

"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.

AIRBORNE

and

margins

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.

GALEN

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

ULRICH

(a shout)

We have visitors!

CUT TO:

ROTUNDA - NIGHT

hall

dusty

fineboned

his

before

glumly at

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

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
the warmth.

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

ULRICH

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

his
courage and speaks.

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

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 table for Ulrich's inspection.

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

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

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

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.

Hodge mutters something inaudible and grimly keeps packing.

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.

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

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 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 the leather pouch containing Ulrich's ashes. Reassured it's still with him, he tucks it away again. Galen 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. kneels beside him. The uneasy company keeps its 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
where the cave had its opening. With yells and whoops
beat the ground with clubs. In the crowd Simon begins
smile, then to laugh. Soon he leads the villagers in a
tumultuous cheer. Brother Jacopus and some of his
drop to their knees and pray.

CUT TO:

CELEBRATION

square
The inhabitants of Swanscombe have decked out the town

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 horse around. The King's men are coming toward him with pikes. Digging his heels into the horse's sides, he urges the animal back across the courtyard, up the steps and right into the building!

THRONE ROOM

throne
soldiers.

Galen gallops into the empty chamber, knocking over the throne and vaulting a table. Hot on his heels are armed soldiers. 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 contingent of footmen from the opposite direction. Galen rides them into the walls!

STAIRS

against
with

The horse scrabbles up the stairs, Galen tucked low against its neck. On the upper landing he comes face to face with 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 pulls 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

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

of

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

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

the

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
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-
filling

Greil, a.k.a. Gregorious, stands in the center of the 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 gapes 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

Valerian is standing in the unearthly twilight, anxiously peering into the mouth of the lair. Suddenly she is hit from 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.

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

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