

CANTERBURIED TALES

screenplay by

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Based on the graphic novel,
Canterburied Tales

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Sunlight pierces through a thick canopy of trees that arch high above the underbrush.

A man, clean shaven and dressed in medieval clothes, strolls through the forest with a woman. This is GEOFFREY CHAUCER, late forties, he carries a satchel with a rolled parchment and quill poking out of it.

Chaucer lovingly kisses the woman's hand. She wears a wedding band of nobility. This is PHILIPPA CHAUCER, early forties, her fair, plain face wrinkles as she laughs.

Chaucer's face darkens a moment.

PHILIPPA CHAUCER

What is it?

Chaucer feigns a smile.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Last night I had visions that the
Grim Reaper stole you from me...
and I gave up on writing.

Philippa laughs.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

What is so funny? I dreamt you
were dead.

Flesh rots away from Philippa's face as she laughs.

The forest cascades into darkness, but it's still daylight behind Chaucer.

Philippa blows him a kiss. She disappears.

Chaucer's gaze darts around the forest.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Philippa?

Fog rapidly rolls in around him.

He sprints faster and faster. Daylight remains close behind.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Philippa!

He searches every shadow. He races further into the forest.

He stops. Catches his breath.

The moon moves overhead.

Moonlight reflects off something on the ground. It's Philippa's wedding ring.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Philippa?

A woman's bloodcurdling scream.

Chaucer snaps around.

Another scream.

In the distance, a shadowy figure of a NAKED WOMAN tied to a tree by her ankles. She hangs over a cauldron.

Chaucer races towards her.

As he nears the woman, he slows to a halt and stares at her, mouth agape. She's a doppelganger for Philippa Chaucer, except her face is younger and contorted with fear.

Her body lashes about over the cauldron as she struggles.

NAKED WOMAN

Help me.

Tears stream down the woman's face.

NAKED WOMAN

You must help me, good sir. Please!

Movement in the shadows catches her eye. Twigs snap.

NAKED WOMAN

It's coming back.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

It?

NAKED WOMAN

Hurry!

Chaucer reaches up to the rope around her ankles.

The woman's eyes widen with horror.

NAKED WOMAN

No!

Chaucer glances up.

A blade cuts down between them.

Chaucer stumbles backwards.

The blade splays open the woman's torso.

Blood sprays across Chaucer's face.

Her blood and guts fill the cauldron.

Chaucer cowers backwards as a decrepit WITCH stirs the blood, forming a thick, red wax.

The witch glances at Chaucer.

He gasps.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Stay back.

The witch swings out her arms as she turns into a giant, fierce crow.

Chaucer runs towards daylight.

Daylight races away from him, until...

FOREST - NIGHT

The crow flies after Chaucer, its sharp beak tearing at his flesh.

Chaucer stumbles and falls.

He grabs a thick, fallen branch and swings it at the crow.

The branch passes through the crow as it separates into five smaller crows.

The crows swoop down at Chaucer. Their squawks are deafening.

Chaucer shields his face as their beaks tear flesh from his bones.

BLACK.

Silence. Slits of bright light.

EXT. HEAVEN - DAY

Chaucer slowly lowers his arms. He's in a pure white, heavenly-like room.

An angel steps out of the light and smiles down at him. It's Philippa Chaucer.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Am I dead?

Philippa Chaucer shakes her head.

She grabs at her face and cries out in pain.

Her angelic flesh cracks, crumbles and burns up into that of a damned soul.

Horns tear through her flesh.

She grabs Chaucer by the throat and throws him down.

They fall into...

INT. HELL - NIGHT

Searing hot flames burn all around Chaucer.

Demons tear him limb from limb as his demon-like wife watches.

Chaucer cries out.

PHILIPPA CHAUCER

On the toll of four tales, all
shall be hers, harbinger of death.

Demon Philippa cries out as her skin contorts and cracks.

White light burns through her.

Her features soften into that of an angel.

She pulls Chaucer up into...

EXT. HEAVEN - DAY

Philippa yanks him up from the fiery pits of hell into a room of shattered light.

Tears stream down Philippa's pained expression.

PHILIPPA CHAUCER

Someone has shifted the balance
between good and evil. You must
go on the pilgrimage. Go to the
Tabard Inn.

There's banging from somewhere.

Philippa presses a red-hot amulet into the palm of Chaucer's right hand.

The banging grows louder.

Chaucer cries out as smoke pours off his hand, enclosing him in darkness.

INT. CHAUCER'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

A dimly lit, dusty room.

Plates of untouched, rotting food are scattered around the floor and shelves.

A tap at the door.

Rats scurry around an unkempt, festering corpse-like man, dressed in black. The only sign of life is the rapid rise and fall of his chest.

He bolts awake. This is Geoffrey Chaucer, merely a shadow of the man from his dream.

Knock knock.

As he wipes sweat from his brow, he glances around to find he's on the floor, slumped against the wall.

Knock, knock!

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Sir?

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Go away.

The knocks cease.

Chaucer's tired, sunken eyes stare dead ahead at a painting of Philippa with a black veil draped over it.

Chaucer rapidly inspects the palm of his hand. There's a patterned burn scar from the amulet in his dream.

With a single blink, the scar disappears.

Chaucer glances between his hand and a portrait of his wife.

At the open window, a crow squawks as it lands on the window ledge.

Chaucer bounds to his feet, grabbing any available weapon.

The crow's eyes glow red.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Stay back!

Chaucer cowers back, tightly closing his eyes. When his eyes open, the bird's eyes are black.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

It was merely a dream. The living
can no more enter heaven than that
bird is bewitched.

Thud, thud, thud!

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

I said leave me be.

The thuds turn to bangs.

Chaucer cowers away from the door.

The door rattles and cracks.

The door blasts open.

Wind whirls around the room.

A quill flies out of Chaucer's bag.

Chaucer ducks and covers his eyes.

Slash. Slash. Rip. Shred.

The wind disperses. Silence.

Chaucer slowly uncovers his eyes and stands. His jaw drops.

He pulls his quill out of Philippa's portrait, which is covered with cuts, then steps back.

The cuts into the painting spell out "PILGRIMAGE".

PHILIPPA CHAUCER (V.O.)

Go. Go. Go.

The walls bleed, "Go to the Tabard Inn".

A deafening laughter fills the air. Chaucer covers his ears.

Dead silence.

Chaucer stares wide-eyed at the room, there's no blood on the walls.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

No. No. I am hallucinating from hunger.

He slowly approaches Philippa's portrait. The painting is undamaged.

The quill is back in his bag.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

No madman's nightmare will frighten me into submission.

Chaucer turns away from the portrait.

The red-eye crow pecks and claws Chaucer's face.

Chaucer grabs his bag and sprints out of his room.

STAIRS

The crow pecks at Chaucer's flesh as he races down the stairs.

EXT. CHAUCER'S HOME - DAY

A home that is overrun with weeds.

The front door bursts open.

Chaucer races out into the dirty streets of fourteenth century London. He swings his bag at the demonic crow.

Chaucer mounts the first horse he sees.

Chaucer galloping away reflects in the crows red eyes.

INT. BURNT OUT HOUSE - DAY

The splayed open body of a flayed woman hangs from the ceiling in a dark room.

The dark figure of the witch watches Chaucer galloping away in her cauldron.

One by one, she places five voodoo dolls, covered with human flesh, into a box labelled "Tabard Inn".

WITCH

Thou souls whose paths once walked apart, follow the ebb and flow of woe to thy final depart.

The final doll she places in the box looks like Geoffrey Chaucer.

EXT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

The streets are empty. Raucous cheers of drunken men cry out from inside the Inn. A man stumbles outside with a cut lip.

Chaucer dismounts his horse and ties it up near a trough.

He faces the inn head on, steeling his nerves.

With a sigh, he walks up the steps and slowly opens the door.

INT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

A crackling fire roars at the far end of the inn, barely lighting up the room.

Rowdy drunks clink together their tankards, splashing ale over a cobblestone floor.

Chaucer steps inside and stays by the door like a lost sheep.

He glances around the dingy tavern, which is occupied by the scum of London.

Across the room, a man, whose dishonesty matches his large build and thick red beard, picks up his bagpipes. This is THE MILLER/ROBIN, a brusque man who always looks out for himself.

Chaucer winces as the bagpipes belt out a tune. He strolls over to the bar, but stops dead in tracks when he sees the BAR WENCH.

The bar wench, in an alcohol-stained woollen dress, hurriedly hands out tankards of ale. She looks exactly like the naked woman from Chaucer's dream.

A man grabs her rag-like apron, drawing her closer.

BAR WENCH

Oi!

She slaps his hand away from her, then tightens the apron around her waist.

She turns to Chaucer. Her torso is splayed open, her flesh is rotting.

BAR WENCH

What can I get ya?

Chaucer blinks. The bar wench is not a rotting corpse.

Colour drains from Chaucer's face. He backs away from her. He looks her up and down. Just like in the dream, she looks like Philippa Chaucer, except younger.

BAR WENCH

(points to her face)

Up here, mate.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Sorry, I did not intend to offend you. It is just... you remind me of someone.

The bar wench laughs.

BAR WENCH

(to the whole bar)

Did you hear that? I remind him of someone.

Everyone in the bar erupts into laughter.

BAR WENCH

Listen, mate.

The bar wench straitens her posture, looking fearsome.

BAR WENCH

We sell food, ale, and rooms. If you are looking for company...

She points to a group of prostitutes.

BAR WENCH

...there's a whole gaggle of girls
just eager to earn their keep.

Chaucer stares at her, lost for words.

BAR WENCH

Do you want anything or not?

The bagpipe music stops.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

(uncertain)

I'm going on the pilgrimage
tomorrow. I wish to stay the night.

BAR WENCH

You don't seem too sure of that.

Chaucer draws in a breath and forces a smile.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

I am most certain.

BAR WENCH

Oi, Harry! We've got another damn
pilgrim who wants a room.

A large, loud-mouthed man, dressed in sensible clothes, quickly acknowledges the bar wench with a smile before resuming his conversation with Robin. This is HARRY BAILEY, late forties.

The bar wench pours ale into a tankard.

BAR WENCH

I would say Harry will be with ya
shortly, but he was meant to help
me two hours ago.

She yells across the room.

BAR WENCH

Do you hear me, Harry?

She bangs the tankard in front of Chaucer. Ale splashes over the counter.

BAR WENCH

Compliments of Harry Bailey, like
we can afford to give away ale to
every Tom, Dick, and Harry.

Chaucer glances back at Harry who chugs back his ale as he laughs and jokes with Robin.

Robin glances in Chaucer's direction, nodding with approval.

Chaucer pushes the tankard back to the Bar Wench.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
I'm in no mood for debauchery.

The bar wench pushes the tankard into Chaucer's hands.

Chaucer gazes at the bar wench's Philippa-like face, lost in thought. His lips quiver and his eyes well up.

The bar wench touches his hand, drawing him back to the here and now.

BAR WENCH
Who is she?

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
Who?

BAR WENCH
The woman I remind you of.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
She is... rather, she was my wife.

The bar wench takes his hand in hers.

BAR WENCH
(insincere)
I'm sorry.

Chaucer suddenly pulls his hand away from her, like a man caught cheating on his wife.

Other bar patrons bang on the counter.

BAR PATRONS
Oi! We need some service here.

The bar wench opens her mouth to speak to Chaucer, but the banging gets louder and louder.

She snaps around and glowers at the bar patrons.

BAR WENCH
The next man who bangs on that
bloody counter will feel my boot
up his arse. You hear me?

The bar patrons back away from the counter.

The bar wench composes herself, then turns back to Chaucer.

BAR WENCH
It seems to me that you of all
people should stick around and
hear out whatever plan Harry has
concocted.

As the bar wench heads over to the other bar patrons, she glances back.

BAR WENCH

You might have some fun.

Chaucer carries his ale over to a table and sits down, keeping his eye on the exit.

Chaucer's gaze follows Harry as he works his way around the bar.

Harry greets THE KNIGHT/PALAMON, whose chain mail tunic is still bloody from battle. Palamon's manner towards Harry remains chivalrous despite Harry's prodding, and waving ale in his face as though every man is obliged to partake.

The bar wench discreetly watches Chaucer, a malicious smile slithers across her face.

Shaking his head, Chaucer gives his ale to the nearest man, then sneaks over to the exit.

Chaucer reaches for the door handle.

Silence. The room falls into darkness.

A decomposed hand touches his shoulder. Chaucer gasps.

The hand is gone. It's not dark anymore.

Chaucer hurriedly grabs at the door handle. As he steps outside, he grabs at his hand.

A scar, shaped like the amulet from his dream, burns on his hand. He cries out in pain.

He cowers back into the tavern. The red-hot scar cools and disappears.

Everyone in the tavern stares at him.

HARRY BAILEY

Are you okay, sir?

Chaucer stares wide-eyed at his hand.

Harry shoves his hand in front of him.

Startled, Chaucer gasps.

HARRY BAILEY

My apologies, I did not mean to
frighten you.

Harry shoves his hand in front of Chaucer again. Chaucer scowls at Harry.

HARRY BAILEY

Harry Bailey. A bored man, hoping
you can liven up this party. From
what I have witnessed, you certainly
can.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Geoffrey Chaucer. And I will be
of no interest to you.

Harry withdraws his hand.

Across the room, Robin laughs at Harry and resumes playing
his bagpipes.

HARRY BAILEY

Please allow me to be the judge of
that.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

I'm afraid I would only bore you,
friend.

HARRY BAILEY

Compared to my guests here, that
is a possibility, but hear out my
offer.

Chaucer draws in a deep breath, then hesitantly reaches
for the door handle again. The burn scar begins to appear
again. He stops.

Harry manoeuvres himself in front of Chaucer.

HARRY BAILEY

The offer is simple, a storytelling
contest.

Chaucer steps away from the exit, his attention more focused
on his hand than Harry.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

A storytelling contest?

HARRY BAILEY

Yes! And the prize is a free meal,
here at my inn.

Chaucer glances at the scar on his hand, then at the door.
As he reaches for the door, the scar burns red-hot again.
He pulls away from the door.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

(grumbles)

How can I refuse.

HARRY BAILEY

Excellent! Well everyone, shall
we proceed?

Chaucer, Harry, Palamon, Robin, and two other men stroll over to a table next to the fire.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Well, who are they?

Chaucer catches a glimpse of the bar wench glaring at him. She quickly looks away.

HARRY BAILEY

Of course, my manners. This is a knight, a miller.

Palamon stares at Robin quizzically.

HARRY BAILEY

A reeve.

Harry points to a well-groomed, choleric, thin man. This is THE REEVE/OSWALD, he has the rough hands of a carpenter and dresses like a manager of lands. The blue hue of his peasant clothes gives away his stolen wealth.

HARRY BAILEY

And also, here a merchant.

Harry points to a man with a forked beard, THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO. He dresses in the flashiest of clothes even though he has the skinny build of a man who can barely afford food.

Palamon still stares at Robin, looking him up and down.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

You've given me professions, not names.

Robin glowers at Palamon.

HARRY BAILEY

For now, that is how they want it.

Robin's face burns red with rage as Palamon continues to stare at him, questioningly.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

(to Palamon)

There's not enough ale in all of bloody London to ignore that intolerable stare. Look elsewhere, or ask your question.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

I apologise, good sir. It's just, there is something familiar about you.

THE REEVE/OSWALD

Yes! I have the same feeling.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
Have we met on a pilgrimage before?
It must be so.

All three men stare at Robin, confused.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
I assure you I would remember ugly
mugs such as yours.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
That's rich coming from a man with
a wart for a nose.

The men laugh.

Robin's face flushes red.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Can we get on with this bloody
contest so Harry can pay for my
meal?

The group take their seats at the table.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
If you all do not mind, I would
rather go first.

The bar wench places another tankard of ale and a large
plate of food in front of Robin.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
No problem here.

Robin knocks back his ale and motions for the bar wench to
bring over another.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Why should he go first? He will
probably bore us with Chivalry and
fair maidens.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
I would take chivalry over your
damnable bagpipes any day.

Robin tightly crosses his arms, his nostrils flare at the
insult.

HARRY BAILEY
Those in favour of the Miller going
first?

Not a single man raises their hand.

HARRY BAILEY
Those in favour of hearing the
knight's tale?

Oswald nods.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
I'm all ears.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Indeed, let's all hear this!

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Very well. My tale begins...

BEGIN THE KNIGHT'S TALE:

EXT. THE FOREST OF LOST SOULS - NIGHT

The shadow of intertwining branches arch low overhead.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON (V.O.)
...after a battle.

The gallop of hooves.

A spec of light in the distance grows into a flickering light.

The gallop of hooves grow louder.

The flickering light grows into a small island of light as Palamon gallops out of the darkness on his horse, YEOMAN. His chest plate is bloody from battle. His torch lights the way.

Palamon glances behind. A wave of fog races after him.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Faster!

Palamon bumps around in his saddle as Yeoman gallops faster.

Another wave of fog races towards him.

Palamon pulls back on the reins.

Neigh! Yeoman bucks his legs. Palamon falls off.

The two waves of fog crash together, engulfing Palamon.

Palamon can barely see a meter ahead.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Travel through the Forest of Lost
Souls, she said. The fog 'tis
merely a myth.

Palamon pushes to his feet.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
That maiden had many fine virtues,
but wisdom was not one of them.

Palamon glances around, Yeoman is nowhere to be seen.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Yeoman.

Palamon feels his way through the forest.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Yeoman!

A knight's corpse slumps forward out of the fog. Maggots crawl around in the corpse's decomposed face. A rotten arrow pins him to the tree.

Palamon gasps.

The rotten arrow snaps.

Palamon staggers backwards as the corpse falls. Bones snap as it hits the ground.

Palamon notices the corpse's fingers are worn down and bloody. He glances at the tree, dried blood spells the word:

"RUN!"

The twang of a bow.

The schhwaff of an arrow flying from somewhere.

Palamon ducks and rolls behind the tree.

An arrow flies out of the fog and scrapes past the tree.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Show yourself. Or are you a coward?

Twang. Schhwaff. Thok. An arrow wedges into the tree.

Palamon pulls his cross from beneath his armour.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

May the fog guide their arrows astray.

Palamon kisses the cross.

Arrows rain down around him.

He bolts to his feet and races through the fog.

Low branches leap out of the fog. He ducks.

He turns right, then left. But each way he turns, arrows fly at him like they're guiding him somewhere.

An arrow whizzes past his head.

He trips and falls onto another dead knight.

An arrow slashes Palamon's arm. He curses under his breath and bounds to his feet. Takes cover behind a tree.

The fog eases up a little. There's a forest clearing dead ahead.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Surely it must be a trap.

Twang. Schhwaff.

Palamon ducks.

An arrow flies out of the fog and hits the tree.

With a shrug, Palamon crawls over to the dead knight and reaches for their shield.

Twang. Schhwaff. An arrow hits his hand. Palamon cries out in agony as he pulls the arrow out of his hand.

He grabs the shield and darts behind the tree. He bandages his hand with an old rag.

Twang. Schhwaff. Another arrow flies out of the fog.
Miss.

Palamon holds up the shield and races towards the clearing.

One arrow after another clangs against the shield.

Another scrapes by his shield, grazing his forehead. He stumbles.

FOREST CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

A human-skin sheet hangs over a branch like a tent. A cauldron bubbles over a fire.

Palamon races out of the fog and takes cover behind the tent. The barrage of arrows stops.

He peers out from behind the tent, his shield held up.

His eyes hunt the perimeter of the clearing. There's no movement anywhere.

Palamon slowly stands.

A war hammer crunches against his chest plate.

Palamon falls and bangs his head against the tree.

Distant male voices call out to each other, VILLAGERS.
Dogs bark.

A YOUNG WOMAN, with dirty blonde hair, drags Palamon's semi-conscious body over to the fire.

The villager's voices grow nearer.

The young woman's soft eyes glance up at the position of the moon, it's almost at its zenith.

Dogs bark at the woman. A mob of villagers, with flaming torches, grab her from behind.

They drag her towards the forest.

Palamon's eyes flicker open.

She screams.

He bolts upright and stumbles to his feet, grabbing his head in pain.

His gaze darts about his surroundings, but it's too dark to make out which way they went.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Fair maiden, I beg of you, cry out again.

A dark figure nudges him from behind. Swiftly pulling his sword, he swings around to smite his enemy.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

(to his horse)

Yeomen.

He stops his sword with barely an inch to spare.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

I'm sorry, my friend.

The young woman cries out again.

Palamon runs towards her scream.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

Dogs bark at the woman as villagers, with flaming torches, drag her along an overgrown path.

She kicks, screams, and struggles to pull her arms free.

YOUNG WOMAN

No!

Tears stream down her face as the man leading the mob presses a cross against her chest. This is BARTHOLOMEW, a haggard, old man.

BARTHOLOMEW

Most cunning serpent, you shall no
more dare to deceive the human
race.

YOUNG WOMAN

Please, let me go!

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Palamon hurries into the forest, feeling his way in the dark.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

I'm not evil!

A distant, faint light flickers between the leaves.

EXT. RITUAL GROUND - NIGHT

Dogs growl at the woman as the villagers tie her to a tree with rope.

YOUNG WOMAN

Don't do this!

Villagers place their torches in their stands, then build up firewood around her.

Bartholomew throws holy water at her.

BARTHOLOMEW

Stoop beneath the all and powerful
hand of God.

YOUNG WOMAN

Help! Someone help me?

Bartholomew rips hair from her head.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

Palamon turns to the woman's cry.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

I'm coming!

EXT. RITUAL GROUND - NIGHT

Bartholomew weaves the woman's hair into a straw voodoo doll that looks like her.

YOUNG WOMAN

And you call yourself a man of
God.

(to the villagers)

If you let him do this, your
daughters will be next.

The villagers stop building up the firewood and exchange worried glances.

BARTHOLOMEW

Fear not, your faith is stronger
than this demon.

A low growl fills the air.

VILLAGERS

What was that?

Most of the villagers run for their lives.

The four remaining villagers hesitantly resume building up firewood around the woman, wary of whatever it was that growled in the shadows.

YOUNG WOMAN

Listen-

Bartholomew ties a cloth around the straw doll's mouth.

She speaks, but no sound comes out. She frustratedly tries to speak again and again. Nothing.

She tugs at the ropes, but they won't break.

Bartholomew holds out his cross.

BARTHOLOMEW

Stoop beneath the all and powerful
hand of God and flee when we invoke
the Holy and terrible name of Jesus.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

Palamon glances around, but the woman's cries have fallen silent.

A low growl.

Palamon whips out his sword. His wide eyes search the shadows for whatever made that sound.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Who is there?

Dogs bark in the distance.

Palamon sheaths his sword and races towards the dogs.

EXT. RITUAL GROUND - NIGHT

Firewood is piled up to the woman's waist.

Bartholomew splashes her with holy water.

BARTHOLOMEW
From the snares of the Devil...

Swish. A bloodcurdling scream.

Bartholomew grabs a torch and shines it on the decapitated body of a villager.

Before he can react, another villager's scream is cut short by the swish of Palamon's blade.

Bartholomew searches the shadows with his torch.

A muffled scream. Thud.

Bartholomew finds another dead villager.

Palamon steps out of the shadows.

The last villager lunges at him from behind. Palamon spins round and runs him through with his sword.

Bartholomew runs over to the woman.

BARTHOLOMEW
I pray God forgives thee.

Bartholomew throws the flaming torch on the firewood.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

No!

Palamon races towards the young woman.

Bartholomew punches Palamon back.

BARTHOLOMEW
Follow the Lords path or ye shall
be forsaken.

The woman struggles to break free as twigs begin to set on fire around her.

Palamon kicks Bartholomew to the ground, then bounds to his feet.

Palamon grabs the torch, but some of the wood is already ablaze. He kicks away a chunk of burning wood.

Bartholomew drags Palamon back and strangles him.

BARTHOLOMEW
Forgive him, Father, for he knows
not what he does.

The fire burns further up the woodpile.

Palamon hits Bartholomew with the torch.

Bartholomew cries out as the flames sear his face. He stumbles back, covering his face.

Palamon kicks more burning wood away from the woman.

Bartholomew's cross stabs into Palamon's shoulder.

Palamon cries out. Collapses to his knees.

Bartholomew turns to the fire.

A growl fills the air. A shadowy, overgrown, wolf-like beast from hell lunges out of the shadows and bites Bartholomew's neck.

Palamon pushes to his feet and stands ready to fight the beast.

The beast bounds off into the night.

Blood pulses out of Bartholomew's neck.

BARTHOLOMEW
You have doomed us all.

Palamon stabs Bartholomew in the heart.

He rapidly kicks burning wood away from the woman.

The young woman cries out, but no sound comes out.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
I do not understand.

She nods to the straw doll in Bartholomew's hand.

After close inspection, Palamon removes the cloth from around the doll's mouth.

YOUNG WOMAN
Thank you! We have to get out of here.

Another low growl fills the air. Leaves rustle as something moves in the shadows.

The woman glances at the moon, it's almost overhead.

YOUNG WOMAN
Hurry!

Another growl.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Hold still.

Palamon goes to hack at the rope with his sword, but he stops and inspects the rope. It's already loose enough to escape. His eyes narrow at the woman.

Something is not right here.

He hacks at the loose rope, then pulls the rope free of her wrists.

She throws her arms around him.

YOUNG WOMAN

We must hurry, it is not safe here.

As she turns to run, Palamon grabs her wrist.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

What is your hurry? Your attackers are dead.

YOUNG WOMAN

Did you not hear the beast? It is still here.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

I heard a growl, but the leaves are still.

Leaves rustle nearby.

YOUNG WOMAN

Are you deaf? We must leave!

She turns to run, but his grip tightens as he pulls her back again.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

I would like to stay and thank this beast.

She glances up at the moon again, it's directly overhead.

Her face darkens.

YOUNG WOMAN

If thou wishes to play it like that, so be it.

A gust of wind blows out all the torches.

The woman cackles.

Palamon ducks as she flies over his head.

He grabs the straw voodoo doll and races after her.

EXT. CLEARING IN THE FOREST - NIGHT

Palamon sprints back to the tent. He searches for the woman.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Come now, why hide yourself?

YOUNG WOMAN
You have my undying gratitude.

A twig snaps nearby. Another twig snaps. His gaze follows each twig snap and rustle of leaves, gauging her position.

In the shadows, she circles his position.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Then come forth and congratulate
me.

The woman laughs.

The straw voodoo doll of the woman is yanked from Palamon's hand.

He rapidly about-turns, catching a glimpse of the woman in the shadows.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
I wish for you to show yourself.

YOUNG WOMAN
Careful what you wish for.

The woman steps forward. Her skin is grey and wrinkled like a corpse.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Bloody hell!

Palamon stumbles backwards, rapidly moving his hand over his sword.

YOUNG WOMAN
Not quite.

With a wave of her bony hand, hell's fire erupts to life under the cauldron. The firewood turns to human bones.

Her vengeful, black eyes seem to cut through Palamon as she glares at him.

With each step, her appearance flickers between that of a young and old woman. Each time she appears young, she stoops forward as though it weakens her.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
You're a...

Palamon steps away from the woman as she slithers closer to him.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
...a, a witch.

The woman picks up a handful of soil.

YOUNG WOMAN

Nature's soil, do as I command,
open up by thine own hand.

She throws the soil at Palamon's feet.

The ground rumbles. Palamon stumbles and falls. He screams.

He claws at the ground as he's dragged back by an unseen force. His fingers bleed.

The rumble fades to an eerie silence.

Palamon clammers to his feet and pulls his sword, staring wide-eyed at his own grave.

She cackles. With a wave of her hand, the sword flies out of his hand.

Palamon lunges for her with a mighty war cry.

She holds out her hand.

YOUNG WOMAN

Land of season, land of night,
bind this man within mine own sight.

Palamon is yanked back by something. He glances down. His arms and legs are restrained by tree roots.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Fight fair, foul witch.

With a wave of her hand, Palamon is surrounded by a large pentagram made from human bones.

YOUNG WOMAN

Fair and Nobel knight...

Palamon reaches for his sword, but his restraints are too tight.

YOUNG WOMAN

...pay the price for what is right.

He claws at the roots, but they're too tough.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Come on, break!

YOUNG WOMAN

A life for a life, a murder for a
murder--

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Murder? What do you mean? I didn't
murder anyone.

The entire clearing suddenly lights up with an orange-red hue.

Palamon's gaze darts around his surroundings. Ceremonial torches sit on each point of the pentagram.

YOUNG WOMAN

I can name five people who disagree with you.

The torches roar with a blinding light. The flames settle down.

The bloody corpses of Bartholomew and the villagers are tied to the ceremonial torches.

The woman takes a waxwork doll from her tent. She rips a chunk of hair from Palamon's head. He stifles a cry of pain.

With a wave of her hand, the roots drag Palamon towards the edge of his grave at the centre of the pentagram.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...

Palamon groans as the root's grip on him tightens.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

I will fear no evil...

YOUNG WOMAN

Quiet!

He opens his mouth to speak, but no sound comes out.

With Palamon's hair, she creates a noose around the waxwork doll's neck.

The woman places the waxwork doll at the centre of a smaller pentagram on a table.

Palamon stares down into his grave, eyes wide with terror.

The woman holds out an crystal orb and yells to the sky.

YOUNG WOMAN

In the name of Palamon's victims,
I call upon the gates of hell,
open up for his crimes, repay me
with what is rightfully mine.

She sprinkles ash over the waxwork doll.

YOUNG WOMAN

Eternal youth.

She tugs the noose tight around the waxwork dolls neck.

Palamon coughs and gasps for air.

His face turns redder by the second.

She excitedly watches her arms and body. Nothing happens.

YOUNG WOMAN

No.

She races over to Palamon's sword and checks her reflection in the blade. She still looks old.

YOUNG WOMAN

No.

She slams down the sword.

YOUNG WOMAN

This is wrong.

Palamon weakly slumps forward as his restraints loosen.

YOUNG WOMAN

You're supposed to make me younger!

As he falls into his grave, the corners of his mouth turn up.

GRAVE

Palamon's lips turn blue. His eyes are bloodshot.

Darkness closes in around him. He barely fights to breathe.

FOREST CLEARING

In a rage, the woman smacks the waxwork doll off the table.

GRAVE

Palamon is thrown against the side of the grave like a rag doll.

FOREST CLEARING

The woman's eyes widen as she glances back at the table. She's broken the pentagram.

GRAVE

Palamon's eyes snap open. He gasps for air.

FOREST CLEARING

Palamon crawls out of his grave.

The woman and Palamon glance at each other, then at the sword.

Both race towards the sword.

Palamon is faster.

The woman grabs the waxwork doll of Palamon and throws it towards the fire.

Thrown like a rag doll, Palamon quickly clammers to his feet and races toward the fire.

The waxwork doll is inches from the flames.

He dives forward.

The doll skims past his hand and lands in the fire.

Smoke billows off Palamon's clothes. He roars in agony as his skin chars.

He drags himself to the fire and grabs the doll.

The smoke clears. She's behind him.

She raises the sword. It swishes down towards his neck.

YOUNG WOMAN

Bastard!

Palamon spins around and grabs the sword handle.

Kicking her away from him, he crawls to his feet.

He glances at the tent. Spots the straw doll that looks like the woman.

YOUNG WOMAN

Are you sure you know what you are doing?

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Catch!

He throws his sword at the woman.

He runs towards her.

She effortlessly catches the sword, then swings it towards Palamon.

He ducks and rolls behind the woman and grabs the straw doll.

The sword hurtles towards his chest. He throws up the straw doll.

The blade skewers the straw doll.

The woman grips her bloody chest, she roars like a demon.

With a gust of wind, the fire goes out.

Pitch black.

The woman flies over Palamon.

Sparks fly as flint stones click together.

A small flame grows into a fire.

Palamon rapidly searches the area, but there's no sign of the woman or the waxwork doll. Not even the tent is there.

He quickly mounts his horse and gallops away.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON (V.O.)

I fled that...

END THE KNIGHT'S TALE

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

All the men lean forward, their eyes wide with wonder.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

...infernal place as quickly as I
dared.

Robin digs into his huge feast and gulps down ale.

THE REEVE/OSWALD

Is the witch dead?

HARRY BAILEY

What of the waxwork doll? Surely,
it's still out there.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Why she could kill you at a moment's
notice.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Perhaps she denies him death, as
he denied her eternal youth.

Harry Bailey stares at Chaucer, aghast.

HARRY BAILEY

What kind of man dreams of death?

Robin bangs down his tankard.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Poppycock!

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

I beg your pardon.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
A bloody baby could weave a more
believable tale.

HARRY BAILEY
Gentleman, please.

Palamon pulls the straw voodoo doll from his satchel.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Is that believable enough for you?

All the men lean in for a closer look.

Robin lunges forward to grab the doll.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Let me see that.

Palamon withdraws the doll before Robin can get his dirty fingers on it.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
And let my only weapon against the
witch leave my side.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Lies. All lies!

Palamon bolts to his feet and reaches for his sword.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Care to take this outside, Miller?

Robin pushes to his feet, his bulging eyes fixed on the straw doll.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Gladly.

HARRY BAILEY
Gentlemen! Chivalry, please.

Palamon lets go of his sword and sits down.

Robin's gaze locks onto the straw doll.

HARRY BAILEY
Robin!

THE MILLER/ROBIN
This is far from over, knight.

Robin moves his seat to directly opposite Palamon where he has a clear view of the straw doll.

Oswald raises an eyebrow as Robin signals for more ale.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
May I suggest the miller goes next.

Before anyone can agree, Robin begins.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
For starters, my name is Robin.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Fly home, Robin, fly! Before you
embarrass yourself.

Oswald splutters into his drink.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
That ship has sailed already.

Harry tightly purses his lips, but the corner of his mouth
curls up.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Shall I begin, or are you afraid
my tale will thrash yours into
oblivion?

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
Hardly.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
Death is swifter than this
storytelling contest.

An awkward silence fills the air as the men exchange
bewildered glances.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
Let's hear this marvellous tale.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
I concur.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
My tale begins outside...

Oswald and Placebo lean forward.

BEGIN THE MILLER'S TALE:

EXT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

Oil lamps light the dark streets. A horse is tied up
outside the Tabard Inn.

THE MILLER/ROBIN (V.O.)
...the Tabard Inn.

Robin drunkenly stumbles towards the inn with a bottle of
wine in his hand.

A DRUNK MAN bumps into Robin, knocking Robin to the ground.

DRUNK MAN
My... My apol-
(hiccups)
My apologies, good sir.

The drunk man helps Robin to his feet. As their hands slide past each other, a folded piece of parchment is slipped into Robin's hand.

DRUNK MAN
(whispers)
Be there within the hour.

Robin shoves the drunk man.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Watch where you are bloody going.

Robin drunkenly stumbles towards the inn as he discreetly unfolds the parchment. It's a map to a forest, an "X" marks the meeting place.

Robin drunkenly stumbles over to the horse that's outside the inn.

He glances around. He's alone. His drunken stumble turns into a sturdy stride. He steals an oil lantern. Quickly mounts the horse and gallops away.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Tree branches cast a creepy web of shadows. Robin gallops through the forest with his oil lantern held out.

He dismounts his horse. Wraps its reins around a branch.

A thirty-something man watches Robin from the shadows. His ragged clothes and jewellery are like that of a PIRATE.

Leaves rustle and a twig snaps.

Robin snaps around.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Come forth before I drag you out
of the shadows.

PIRATE
I want more money.

Robin laughs.

In the shadows, the pirate strokes the blade of a dagger.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
No man breaks a deal with me!

PIRATE

Three of my men died while stealing
this little family heirloom of
yours.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

The deal was twenty shillings and
not a penny more.

PIRATE

Tongues wag when a man thinks it
will save his life.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

What is that supposed to mean?

SOMEONE attacks Robin from behind.

Robin spins round and snaps someone's neck.

Pirate grabs Robin from behind and presses his dagger
against Robin's throat. He waves a metal amulet in front
of Robin's face.

PIRATE

This "heirloom" isn't just a pretty
piece of metal. Forged in the
depths of hell, they said.

Robin snatches at the amulet.

PIRATE

I wouldn't do that, mate.

The dagger cuts into Robin's neck a little, drawing blood.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Tell me your price before I rip
your bloody head off.

PIRATE

Forty shillings.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Forty!

The pirate tightens his grip on Robin's neck.

PIRATE

I could just test this amulet on
your pretty head.

Robin growls.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Deal.

Robin begrudgingly hands over the money.

Pirate gives the amulet to Robin.

PIRATE

Snap the amulet in half, then press one half against a sacrifice's forehead. For another ten shillings, I'll find the perfect victim.

Robin snaps the amulet in two.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Why? When I have you.

Robin grabs Pirate by his hair and yanks him back into a choke hold.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

No one breaks a deal with me.

The Pirate howls with laughter.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

You are either a bloody fool or a man withholding information.

PIRATE

It is you that is the fool, mate.

Pirate elbows Robin in the gut.

Robin gasps for air. He stumbles backwards.

PIRATE

The amulet only works under direct moonlight.

Robin glances up. The tree canopy is too thick to let moonlight through.

PIRATE

I didn't choose this meeting place because I love trees, mate.

Pirate punches Robin to the ground.

Something in the tree canopy catches Robin's eye. There's a grey blanket up there.

PIRATE

If you betray me again, I will flay you like a pig.

Robin glares at Pirate.

PIRATE

My dogs will feast on your entrails.

Robin kicks Pirate to the ground, then bounds to his feet. He grabs a fallen branch and throws it up.

The branch knocks the blanket free. Moonlight shines down on them.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
That looks like moonlight to me.
Mate.

Pirate clammers to his feet. He runs.

Robin grabs him.

Pirate struggles.

PIRATE
No. Please don't...

Robin drags him back into the moonlight. Presses the half-amulet onto the pirate's forehead.

Moonlight intensifies into a thin beam.

Pirate cries out in pain as the amulet absorbs the moon's power.

His cries turn into a growl...

Muscular, hairy arms tear through the pirate's tunic.

His hairy body curls down into...

An oversized, wolf-like CREATURE from hell. The amulet glows in the creature's forehead.

A blast of energy throws Robin back.

The snarling creature bounds onto Robin.

Robin rapidly holds out his half of the amulet.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Stop!

The creature sits.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Someone in this bloody county has
the Orb of Hades. Find it.

He clips the amulet onto his belt.

The creature sniffs the air and ground, then bounds through the dark forest.

Robin leaps onto his horse and gallops after the creature. They disappear into the black of night.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST - NIGHT

Robin pulls back the reins. His horse whinnies and bucks up its legs.

The creature sniffs the ground, then looks dead ahead at an old cottage.

There's movement inside the cottage.

Robin and the creature hide behind a tree.

EXT. OLD COTTAGE - NIGHT

Tools and rope lay on the grass, near half-built furniture covered by an old, fraying sheet.

Robin and the creature peer out from behind the tree.

Robin holds out the amulet.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Hide.

The creature turns invisible.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Wait here.

Robin sneaks up to the cottage, grabbing rope off the grass. He peers through the window.

INT. OLD COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER, a worn-out thirty something woman in a dirty, patchwork dress, places bunches of wild flowers and herbs over doorways and windows.

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER

Why must you place those flowers
everywhere?

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER, a late thirties man dressed in dirty, old work clothes, sands down a cupboard door that won't close properly.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER

Would you rather die? You move us
into the middle of nowhere, help
hours away.

Reginald grabs the bunch of flowers from the front door.

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER

What on earth does that have to do
with these?

Maude grabs the flowers.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Are you trying to bring bad luck
into--?

The front door crashes open.

Robin storms in, carrying rope. He tackles Reginald.

Robin bangs Reginald's head against a work top, knocking him out.

Maude attacks Robin with her broom.

Robin twists the broom out of her hand. Chokes her until unconscious.

He ties up Reginald and Maude.

Robin storms throughout the house. Emptying drawers, cupboards, and smashing pottery as he hunts for the orb.

Robin stomps back into the kitchen. The couple blink awake.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Where do you keep your bloody
valuables?

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER
(stutters)
Valuables?

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Take what little we have, just
don't hurt him.

Robin slaps her. She falls onto her side, whimpering.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Did I speak to you...?

Robin falls silent. His gaze drifts down to Maude's neckline. A necklace made from stones has fallen out from beneath her dress. A crystal orb, with a fire burning inside it, hangs from the necklace.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
(whispers)
The Orb of Hades.

Robin carefully reaches for the necklace.

The corner of Maude's mouth curls up.

The tips of Robin's fingers graze the necklace.

Boom! A blast of air throws Robin back. His head cracks against the wall.

Reginald gasps. He stares at his wife, horrified.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Did you really think God would
leave the necklace unprotected?

Robin staggers to his feet.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
What are you? A witch? A fallen
angel?

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Leave before you destroy yourself.

Robin thrusts Maude against the wall.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Give me the necklace.

Maude spits on Robin's face.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
I would rather die.

Robin chokes her.

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER
For God's sake, just give him the
necklace.

Maude gags and wheezes as Robin's grip on her throat
tightens.

Reginald struggles to break free of the rope.

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER
Let her go!

Robin slams Maude across the room.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
(her voice trembles)
If you kill me, you'll never get
my necklace.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
There are other ways to loosen
your tongue.

Robin grabs a knife from the kitchen table. He strokes
the sharp blade menacingly.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Relinquish the necklace.

Maude shakes her head.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Is your tongue broken?

Robin yanks her tongue out of her mouth. His knife slashes down towards it.

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER

No!

The knife stops. Robin lets go of her tongue. He stares down at the necklace. The stone chain is engraved with a series of symbols.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

A protection spell... How do I
break the spell?

Maude sobs.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER

The Orb of Hades is too dangerous.

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER

The Orb of Hades? What in God's
name is going on?

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER

Let my husband leave. Please. He
knows nothing of the necklace.

Robin unties Reginald, then holds out his amulet.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Come, beast.

An invisible force crashes through the window. The creature flickers between visible and invisible as it prowls about the kitchen.

Robin points to Reginald.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Kill him.

The creature attacks Reginald.

Reginald races out the door.

The creature chases after him, snarling.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER

Reginald!

Robin unties Maude.

She turns to run.

Robin twists her arm. Maude's wrist snaps. She cries out.

Robin pushes her outside.

EXT. OLD COTTAGE - NIGHT

Reginald wields an axe like a weapon as the creature prowls around him, flickering between visible and invisible.

Reginald runs, but the creature bounds in front of him.

Robin pushes Maude out the front door.

Maude pulls free of Robin and runs towards Reginald.

MR. REGINALD CARPENTER
Stay back, Maude.

The creature bites Reginald's leg. He cries out. Blood pools around his leg. He falls to his knees.

Robin pulls Maude into a choke hold.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
I'll let him live for a price.

Reginald swings his axe at the creature.

The creature leaps over the axe. It sinks its teeth into Reginald.

Reginald cries out in agony.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Reginald?!

Reginald grows weaker.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Give me the necklace.

Maude throws her necklace on the ground. She tries to run to Reginald, but Robin holds her back.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Reginald?!

THE MILLER/ROBIN
How do I remove the protection
spell?

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Just break the chain. Now, call
off your beast!

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Why?
(holds out amulet)
Kill her.

Maude turns to attack Robin, but Reginald lets out a bloodcurdling scream.

She grabs the heaviest log she can find, then sprints over to Reginald.

The creature laps up Reginald's blood.

Maude whacks the creature away from him.

She turns back to Reginald. He vacantly stares into thin air. His intestines sprawled across the grass.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
No, you cannot leave me. Please!

Maude wipes blood away from Reginald's face as tears stream down her face.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Reginald?

Twigs snap behind her. She gasps. Slowly turns around.

The snarling creature lunges towards her.

She ducks and rolls.

The creature sinks its teeth into her stomach. She cries out. Blood drenches her clothes.

She struggles against the creature. Her eyes narrow at a glowing amulet in the creature's forehead. It matches Robin's amulet.

She kicks away the beast. Grabs Reginald's axe. Staggers towards Robin.

Robin smashes the necklace with a hammer, then pockets the Orb of Hades.

Maude swings the axe down towards Robin's neck.

Robin grabs the axe handle. Trips Maude. She falls onto him.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
You are no match for me, woman.

Robin pushes Maude off him.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
I can't let you leave with that orb.

Robin reaches for his amulet. It's gone.

Maude weakly stands behind Robin, her clothes soaked with her own blood. She holds out his amulet.

MRS. MAUDE CARPENTER
Kill him.

The beast bounds onto Robin, knocking him to the ground.

Maude slumps to the ground as she profusely bleeds.

Robin struggles against the growling creature. Its teeth near his throat.

Maude breathes out. Her lifeless eyes stare into space. The amulet falls out of her hand.

Robin reaches for the amulet. It's too far away.

The creature's sharp teeth are inches from Robin's throat.

Robin grabs a rock. Hits the creature.

Startled, the creature hobbles back.

Robin crawls towards the amulet.

With a roar, the creature bounds onto Robin.

Robin grabs the amulet. Holds it out.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Stop!

The creature stops just short of his throat.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Get off me, you blasted beast!

Robin clammers to his feet. Limps over to Maude's bloody corpse. He steals anything of value from her.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Eat your dinner, beast.

The creature tears flesh from Maude's bones.

Robin removes the Orb of Hades from his pocket and gazes into its fire.

END THE MILLER'S TALE

INT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

The fire crackles. All the listeners stare at Robin in a stunned silence.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Have you no shame?

THE REEVE/OSWALD

The carpenter was made a fool by his own wife. It's an insult.

HARRY BAILEY

Surely no man could be that callous.

Robin shows them his half of the amulet. He gulps down ale, then turns to Palamon with a mischievous grin.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Tell me, Knight. You're full of
that chivalrous poppycock--

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
What would you know about chivalry?

Robin's jaw tenses up, his nostrils flare. Through gritted teeth, he continues.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
I've proven my story. Will you
prove yours by showing me your
straw doll?

Palamon grips the edge of the table so tight his knuckles turn white.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
If I were to stab that doll, would
you die?

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Yes...

All eyes are on Robin.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
...if your aim is as bad as your
story.

Palamon pushes out of his seat. Reaches for his sword.

Robin pushes to his feet.

The bar wench strides over with a large tray of food.

BAR WENCH
Oi! No fighting or take it outside.
I'm not cleaning up your blood.

Robin and Palamon sit down.

The bar wench serves plates of mouldy food that crawls with insects.

Chaucer gasps.

The bar wench glowers at Chaucer.

BAR WENCH
Oi! That food was freshly cooked
yesterday.

Chaucer stares at her in horror. Her skinless face pulsates with blood.

Chaucer bounds to his feet and shoves her against the wall.
The bar wench screams.

All but Robin drag Chaucer away from her. Chaucer struggles against them.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
No! She is evil. We must stop
her!

HARRY BAILEY
Stop her from doing what?

Robin digs into his mouldy, insect infested food.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
Do not eat that devil's feast!

Chaucer breaks free of them and knocks the food away from Robin. The plate smashes on the floor.

Chaucer turns on the bar wench.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
How are you going to kill them?

The bar wench trembles with fear.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
Answer me!

Harry shoves Chaucer aside. The bar wench hurries back to the bar.

HARRY BAILEY
What is wrong with you, man?

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
What is wrong with me? Can you
not see the food is crawling with
insects?

Chaucer glances at the food again, it's just a delicious plate of meat and bread.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
What of her face? She has no skin.

He glances at the bar wench, there's nothing wrong with her face.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
But I was certain...

Chaucer slumps down into his chair, confused.

HARRY BAILEY
Whose tale is next?

THE REEVE/OSWALD
I'll go next.

HARRY BAILEY
Marvellous!

THE REEVE/OSWALD
My tale is about a thieving miller.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
(growls at Oswald)
You bloody--

HARRY BAILEY
Oh, be quiet, you drunk fool.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
As I was saying...

THE REEVE'S TALE:

INT. SOLER HALL - NIGHT

Faded paintings of great historical figures adorn the dull, wooden walls.

THE REEVE/OSWALD (V.O.)
...my tale is about a miller.

Outside, a crowd of ANGRY VILLAGERS yell at someone.

THE REEVE/OSWALD (O.S.)
Yes, we have all heard the rumours
about the miller stealing grain.

Relentless voices yell at Oswald.

THE REEVE/OSWALD (O.S.)
Out of my way, please.

Oswald bursts through the door and slams it shut. Angry villagers yell and bang on the door.

Oswald locks the door. Through the din of the angry villagers, he calls out.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
John. Aleyn.

JOHN, a brave young student (age 23), brazenly strides into the room, his eyes locked on Oswald.

ALEYN, a shy student in his early twenties, hesitantly follows John into the room. He nervously glances at the door as the yelling grows louder.

JOHN
You called, sir.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
 A man cannot think with all that
 noise. Get rid of them!

JOHN
 Surely by now you must concede to
 their demands. Send Aleyn and I
 to the mill, we'll demand the truth.

Dead silence. Not even the angry villagers can be heard.

An old WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK scoffs at John.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
 Has thou met an honest thief?

Oswald growls at the woman.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
 Who in God's name do you think you
 are...?

Oswald stares at the locked door, confused.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
 How did you get in here? I locked
 that door.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
 Thou could ask who and how, but
 why yields a more fruitful answer.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
 Very well. Why are you here?

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
 To deliver thou from evil. The
 miller 'tis a thief, no doubt.

The woman in the black cloak holds out a murky bottle,
 which is filled to the brim with a potion.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
 Question him if thou must. But,
 when that fails, put a single drop
 of this in his wine.

John takes the bottle and inspects it, then passes it to
 Aleyn.

JOHN
 What is it?

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
 'Tis a potion that breathes life
 into dreams, where thou shall find
 the answers ye seeks.

Aleyn opens the potion and raises it up to his nose.

The woman grabs the bottle from beneath Aleyn's nose.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
What fool inhales thine own potion?

She gives the bottle to Oswald. He inspects the potion, then gives it to John.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
Go. If civility fails, use this instead.

JOHN
And if he truly is a thieving scoundrel?

THE REEVE/OSWALD
Steal back what is rightfully ours.

John turns to leave, but Aleyn holds back.

ALEYN
Sir. What if we're caught? The miller, he is a brute.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
Do what you must. The responsibility shall be mine.

As the two lads turn to leave, the woman blocks their path.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
Mine offering 'tis not free.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
What is your price, hag?

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
Merely a lock of thine own hair.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
What a preposterous price to pay.
Why my hair? When it is they who will use your so called potion.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
Thou did say he would take responsibility for their actions.
Did he not?

Oswald rolls his eyes, grumbles.

The woman takes back her potion.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
I wish thee luck with your futile endeavour.

The woman walks towards the exit.

JOHN

The miller is unlikely to confess
of his own will.

Oswald glances at the woman, she's almost at the door.

Aleyn hesitantly steps forward.

ALEYN

He's right, sir. Whatever evil
lays in that bottle, we need it.

The woman reaches the door.

THE REEVE/OSWALD

Wait!

Oswald cuts off a lock of his hair and gives it to the woman.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK

Be forewarned, never use more than
one drop.

She gives the potion to John.

ALEYN

Why?

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK

All nightmares begin as dreams.

John scoffs at the woman.

In the blink of an eye, the woman is gone. The noise outside resumes as if the angry villagers had never stopped yelling.

THE REEVE/OSWALD

God be with you.

John and Aleyn leave.

EXT. MILL HOUSE - DAY

Windmill blades appear and disappear behind the house as a gentle breeze turns them.

John brazenly strides towards the miller's house, his eyes locked on the front door. He lugs behind him a cart filled with sacks of grain, topped with a bottle of wine.

Aleyn remains several steps behind John. He peers inside the potion bottle.

ALEYN

How can you be so certain about
using this... this potion?

John bursts out laughing.

JOHN

And here was I believing you were
a student of science.

Aleyn's eyes narrow at John.

JOHN

Rest assured, my friend, this is
merely a hallucinogen.

John bangs his fist on the Miller's door. No answer. He
bangs on the door again.

The front door snaps open, startling the students.

SYMKYN

What?

A brutish man, dressed in a tunic that far exceed the income
of a miller, glares at the boys. This is SYMKYN.

Aleyn takes two steps back, his eyes wide with terror.

JOHN

Miller Symkyn, I presume.

Symkyn grunts.

JOHN

I'm John and this is my cowardly
friend, Aleyn.

Aleyn elbows John, annoyed.

JOHN

We have some grain that needs
grinding for our college.

Aleyn doesn't speak. John nudges him.

ALEYN

John, that is, we are thoroughly
interested in how you grind the
grain. But we could always return
another week.

John throws Aleyn a scathing look.

Aleyn nervously looks anywhere, but at Symkyn or John.

SYMKYN

Come in.

INT. MILL HOUSE - DAY

John and Aleyn carry in the large sacks of grain. A BABY
cries somewhere in the house.

JOHN
We hope this is enough.

Symkyn grunts, then leads them through to...

MILL ROOM

John and Aleyn stare up at the turning wheels of the mill. A balcony circles the room at a dizzying height.

SYMKYN
Wait here.

Symkyn climbs up the ladder. A moment later, the wheels of the mill stop turning, then Symkyn throws down a chain.

SYMKYN
Hook that to a sack of grain.

John hooks the chain onto the sack.

Symkyn hoists each sack up to the balcony.

BALCONY

John and Aleyn step onto the balcony.

John's face softens like a lovesick puppy as MALYNE, the twenty-year-old wife of the miller, emerges from a doorway.

MALYNE
Our son is finally sleeping, thank God.

Symkyn sees the way John looks at Malyne. He glowers at John.

SYMKYN
Malyne, can you not see I have guests? Leave us!

MALYNE
Oh, excuse me.

JOHN
Don't leave on our account. Malyne, was it?

Malyne glances between Symkyn and John, then hastily retreats.

As she turns, John sees a bruise on her neck.

SYMKYN
Look elsewhere, boy.

John's eyes narrow at Symkyn. His fists clench.

Aleyn quickly steps between them.

ALEYN

The grain, sir, we would love to
know how you grind it.

John mutters each step under his breath as he watches Symkyn
adjust the millstones and pour grain into a bin.

MILL ROOM - LATER

A river of flour flows down a chute and into a sack.

Symkyn's baby cries again.

SYMKYN

Malyne. Malyne!

Symkyn storms out of the room and drags back Malyne.

SYMKYN

Shut him up.

Symkyn shoves Malyne up the ladder.

John clenches his fist. Aleyn quickly manoeuvres himself
between John and Symkyn.

ALEYN

So that is how it is done? Grinding
the grain, that is.

John barges past Aleyn. He glares at Symkyn.

JOHN

What of the rumour, is it true?

SYMKYN

What rumour would that be?

JOHN

That you're a thieving scoundrel.
A brute of a man, nay, a woman.

ALEYN

John!

Symkyn's face contorts with rage. Both lads cower back a
little.

SYMKYN

How dare you!

ALEYN

Forgive my friend, his mouth runs
quicker than his mind.

JOHN

Is it true?

SYMKYN
Of course it's bloody not!

Symkyn and John scowl at each other. Aleyn quickly intervenes.

ALEYN
My friend has a bottle of wine in
the cart. Why not join us in a
drink? As an apology.

SYMKYN
So he can poison me and steal my
wife?

ALEYN
You have my word as a man, John
has no such intentions.

SYMKYN
I'll get the wine. And I'll pour
it.

Symkyn leaves. He returns a moment later with their wine. He pours out three glasses of wine and hands them out.

John raises his glass.

JOHN
Miller Symkyn, may God grace you
with all that you deserve.

John knocks back his wine.

JOHN
(mumbles)
Prison, hopefully.

Symkyn puts down his wine and attacks John. John retaliates.

Seizing the distraction, Aleyn quickly tips a drop of the potion in Symkyn's wine.

John swings his fist towards Symkyn.

Aleyn grabs John's fist and pushes him away.

ALEYN
John, apologize to this good man.

Symkyn shoves Aleyn aside.

John pulls Symkyn into a headlock.

JOHN
Aleyn, the potion.

Aleyn shakily pours the spiked wine into Symkyn's mouth. John covers Symkyn's mouth and nose, forcing him to swallow.

John releases Symkyn.

Symkyn turns on John, but he collapses.

ALEYN

Is he dead?

John nudges Symkyn, but he doesn't wake. Aleyn's eyes widen with horror.

Malyne screams. She's on the balcony. John races upstairs.

BALCONY

John grabs Malyne. Hurries her through the doorway.

CORRIDOR

John pushes Malyne into a bedroom and locks the door.

MILL ROOM

As John returns, Aleyn holds a glass in front of Symkyn's mouth. It steams up as he breathes out.

JOHN

He's just sleeping?

Aleyn nods.

ALEYN

What are we supposed to do? A sleeping man cannot answer our questions.

A knock knock knock from somewhere.

DREAM SYMKYN (O.S.)

Hold on!

SYMKYN

(talking in sleep)

Hold on.

They hear the front door open.

John and Aleyn exchange a panicked glance.

Footsteps approach.

John and Aleyn rapidly hide in the shadows, behind a large support beam.

A dream version of Symkyn, DREAM SYMKYN, strides into the room, dragging an overloaded cart filled with sacks of grain.

ALEYN

(mumbles)

The potion breathes life into
dreams.

(eyes light up)

We're watching Symkyn's dream.

Dream Symkyn carries two sacks of grain towards the students.

Aleyn gasps as Dream Symkyn nears them and glances their way.

John covers Aleyn's mouth, pulling him further into the shadows.

Dream Symkyn opens a door to a secret room. He hides the two sacks of grain in the room, then walks away.

John and Aleyn peer into the secret room. The room is filled with at least a dozen sacks of grain.

ALEYN

How can one man possess so much
grain?

JOHN

It's time for that thieving
scoundrel to pay.

Dream Symkyn cries out.

The students race towards Dream Symkyn.

Dream Symkyn stares in horror at his sleeping self. He sees Aleyn and John.

DREAM SYMKYN

Who are you?

An axe appears in Dream Symkyn's hand.

DREAM SYMKYN

(points to Symkyn)

What evil is this?

Dream Symkyn swings the axe at John.

John ducks. Aleyn tackles Dream Symkyn.

Dream Symkyn disappears. Aleyn falls over. The cart of grain disappears. Symkyn stirs in his sleep.

JOHN

The potion is wearing off.

Aleyn glances back at all the ill-gotten grain.

ALEYN

If only we could give him more
than a drop of the potion. Not
only could we steal back our grain,
we could grind it too.

JOHN

What a marvellous idea!

John grabs the potion bottle off Aleyn and strides over to Symkyn. Aleyn steps in front of John.

ALEYN

Do you not remember the woman's
warning? No more than a drop.
All nightmare's begin as dreams.

JOHN

What harm could a few extra drops
possibly do?

ALEYN

What harm?! You were just attacked
with an axe.

JOHN

A dream cannot harm a man.

John pushes Aleyn out of the way.

Aleyn snatches the potion bottle.

ALEYN

Don't be a fool.

Aleyn and John fight over the bottle.

The potion bottle slips out of their hands. Smash.

The murky potion floods the ground floor.

Aleyn and John cover their mouths and race up the ladder.

BALCONY

Aleyn looks down as Symkyn disappears into the murky potion. He glances around, confused. Where's John?

ALEYN

John? John!

A hand grabs Aleyn from behind. He snaps around and swings back his fist.

ALEYN

John!

Aleyn stumbles back a step.

JOHN

Where in God's name did you go?

ALEYN

Where did I go? You are the one
who vanished.

JOHN

Aleyn.

John nods down to the potion cloud.

The potion disperses. Symkyn emerges. He tosses and turns
in a restless sleep.

Day turns to night. Torches appear and light the room.

Voices argue. It's Malyne and Symkyn. The baby cries.

Malyne screams.

John and Aleyn race towards the scream.

BEDROOM

The door crashes open. Aleyn and John charge into the
room.

Malyne is slumped on the floor. Blood pools around her
head.

Malyne's chest rises and falls. She's alive.

The door slams shut. Behind it, a NIGHTMARE SYMKYN, his
eyes dark with rage, glowers at John.

NIGHTMARE SYMKYN

She is mine. But she wants you.

John rushes to Malyne's aid. Nightmare Symkyn blocks his
path. Aleyn steps forward.

ALEYN

Allow us to help her, please.

John shoves Symkyn back a step.

JOHN

Move before I thrash you to a bloody
pulp.

Nightmare Symkyn's eyes darken. A sword appears in his
hand.

NIGHTMARE SYMKYN

If I cannot have her, nobody can.

Nightmare Symkyn charges towards Malyne.

John shoves him away from Malyne. He glances down, a sword appears in his hand.

Their swords clash.

Aleyn pushes John away from Nightmare Symkyn.

ALEYN

Rumour has it that men who die in
their dreams die in real life.

JOHN

What a marvellous idea.

Nightmare Symkyn's sword slashes towards Aleyn.

ALEYN

You are not a murderer, John.

John shoves Aleyn aside and lunges towards Symkyn with a warlike cry.

A deadly duel of swords.

John and Symkyn's battle moves towards the crying baby.

Aleyn dives in front of them and grabs the baby.

John and Symkyn's swords crashes through the baby's crib.

John stabs Nightmare Symkyn in the heart.

Nightmare Symkyn collapses and dies, but nothing from the nightmare disappears.

JOHN

I thought you said he would die.

John goes to help Malyne who begins to wake. Aleyn puts the baby on the bed and races out to...

MILL ROOM

The real Symkyn stares into space, eyes wide as though scared to death, his face deathly pale.

BEDROOM

Nightmare Symkyn's hand twitches. He drags himself to his feet, more like a zombie than man.

MILL ROOM

Aleyn holds a glass near Symkyn's mouth, it doesn't steam up.

Aleyn bolts to his feet and races up the ladder.

BEDROOM

Aleyn races into the room.

ALEYN

Symkyn is dead.

Malyne cowers in the corner with her baby.

Nightmare Symkyn strangles John.

Aleyn grabs a piece of the broken crib, with a nail poking out of it, and slams it into Symkyn's head.

Nightmare Symkyn dies. His flesh rots a little. He wakes up again.

John and Aleyn throw everything they've got at Nightmare Symkyn, but nothing kills him. Each fatal blow turns Nightmare Symkyn more zombie-like

JOHN

(to Malyne)

Stay here.

John and Aleyn lure Nightmare Symkyn out to...

BALCONY

Nightmare Symkyn Tackles John to the ground. Pins him down, pressing the blade against John's throat.

JOHN

What will it take to kill this man, a stake through the heart?

John kicks Symkyn. Symkyn stumbles back and falls over the edge. Nightmare Symkyn roars. Silence.

The lads peer over the edge of the balcony. Nightmare Symkyn is skewered by a stake through the heart.

Nightmare Symkyn lifts himself off the stake.

JOHN

Where did that stake come from?

Aleyn backs away from John.

ALEYN

A dead man can't dream, John. The miller is most certainly dead.

John grabs anything he can as a weapon against the miller.

JOHN

This is no time for debating who can and cannot dream, Aleyn.

ALEYN

You were caught in the potion.

JOHN

We were both caught in the potion.

ALEYN

But you spoke of a stake, now
there's a stake down there.

Nightmare Symkyn's mangled body slowly pulls itself up the ladder, a raging monster.

Aleyn grabs a Chisel off the wall. He turns on John. He glances between John and Nightmare Symkyn.

ALEYN

Your mind is keeping that thing
alive.

Aleyn lunges at John with the chisel.

Nightmare Symkyn drags his mangled body along the balcony with the stake in his hand.

Nightmare Symkyn stabs the stake towards them.

Aleyn kicks John towards the stake. Blood sprays across his face.

John collapses as blood pumps from his chest.

Nightmare Symkyn hobbles closer to Aleyn. An axe appears in his hand.

Aleyn trips and falls. He lands on an unconscious body. He quickly clammers away from it, eyes wide with horror as he stares at his own body. This is Aleyn's nightmare.

A single tear rolls off DREAM ALEYN's cheek as he stares back at his dead friend.

Aleyn glances up at nightmare Symkyn as the axe swings towards his neck.

Malyne steps onto the balcony, holding her baby tight.

Aleyn's head rolls across the floor.

Malyne screams.

Nightmare Symkyn throws the axe at Malyne.

She shields her baby.

Nothing happens.

She slowly looks up. The axe is gone. Night turns to day.

The nightmare fades away, leaving only the dead bodies of Aleyn, John and Symkyn.

INT. SOLER HALL - NIGHT

Malyne pulls a cart brimming with sacks of grain towards Oswald.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
Can I help you?

MALYNE
I bring the grain my husband stole.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
What of Aleyn and John?

Malyne breaks down into tears.

END THE REEVE'S TALE

INT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

Distant thunder rumbles outside. A few drops of rain tap against the window.

Oswald glares at Robin.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
Malyne recounted the tale of the
thieving, lying miller's demise.

Robin silently glares at Oswald, gripping his dinner knife.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
What a vindictive tale.

Oswald grins at Robin.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
Of course, it is.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
I'll grind your bloody bones.

Robin lunges at Oswald with his knife.

Oswald leaps back.

HARRY BAILEY
Don't take his bait, Robin.

Robin stabs the knife into the table. He sits back down and chugs down more ale.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
This damn competition is mine
anyway.

Robin suddenly becomes pale and weak. As he pulls out of it, he yells to the bar wench.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

More ale!

Oswald edges back to the table, keeping Robin at more than an arm's length away.

HARRY BAILEY

I suggest we move on to the fourth tale.

Chaucer's eyes widen.

HARRY BAILEY (V.O.)

(echo in Chaucer's mind)

Fourth tale... fourth tale...

Chaucer turns as pale as a sheet.

FLASHBACK - CHAUCER'S DREAM

Hell. Searing hot flames burn all around Chaucer.

Chaucer cries out in agony as demons tear him limb from limb.

His demon-like wife watches.

PHILIPPA CHAUCER

On the toll of four tales, all shall be hers, harbinger of death.

Demon Philippa cries out as her skin contorts and cracks.

END FLASHBACK

INT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

Chaucer grabs a knife from the table and dives towards Placebo. The others struggle to hold him back.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

You must not tell your tale! The harbinger of death, she will come!

The bar wench runs over with some rope. They tie Chaucer to his chair.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

The fourth tale, you must not tell it! Don't tell it!

Robin gags Chaucer with a rag.

Placebo composes himself and sits down.

Robin falls unusually quiet. He keeps a watchful eye on Chaucer, disturbed by the warning.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Let's get this over with so I can
win.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
My tale begins...

BEGIN THE MERCHANT'S TALE:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A tired, old knight travels through the dark forest on his horse, RAVEN, barely keeping his eyes open. This is JANUARIE, his armour is as old and worn out as him.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO (V.O.)
...in a dark, spooky forest.

He slowly blinks as he catches a glimpse of a light up ahead.

The light grows into a flickering flame.

Raven's hooves dig into the ground as it nears the flame.

JANUARIE
What is it, Raven?

There's movement near the light.

JANUARIE
Who's there?

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)
Come hither, seeker of truth.

Raven whinnies and backs away from the light.

JANUARIE
Whoa... easy there.

Januarie tightens the reins. He strokes Raven's mane.

JANUARIE
What is it?

The horse bucks, throwing Januarie off, then gallops away.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)
Come hither, seeker of truth.

JANUARIE
Who is there?

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)
The answer you are seeking.

Januarie sneaks up towards the fire. He hides behind a line of trees and watches the fire.

JANUARIE
What truth might that be?

A hunched-over, shadowy figure hobbles around the fire, this is the SEER.

SEER/DISEMBODIED VOICE
Come forth, Januarie.

Januarie whips out his sword.

JANUARIE
Who told you my name?

Januarie's eyes widen. Where's the seer?

JANUARIE
I demand you answer me, old fool!

Januarie slowly turns around, sword held out, checking every shadow and rustling bush for this mysterious person.

The sword is ripped from his hand.

Januarie spins around.

The seer presses the tip of the sword against his throat, a pearl of blood trickles down his neck.

JANUARIE
Finish the job and be done with it.

SEER
A man who lives by his sword, shall die by it.

The fire lights up the seer's grey, wrinkled skin, a stark contrast to his overgrown black-hair.

The seer expertly spins the sword up into the air, catching it by its deadly sharp blade.

Januarie gasps.

JANUARIE
That sword should have cut off your fingers.

The seer gives the sword to Januarie.

JANUARIE
Are you not afraid I'll smite you where you stand?

The seer strolls towards the fire.

SEER

Thou may try, but thou will fail.

The seer sits down by the fire, poking it with a stick.

SEER

Come, the fire beckons you,
Januarie.

Januarie hesitantly approaches the fire.

JANUARIE

For what?

SEER

Your future, of course.

JANUARIE

I suppose you want me to cross
your palm with silver.

Seer shakes his head.

SEER

Another will pay the price.

JANUARIE

Another?

SEER

A willing participant. Come, hold
out your hand.

The seer sprinkles red sand into Januarie's hand.

SEER

Ask your question, then throw the
sand in the fire.

Januarie silently gazes at the sand for a moment.

JANUARIE

What future is there for an old
knight?Januarie throws the sand into the fire. Bright flames
erupt high above them.As the flames settle back down, Januarie's eyes are drawn
to the centre of a flame. An image slowly comes into
focus...A weary woman wipes dust off her hands, then ecstatically
throws her arms around a man. This is MAY, she wears a
wedding ring.Two men show up at a house, but the image flies by too
quickly to make out the faces.

A feast on a table.

A scream!

May's been run through with a blade.

JANUARIE (O.S.)

May?!

In the fire, May dies in a pool of her blood.

The fire goes out with a puff of smoke.

The forest darkens.

Januarie bolts to his feet.

JANUARIE

No! Who did this? You must show
me more!

Januarie looks up from the burnt-out fire to face the seer,
but he is gone.

JANUARIE

Where are you?

Januarie about-turns, all trace of the fire is gone.

JANUARIE

Seer!

A horse whinnies.

Januarie finds his horse tied to a tree branch, as though
none of the night's events had happened.

Januarie mounts his horse.

JANUARIE

I'm coming, May!

He gallops off into the night.

EXT. TOWN OF PRUIA - MARKET - DAY

Januarie gallops through the town.

JANUARIE

Out of my way!

A young knight, dressed in the finest armour a man can
buy, tumbles out of the way. This is JUSTINUS.

Justinus catches a glimpse of the horse-rider's face.

JUSTINUS

Januarie?

Placebo abandons his shop and rushes over to Justinus.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
A spectacular dive, even if it was
because of that damn rude knight.

Justinus' eyes light up.

JUSTINUS
Januarie...

Placebo helps Justinus to his feet.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
No, it's September, my concussed
friend.

Justinus excitedly grabs Placebo by the arms.

JUSTINUS
Our wandering friend has returned!

MARKET WOMAN (O.S.)
Why not welcome your friend home
with a gift.

Both men turn to face the MARKET WOMAN, who tends a small market stall filled with trinkets.

MARKET WOMAN
I have the perfect gift.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
What a marvellous idea!

JUSTINUS
I'm afraid my friend's enthusiasm
exceeds the contents of his purse.

Justinus nudges his friend to leave.

The woman steps in front of them, holding a tempting box before their eyes.

MARKET WOMAN
(to Justinus)
My prices are fair. The contents
of this box for a lock of your
friend's hair.

Justinus grabs Placebo's arm and drags him away. Placebo digs his heels in.

JUSTINUS
Let's go, Placebo. This woman has
a foul stench about her.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
What may I ask is in the box?

The woman opens the box for the men to see. Placebo's face flushes with excitement.

He grabs his friend's sword.

JUSTINUS

No!

Placebo cuts a lock of hair from his head, then gives it to the woman.

MARKET WOMAN

Januarie is a very lucky man.

Justinus grabs his sword and swings it up to the woman's throat.

JUSTINUS

Tell us how you know Januarie's name or lose...

The Market Woman has disappeared.

JUSTINUS

...your head.

Justinus's gaze darts around, searching for the woman.

JUSTINUS

Where did she go?

He spots a woman run into a crowd, he turns to race after her.

Placebo grabs Justinus's arm.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Knowing a man's name is not a crime, my friend. Come...

Placebo hurries off with his box.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

...Januarie is home!

EXT. JANUARIE'S HOME - DAY

A large house at the centre of acres of farm land, orchards, and stables.

Januarie marches up to the front door, his eyes heavy from exhaustion, and bangs his sword on the wooden door.

JANUARIE

May!

The door creaks open.

May's weary eyes light up when she sees Januarie.

MAY
Januarie, you're back!

May wipes her dusty hands on her apron, then tightly hugs him.

Januarie abruptly pushes out of the hug.

JANUARIE
Are you alone?

INT. JANUARIE'S HOME - DAY

Januarie strides through a simple home, with his sword drawn, and checks every room.

MAY
Januarie, what is it?

JANUARIE
Where is he? There's someone here,
I know it.

May glares at him.

MAY
How dare you barge in here like
that and accuse me of being with
another.

Januarie blushes.

JANUARIE
Oh, my dear, that is not what I
meant.

MAY
What did you mean?

Januarie checks the last room, they're the only ones there.

JANUARIE
I meant...

He glances around the house, confused, as he heads back to...

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A cauldron bubbles atop a wood fire. A simple wooden table at the back of the room.

JANUARIE
...I don't know what I meant.

MAY
What happened to you? Where have
you been?

JANUARIE

I have been trying to find my place
in the world. Then I met a... I
met someone, a stranger...

Januarie rubs his tired, bloodshot eyes.

JANUARIE

...maybe I dreamt it, it did seem
rather odd.

Januarie slumps forward, exhausted.

May takes his sword and leaves it in the corner of the room. She helps him into...

BEDROOM

A dimly lit room with merely a bed and one cupboard.

May helps Januarie into bed. As soon as his head hits the pillow, he's out like a light.

BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark. The clink of pots and pans. Januarie wakes and lights a candle.

KITCHEN

Januarie strolls into a room lit up by candles. He gawps at a huge feast on the table.

May darts about the kitchen setting up the feast.

MAY

Good evening! You look much better.

JANUARIE

What is this?

MAY

I'm recreating our marriage feast!

JANUARIE

Do we need to?

MAY

I think so.

A knock at the door.

JANUARIE

Who visits at this ungodly hour?

Januarie yanks the door open, ready to yell. It's Justinus and Placebo.

JANUARIE

Januarie, it's good to see you!

Placebo hugs the box close to his side.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

You must tell us all about your travels, friend.

Colour drains from Januarie's face as he stares at them.

FLASHBACK - IMAGES IN THE FIRE

Two men show up at a house, but the image flies by too quickly to make out the faces.

A huge feast.

May screams!

She's been run through with a blade.

END FLASHBACK

INT. JANUARIE'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Januarie glances at the feast on the table, it matches the image in the fire.

He turns back to his friends and glances at Justinus' sharp sword. The box in Placebo's hands is big enough to conceal a knife.

JUSTINUS

Januarie?

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

He's so surprised to see us, he's lost for words. Am I right?

Placebo pushes by Januarie and sits at the table, eying up the feast.

MAY

Say something, Januarie.

A reflection of the seer's fire appears on a pan.

The seer's shadowy figure appears in another reflection.

A dark shadow engulfs Januarie.

He gasps and about-turns.

JANUARIE'S HALLUCINATION - CONTINUOUS

Januarie's back in the dark forest with the fire.

A thunderous downpour, but the fire still burns bright.

The seers shadowy figure appears.

JANUARIE
The vision was real.

The seer disappears.

Januarie races over to the fire and gazes into it.

JANUARIE
What future is there for an old
knight?

Nothing appears in the flame.

JANUARIE
Show me the secrets you hold!

Nothing.

JANUARIE
Seer, answer me. Which one kills
her?

A disembodied laugh echoes.

MAY (O.S.)
Januarie?

A flash of lightning lights up the seer.

Januarie grabs a burning log from the fire.

END HALLUCINATION

INT. JANUARIE'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Januarie grabs a candle.

With a war cry, he swings it towards May's face.

JUSTINUS
No!

JANUARIE'S HALLUCINATION

Januarie swings the burning log towards the seers face.

JANUARIE
Answer me!

A hand grabs the burning log.

The seer turns into Januarie.

A flash of lightning.

END HALLUCINATION

INT. JANUARIE'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A flash of lightning as rain pelts against the window.

Januarie stares at his reflection in the window. He glances around, confused.

Placebo and Justinus restrain him.

May trembles as Januarie wields the candle like a weapon, inches from her face.

JANUARIE

May?

Januarie loosens his grip on the candle.

Placebo quickly grabs the candle before it falls.

JUSTINUS

Are you all right, my friend?

Januarie backs away from them.

JANUARIE

My apologies.

Justinus and May stare at Januarie, worried.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Come now, enough with the worried faces. What knight wouldn't experience a spell of madness after such a long, arduous adventure.

Placebo sits before the feast.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

A good meal will wash away the madness.

Justinus and May sit at the table.

Justinus is still wearing his sword. Januarie backs into the corner and grabs his sword.

Justinus's hand hovers over his sword.

Placebo laughs.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Is this a feast or a battle?

JANUARIE

May I take your sword?

Januarie's face darkens.

JANUARIE

We are all friends here. Are we not?

MAY

Januarie!

JUSTINUS

It's all right, May.

Justinus hands over his sword.

Januarie places the sword in the far corner, then joins them at the table.

Placebo's hungry eyes soak up the feast before him.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

What a sight to behold!

JUSTINUS

It looks a good meal indeed.

MAY

By all means, enjoy.

Justinus watches Januarie like a man planning to fight. He glances at his sword, then at Januarie's sword.

Januarie watches Justinus's every move.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

I have to say, I have a gift for you, Januarie, one you should love!

JUSTINUS

Placebo! No.

JANUARIE

Oh, what is it?

Placebo taps on the wooden box.

MAY

I'm intrigued.

Januarie's eyes remain fixed on the box, suspicious.

JUSTINUS

Now's not the time.

Justinus subtly nods towards May.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

If you insist.

Januarie's eyes remain locked on both men as they dig into their meal.

KITCHEN - LATER

May clears away the plates of food.

MAY

Now everyone, just let me clear
this all away and leave you to it.

JUSTINUS

Can I help?

MAY

No. No, I've got it.

Placebo has the box in his hands, barely able to sit still
with all the excitement.

JANUARIE

What's in the box?

Januarie manoeuvres himself between the men and May.

JUSTINUS

Perhaps you should not see.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Don't be such a bore.

Januarie takes a knife from the table and hides it behind
his back.

JANUARIE

All right, you two, I will have a
look.

As Placebo opens the box, Januarie tightly grips the knife,
ready to attack.

JANUARIE

Good lord.

The knife falls out of Januarie's hand as he blushes.

JUSTINUS

I know, embarrassing. I told him
not to.

Januarie removes explicit drawings of women from the box.

JANUARIE

What a remarkable gift.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

I thought you would like it, the
sort of stuff we have seen in the
brothels in town.

MAY

What!

JANUARIE

Placebo... misspoke, dear!

MAY

Did he? And what are these, then?

May grabs the drawings out of Januarie's hands.

MAY

Heavens above!

JANUARIE

Now, dear, please calm down.

MAY

Why, Januarie? Why?

May cries as Januarie tries to console her.

JUSTINUS

Satisfied!

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

I only tried to help.

May pulls away from Januarie.

Flustered, Januarie quickly pulls his sword.

JANUARIE

This is what I think, May.

Januarie skewers the drawings with his sword.

JANUARIE

I want you, not these.

He swings the sword back towards the sheath, but misses.

May screams.

Justinus and Placebo stare at May in horror.

Januarie turns as pale as a sheet. He slowly turns to find May has been run through with his sword.

MAY

Januarie?

May falls into a pool of blood.

JANUARIE

No.

Januarie applies dressings around her wound.

JANUARIE

No. Please, no, don't leave me?!
I'm sorry.

May's tearful eyes flutter shut. Her body falls limp.

JANUARIE

No!

Januarie punches the ground.

A malevolent laugh.

Januarie looks up from his wife. The seer appears between Januarie and Placebo, enjoying every second of his pain.

Januarie's eyes fill with rage.

JANUARIE

You!

Justinus and Placebo exchange a confused glance. Who is he talking to?

JANUARIE

This was your doing.

Januarie pulls his sword.

JUSTINUS

Think this through.

Januarie lunges towards Placebo with his sword.

Justinus grabs his sword.

Swords clash.

Justinus shoves back Januarie.

JUSTINUS

I'm sure Placebo never intended for... for this to happen.

SEER

A man who lives by his sword, shall die by it.

Placebo hides behind Justinus.

JANUARIE

(to seer)

Why?

The seer just laughs.

JUSTINUS

Who are you talking to, Januarie?

JANUARIE

Stop laughing!

Januarie lunges for the seer, but the seer disappears, then reappears behind him.

Placebo darts towards the door.

Januarie charges towards him, sword held out.

Justinus dives in front of the sword. The sword stabs into his chest. He cries out in agony.

Januarie yanks back his sword.

Blood gushes out of Justinus's chest. He collapses beside May.

The seer still laughs.

Januarie turns on the seer. He swings back his sword. It swishes down towards Placebo.

Placebo grabs Justinus's sword.

In one swift move, he dives out of the way and stabs Januarie in the back.

Januarie falls to his knees.

The seer appears before Placebo as well, startling him.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Who are you?

The seer disappears.

END THE MERCHANT'S TALE:

INT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

Harry, Oswald, and Palamon applaud Placebo's tale, drowning out his voice as he declares...

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

The end.

Robin crosses his arms as the group cheer for Placebo's tale. He glances around the inn, the last few bar patrons are finishing off their drinks.

HARRY BAILEY

What a tale!

Chaucer, still gagged and tied to his chair, catches a glimpse of Robin watching the other bar patrons.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

It should be, I kept the drawings.

Placebo removes a box from his bag and hands it to Harry.

Harry's eyes widen as he looks at the explicit drawings.

The pictures work their way around the group, eliciting whistles and flushed faces.

Oswald quickly leans over, sneaking another peek at the pictures.

THE REEVE/OSWALD

Are they for sale?

Placebo grins.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

I always try to be of service.

The pictures finally end up in Robin's hands. He takes one look at them and rolls his eyes.

HARRY BAILEY

Well, it is obvious what the best story is.

With dramatic flair, Harry's eyes wander around their group, finally looking at Robin.

HARRY BAILEY

It is...

Robin leans forward as he pushes up from his seat, barely concealing his joy.

Harry turns back to Placebo and holds out his hand.

HARRY BAILEY

Congratulations! What a story you had there.

Grinning like a Cheshire cat, Placebo enthusiastically shakes Harry's hand.

Robin quietly slips back into his seat, dismayed.

Oswald shakes hands with Placebo.

THE REEVE/OSWALD

You had me on the edge of my seat.

Chaucer watches Robin, suspicious of his stolen glances of other bar patrons.

Palamon stands and salutes Placebo.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Well deserved, Sir!

Robin's jaw tenses up. With that, he slams down his tankard.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

What!

Everyone in the group stares at him as he bolts to his feet, infuriated.

HARRY BAILEY

Oh, what now?

THE MILLER/ROBIN

I would hardly call that a tale.

Placebo gets in Robin's face.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Compared to your despicable tale,
my story was a work of art.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Art? Ha!

THE REEVE/OSWALD

Talk about a sore loser.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

This should be good.

Robin looks around the group, dismayed.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Are you all deaf?

Robin waves his arms about with his impassioned plea. He steals a glance at the other bar patrons as they begin to stand.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Placebo's tale was just about an old fool who killed his wife.

Harry Bailey motions for the Bar Wench to come over to them.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

By his own sword, no less.

The Bar wench gives each person their bill, except for Placebo.

Robin glances at his bill, then glares at Harry.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

I'm no one's bloody fool, Bailey.
You duped me into spending more
money.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Placebo won, fair and square.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Fair? Fair?!

THE REEVE/OSWALD
Come now, don't confuse the man.
Fair isn't in his vocabulary.

Robin's eyes follow the other bar patrons as they exit the inn. It's just their group left in the bar now.

A smile spreads across Robin's face as an eerie calm comes over him.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
You want to talk fair?

The others glance at each other, confused.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
(to Palamon)
I'm the only man who didn't copy
your story.

Palamon stares at Robin, in disbelief.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Do you not think it odd that their
stories had a witch too?

Palamon glances at Oswald and Placebo.

THE REEVE/OSWALD
I assure you, it was a coincidence.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO
You have my word. Besides, my
witch was a seer.

Robin sidles up next to Palamon.

THE MILLER/ROBIN What do we really know about them?

Palamon tears up his bill.

HARRY BAILEY
Stop stirring up trouble, Robin.
(to Palamon)
You have my word as a man, no one
cheated.

THE MILLER/ROBIN
Ha! That's rich coming from you,
the man who is friends with the
winner.

HARRY BAILEY

(lying)
That is not true.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

He's not going to admit to conning
us.

Tension grows between the men as they glare at each other.

Robin contentedly smiles as the murderous scowls consume
the group.

All the men turn on each other, yelling.

Robin weaves between the arguing men, carefully taking a
stray hair from Harry.

Robin grabs Chaucer by his throat and rips a hair from his
head. He leans down to Chaucer's ear.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

(whispers)
Thine own eyes do not deceive thee.

Robin's eyes glow red.

Chaucer's scream is muffled by the gag. He struggles to
loosen his restraints. It's no use.

Robin maliciously grins.

THE MILLER/ROBIN

(whispers)
Thou should hath staid thy tongue.

Chaucer screams and bangs his chair to get attention, but
the noise is drowned out by yelling.

Robin strolls over to the fireplace, grinning from ear-to-
ear.

Chaucer bangs his chair against the wall. The chair cracks
a little.

The argument turns violent.

Palamon pulls his sword.

Robin draws a pentagram with ash from the fire.

Chaucer tilts his chair back. He falls. The chair breaks.
His ropes loosen.

Robin takes out five waxwork dolls from a hidden bag, then
ties hair from each man around each doll's neck.

Chaucer removes his gag and leaps to his feet.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Stop!

Robin places the Oswald wax doll on the pentagram. Oswald disappears.

HARRY BAILEY

What on Earth?

Palamon's eyes narrow at the wax dolls by the fire.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

My God. Run. Now!

The next wax doll is moved onto the pentagram.

Palamon disappears.

The men turn to run.

One by one, all the men disappear.

The fire and candles blow out. Pitch black.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Pitch black.

Hell's fire erupts to life beneath a cauldron. The five ceremonial torches from Palamon's story light the forest clearing.

Palamon, Chaucer, Harry, Oswald and Placebo exchange confused glances.

A large, human-bone pentagram surrounds them.

Palamon glances over to the human-skin tent. The five human-skin voodoo dolls sit on a small pentagram.

Palamon races over to the dolls. An unseen force blasts him back.

Robin emerges from the tent in a black robe. He comes over weak. Stoops forward. His appearance flickers between that of the woman in the black cloak, the seer, the young woman, the market woman, and the witch.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

What in heaven's name are you?

THE MILLER/ROBIN

Heaven? Don't insult me.

The other men sprint towards the forest.

An invisible force drags them back into the pentagram.

Robin's appearance comes to rest on that of the same wrinkled, grey-faced woman from Palamon's tale and the burnt house, the witch.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON
This didn't work last time, foul
demon.

The witch holds out the Orb of Hades. Its fire burns bright at the centre of the orb.

WITCH
Nature's soil, do as I command,
open up by thine own hand.

The witch smashes the orb with a rock.

A blinding flash of light.

The forest clearing darkens.

The ground rumbles.

WITCH
Fair and Nobel men repent.

Numerous decomposing, bug infested, bloody corpses crawl out of the soil like zombies. It's all the victims from their stories. They attack Placebo, Palamon and Oswald.

WITCH
Pay the price for what is right.

The dead bar wench crawls out of the ground, a sword sticking out of her splayed open torso. She attacks Chaucer.

Chaucer cowers away from the dead bar wench.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
No. You are merely a dream.

A formless demon of pure sin crashes out of the ground. Attacks Harry.

A cacophony of pleas from the men.

WITCH
Quiet!

All the men lose their voices.

Harry, Chaucer, Placebo, Palamon, and Oswald are each tied to a ceremonial torch.

WITCH
A life for a life, a murder for a
murder.

Palamon edges down to the ground. Grabs a stone. Picks at his ropes.

WITCH

(yells)

In the name of their victims, I
call upon the gates of hell.

Dead Symkyn drags an axe over to Oswald.

Palamon's restraints fray. He continues to cut it with the stone.

WITCH

Open for their crimes.

Dead Bartholomew pours alcohol over Palamon. The dead villagers light a torch.

Palamon mumbles a prayer.

Dead May, Justinus and Januarie steal Palamon's sword and aim it at Placebo's neck.

WITCH

Repay me with what is rightfully
mine.

The formless demon circles Harry like a vulture.

The dead bar wench pulls the sword out of her chest and swings it up over Chaucer's head.

WITCH

Eternal youth.

Palamon breaks free.

The formless demon chokes Harry. His flesh begins to turn into ash.

Palamon races towards the human-skin dolls. Bartholomew chases him with a lit torch.

Swords and axes swing towards Placebo, Oswald and Chaucer.

The witch grows younger by the second.

Bartholomew throws his torch. It hits Palamon. Smoke billows off Palamon's clothes.

Palamon dives towards the human-skin dolls. Grabs them. Destroys the small pentagram.

The witch's renewed youth rapidly fades.

WITCH

No!

Blinding flash of light.

BLACK

INT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

Smoke. The fire flickers alight. The walls are singed.
Smoke clears.

In the blink of an eye, all the storytellers and corpses appear.

The corpses collapse to the ground. The spell is broken.

The men stare, wide-eyed, at Harry's dead body slumped in the corner. Half his body has turned to ash.

Palamon collapses, his skin charred beyond recognition.

Chaucer, Placebo and Oswald rush to Palamon's side.

THE KNIGHT/PALAMON

Get the straw doll. You must stop
her.

Palamon's eyes flicker shut as he lets out one last pained breath.

Chaucer darts over to Palamon's bag.

The witch steps out of the shadows.

Chaucer cowers back.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Stay back!

Placebo grabs Palamon's sword.

WITCH

As you wish.

A thin smile creeps onto her face. She holds out the amulet.

WITCH

Kill them all.

An invisible force crashes through the door.

Tables fly aside as something bangs against them. Glass smashes on the floor.

Oswald cries out. Blood pumps out of his neck. Collapses. The creature appears. Its jaw locked around Oswald's neck.

Placebo and Chaucer stumble away from the creature.

They race for the door.

With a flick of the witch's wrist, the door slams shut.
Placebo tugs at the door. It won't open.
The men cower in the centre of the room.
Placebo crosses his chest, then prays.

WITCH

You think God will help you? You're
all bloody sinners.

A low growl fills the air. Glass shards crunch as something
circles them.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Call off your demon, or whatever
that thing is.

The witch steals money from behind the bar.

WITCH

Why?

Placebo turns to Chaucer.

THE MERCHANT/PLACEBO

Get the straw doll.

Sword drawn, Placebo charges towards the creature. It
disappears.

Chaucer races towards the straw doll.

The witch darts across the room and tackles him to the
ground.

Placebo staves off the creature. He is thrown backwards.
A bite wound on his arm bleeds as he struggles against the
creature.

Chaucer throws a chair at the creature.

The creature releases its grip on Placebo. It turns
invisible.

Silence.

They look around. Where is the creature?

The rhythmic crack of glass shards as they move aside
slightly as the invisible beast walks on them.

Placebo scoops up ash from the fireplace. Throws it across
the room. A blackened creature prowls around Placebo.

The witch seizes the moment to grab the straw doll. Chaucer
whacks it out of her hand. The witch tumbles across the
ground along with the doll.

Chaucer tackles the witch for the doll. He grabs the doll.
Placebo's bloodcurdling scream.

Placebo's stomach gapes open. Entrails sprawled across the floor.

Chaucer gasps. Dazed by the bloody sight.

The witch snatches the straw doll from Chaucer's hand.

The creature watches Chaucer, snarling.

Chaucer is cornered.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Wait. Condemned men are entitled to one final wish.

The creature moves closer, baring its sharp teeth.

Chaucer backs further into the corner.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

What was my sin?

The witch waves her hand in front of Chaucer's eyes.

WITCH

Restore from whence it came, the memory of a fallen man's shame.

CHAUCER'S MEMORY

A ghostly memory appears before Chaucer's eyes.

A healthier, slightly YOUNGER CHAUCER stands by Philippa's sick bed. The woman in the black cloak hovers around him.

YOUNGER CHAUCER

Please. You must help her.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK

A life for a life will buy her a year or two, but thou must choose a sacrifice.

Younger Chaucer gazes at his dying wife.

YOUNGER CHAUCER

Name your price, anything.

Younger Chaucer, Philippa and the woman disappear. Quickly replaced by...

The naked bar wench hanging from a tree by her feet. Tears stream down her panicked face.

The woman in the black cloak raises a sword over the bar wench.

BAR WENCH
You must help me, good sir.

Younger Chaucer watches, barely holding himself back.

BAR WENCH
Please!

The sword swishes down. Bar wench screams. The sword splays open her torso. Blood gushes into a cauldron beneath her.

Younger Chaucer turns as pale as a sheet.

The woman in the black cloak waves her hand in front of Chaucer's eyes.

WOMAN IN A BLACK CLOAK
Forget.

END CHAUCER'S MEMORY

INT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

Before Chaucer can react, the creature bounds onto him. He falls.

Chaucer barely keeps the snarling teeth away from his throat.

Chaucer cries out in pain. Not from a bite wound. The scar on his hand burns brighter than ever.

Chaucer glances between the scar and the amulet in the creature's head. It's a match.

He glances out the window. There's moonlight.

He presses the scar against the creature's head.

The creature roars. The moon's energy is drawn out of it.

Animal features shift back to human.

A naked man stares at Chaucer, confused. It's the pirate from Chaucer's tale.

The amulet falls off the pirate's forehead. Chaucer catches it. The pirate smiles.

PIRATE
I'm free!

A bloody sword tears through the pirate's chest. The witch rips out the sword. The pirate slumps to the ground.

The sword cuts through the air, towards Chaucer.

Chaucer kicks the sword out of her hand. Presses the amulet against her head.

All the moon's energy burns into her. She cries out.

Her appearance shatters between all the witches.

Her demon face burns through.

The demon face shifts towards animal.

She curls over into the creature. It growls at Chaucer.

Chaucer rapidly holds out the burning amulet-shaped scar.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Stay back!

The creature backs away from Chaucer slightly, then sits.

He slowly reaches for the sword. Swings it up over the creature's head.

A MOB of neighbouring people charge into the building.

They stop dead in their track, shocked by all the dead bodies.

Chaucer swings the sword down towards the creatures neck.

The mob tackle Chaucer and grab the sword.

EXT. TABARD INN - NIGHT

The angry mob drag Chaucer outside. Chaucer struggles against them.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

I must stop the witch!

They throw a noose over Chaucer's head.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

No! You must release me. She's getting away.

Chaucer winces in pain. His amulet-shaped scar burns red hot.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

God forgive me.

He struggles against the mob to hold out his scarred hand. He commands the creature.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Protect me.

90.

The creature appears and lunges towards the mob.

FADE OUT.