  
sweeps and rushes toward them. They stagger back as the dragon  
past.

**ULRICH**

Be quick!

around Galen hands his treasure over. Ulrich closes his hand  
it.

**ULRICH**

Come close to me.

suffused Galen and Valerian approach. The old man's hand is  
turning with an internal glow. Behind them, the dragon is  
for another pass.

**VORTEX**

the All at once the glow brightens, and in another instant  
in a world spins off into a blur, setting all three afloat  
other timeless netherworld. Valerian and Galen cling to each  
in terror.

**ULRICH**

Don't be afraid. You have served me  
with great courage. Now you must  
show me you have even more.

**GALEN**

Anything!

Starlike  
recognizable  
of

The voices seem to be coming from a huge distance.  
gleams whiz by, and fleeting glimpses of half-  
faces and forms. The wizard's eyes are like glittering  
crystals. Tiny motes and planetoids dance in the hairs  
his beard. He seems wreathed in luminescence.

**ULRICH**

You must destroy the amulet, and me  
along with it.

**GALEN**

No!

**ULRICH**

You brought me from the flames, you  
must send me back.

**GALEN**

I can't.

**ULRICH**

When the time comes, you'll  
understand. Here.

reluctantly

He dangles the amulet in front of Galen. Even more  
than he let it go, he takes it back.

**MOUNTAIN TOP**

atop a  
farms  
at

Abruptly, the vortex is gone and they find themselves  
rocky crag overlooking the eclipse-darkened fields and  
of Urland. Galen glances at his surroundings and stares  
the amulet, full of awe.

**ULRICH**

I know what you're thinking. You  
have learned much and done well.  
Don't worry, you won't need it any  
more.

**CUT TO:**

**GRANGE HALL - DAY**

the Greil is urging Simon, the last of the converts, into  
cistern.

**GREIL**

Make haste, brother.

He dips Simon's head under water.

**GREIL**

Now be thou baptized in the name of  
the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. May  
the Lord our God light our way.

through In the background, half the congregation is staring  
again. A the burned-out walls, fervently praying and crossing  
over themselves, wondering if they'll ever see the sun  
the cry goes up: a shape crosses the solar corona, wheels  
the village and streaks away toward the mountains --  
dragon.

**CUT TO:**

**MOUNTAIN TOP**

watch Galen and Valerian peer out from behind a boulder and  
cliff. The Ulrich hobble perilously close to the edge of the  
old man spreads wide his arms and tilts his head back.

**ULRICH**

Nimbus! Tempestas! Fulmen!

down From over the horizon roiling inky-black clouds churn  
whips upon them. Thunder booms and echoes. A bitter wind  
in on their clothing. As the storm gathers fury, the dragon  
makes a reappears, circling in the distance. Finally it homes  
beast's the mountain crag and dives at Ulrich. The conjurer  
past. gesture and strokes of lightning explode against the  
scaly flanks. It emits a high thin scream and rockets

**GALEN & VALERIAN**

of  
Valerian crawls away and comes back with a hefty chunk  
granite.

**VALERIAN**

Here. Do as he said. Smash it.

**GALEN**

Not if it means killing him.

**ULRICH**

clouds  
lightning  
splits  
He resolutely waits as the dragon banks against the  
and starts another pass. Again, the sorcerer summons  
bolts. But the dragon keeps coming; this time a talon  
the old man's cape.

**GALEN & VALERIAN**

to  
Valerian wrestles the amulet away from Galen. It falls  
the ground.

**VALERIAN**

You heard what he said.

She lifts the chunk of stone. Galen grabs for it.

**GALEN**

No! You can't!

**THE LAST ATTACK**

earthward.  
folds  
the  
Vermithrax spirals up into the storm, then drops  
Ulrich watches as the beast comes straight at him. He  
his arms and bows his head. Leathery wings humming, the  
creature levels out, swoops up past the crag and lifts  
master magician away in its huge hind claw.

**ULRICH**

Galen!

circling Galen and Valerian are horrified to see the dragon  
upward with the sorcerer writhing in agony in its grip.  
As the monstrous thing flies high over them, they can hear  
Ulrich's faint screams.

#### **DEATH**

Now Galen understands. He seizes the granite block from  
Valerian and raises it with both hands over his head.  
He takes a final look at the amulet, glowing at his feet,  
then brings the rock down with all his might. There is a  
blinding flash as it shatters into a million fragments.  
Far above there is another blinding flash as Ulrich's  
earthly body explodes against the belly of the beast. The  
darkened sky lights up as huge gouts of flame spew forth from  
the dragon's gut. Wings fluttering uselessly, this  
reptilian torch plummets to the ground.

#### **LAKE**

Below, a stock pond nestled in the foothill pastures.  
Trailing a wake of flame, Vermithrax plunges like a comet into  
the water. There is a stupendous splash and eruption of  
steam.

#### **GALEN & VALERIAN**

They stare down from their lofty perch, watching as  
further explosions boil the water from the pond.

#### **ECLIPSE**

Behind a tattered wrack of cloud, the moon slowly  
uncovers a pale sun.

**DISSOLVE:**

**THE CARCASS - DAY**

Galen  
blackened  
scales to  
upside  
surprise.  
toward  
toward the

Grey misty light reveals the beast's mangled remains.  
and Valerian emerge from the fog, walk under a  
wing and make their way through the mud and loose  
the huge charred head. The death agony has twisted it  
down. The mouth is frozen in a grotesque look of  
The eyes are glazed. Now the sound of voices floats  
them, chanting an ancient hymn. A moment later a mob of  
Christians, led by Greil, crests a hill and moves  
hulk. The song ends.

**GREIL**

Let us pray.

The members of the congregation fall to their knees.

**GREIL**

We thank thee, Lord, for this divine  
deliverance. Verily is thy presence  
amongst us, fully manifest in this,  
thy great work.

hand.

Galen and Valerian look at each other. She takes his

**GREIL**

Arise, children of the Lord and  
forsake evermore the pagan mysteries.  
Rejoice in the true power of the  
Christian God!

into the

Galen turns and leads Valerian away. They disappear  
mist.

**DISSOLVE:**

**FLENSING - DAY**

tipped up  
the

In the clear light of a new day, ladders have been  
against the creature's back. Teams of men swarm over

burial.  
sledges. In  
open

crusted flesh, slicing off long strips for piecemeal  
Below, yoked oxen drag the heavy carrion away on  
the background other workmen dump the remains into an  
pit.

**THE KING**

royal  
open  
eyes  
dragon  
Horsrik

With the crack of a whip and the clatter of hooves, the  
coach pulls up to the shore of the lake. A door creaks  
and King Casiodorus totters out. His face is puffy, his  
are red. He slogs through the mud to the head of the  
and commences hacking at it with a ceremonial sword.  
steps out of the coach and draws himself up.

**HORSRIK**

(loud)

All hail Casiodorus Rex -- Dragon  
slayer!

pronouncement  
they

The workers pause long enough to listen to this  
and cast a glance at the sorry spectacle. Wordlessly  
resume their labors.

**HORSRIK**

(nodding)

Hail and praise be!

**DISSOLVE:**

**ON THE ROAD - DAY**

by  
hot  
him.

The trail leads through copses and open meadows. Side  
side, Galen and Valerian march up a long slope under a  
sun. He limps a bit; she finds a staff and hands it to

**VALERIAN**

You want to rest?

**GALEN**

No. I'm fine.

**VALERIAN**

You miss Ulricn.

**GALEN**

Yes.

**VALERIAN**

And the amulet.

**GALEN**

That too.

**VALERIAN**

Not me. I'm glad it's gone. I'm glad you did what you did.

(he doesn't reply)

You may not be a sorcerer, Galen, but I love you anyway. I don't regret anything that happened. I just wish --

**GALEN**

Yes?

**VALERIAN**

(sighs)

-- that we had a horse.

and  
is a  
canters  
and  
Galen falls a step behind. He briefly closes his eyes  
mutters something. They walk on a few paces. Then there  
whinny from the nearby woods and a white stallion  
forth. It crosses a meadow, comes right up to Valerian  
nuzzles her.

**VALERIAN**

What is this?

**GALEN**

A horse.

**VALERIAN**

Did you...!?

**GALEN**

No. It must have been wandering loose.  
Or wild.

Galen climbs aboard. He reaches out to help her up.

**VALERIAN**

Wait a minute. I just wished for a horse and here it is.

**GALEN**

You don't want to wish it gone, do you?

Galen touches the horse's flanks with his heels and they ride off.

She thinks for a moment, then lets him help her up.

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**THE END**