

ONCE UPON A TIME
IN MANKIND'S...



Darkest Age

PILOT
"The Candlebearer"

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v 3.01
5/1/23



In an age that history forgot, there was magic, steel
and mankind's futile struggle against the darkness
that sought to consume them.

These are the tales collected by an aging monk and
retold as stories of mankind's Darkest Age.



BLACK

A woman's Celtic singing mingles with a sharply plucked lute.

INT. ROYAL BED CHAMBER - NIGHT

Over opening credits. Beads of wax DRIP from a nearly exhausted LIT CANDLE.

The singer's ghostly voice fades, playing over the scene.

The sound of swords CLASHING echo with the chaos of a distant battle.

An unearthly ROAR -- the flame flickers wildly.

Frantic FOOTSTEPS approach.

A WRINKLED HAND -- SNATCHES the candle and the room fades into darkness.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER TITLE: THE CANDLEBEARER

FLINT AND STEEL. STRIKE. STRIKE. SPARK.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - SUNSET

On the third STRIKE the warm flame flickers in the hand of CYRUS COBBLER, (18) A bright eyed young castle servant with a rough spun tunic, curly hair and an optimistic personality.

Cyrus uncups his hand with devoted care, eyes inches away from the newly lit wax candle in a chandelier.

CYRUS

There we are.

Cyrus uses the candle to light its nearby counterparts.

HISS. Hot wax DRIPS on his hand. Cyrus winces in pain.

The ladder WOBLES precariously beneath him. Cyrus barely balances in time.

BERRET (O.S.)

(urgently)

Oh no take your time. It's not as the royals will be here ANY MOMENT!

Cyrus glances downward at the source of his critique. The floor seems to zoom in towards him and he tightens his grip.

BERRET SMITH, (20) his stocky best friend in near identical servant's garb, holds the ladder halfheartedly with a perturbed look on his face.

All around them servants, chefs and royal decorators prepare the grand dining hall for the Easter Feast.

The distant CLAMMOR of a CROWD approaches.

The room goes quiet, everyone pauses for a moment before hastily returning to their last minute preparations.

Cyrus snaps his attention back to the chandelier, something is moving by his hand.

IT'S A RAT! It HISSES. Cyrus instinctively leans backward. Berret is distracted watching a woman bent over placing drink on a nearby table.

Cyrus falls. SPLOOOSH. Right into a recently placed giant tower of PUDDING. The two servants at either side GASP.

INT. STONE HALLWAY - SUNSET

Through a stone window, the last tip of the sun passes over the horizon. It bathes the hamlet outside the castle walls in the last moments of its golden light.

Fine jewelry and decorative chains JINGLE as they bounce on the speckled chest of, UTHUR PENDRAGON, (82) the King of the Britons, white hair, long beard, in his royal robes.

He pauses, the line of nobles, knights and servants behind him halt in their steps, waiting on the king to move forward.

The light of the sun passes into shadow on the king's face, and the hall is filled with the glow of torches on the walls.

His eyes flicker with terror.

THE QUEEN (O.S.)

It is upon us my King.

THE QUEEN, (40) with a face like a renaissance painting and eyes lined with sadness, takes her husband's hand in her own. She lets out a breath like a weight was just lifted.

THE QUEEN (CONT'D)

Let us rejoice and be glad.

Bitterness replaces the fear in Uther's eyes. He releases his wife's hand and leads the procession down the hall.

TWO ARMED GUARDS, at either at opposite ends of heavy oak double doors, SWING them open, bathing the stone hallway with candlelight.

The king squints his eyes from the brilliant glow.

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

NOBLES, in lavish dresses and attire flood the room like a stream, parted in the center by the slower king and queen.

The dining hall glows with the inviting blaze of its candles, chandeliers, candelabras and even smaller candles scattered about the dining tables.

Festive music plays loudly and a JESTER, (30s) a gaunt man with an unsettling smile and peculiar face paint, juggles large eggs in the center of the room.

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - SERVANTS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Cyrus and Berret catch their breath in the nearby servants station, resting their backs against yet uncorked barrels of wine.

A servant comes from the kitchen. BEATRICE, (20s) a handsome young woman with hair tied neatly, modest dress and a look that says, "Don't cross me." She carries a tray of food.

CYRUS

Beatrice... you look.

Beatrice flashes Cyrus a steely look, eyebrow raised. Berret quickly jumps to his friend's defense.

BERRET

Busy. Incredibly busy. So busy that we're NOT going to interrupt.

Cyrus nods in agreement. Both young men are tossed two chunks of bread.

BEATRICE

That's all you get. Any more and they'll notice.

Beatrice turns and enters the feasting hall. Cyrus stares at the bread like it was a gift from heaven.

BERRET
 (mouth full of bread)
 Good job lover boy but better eat
 that before they do.

Cyrus looks down at two rats nibbling at the crumbs from the bread. He gives a look of understanding and tosses them a larger piece.

Cyrus peers through an opening in the storage room's door, looking out at the feast.

CYRUS
 Do you think... she'll ever notice
 my affections.

BERRET
 It'd take a blind beggar not to.
 More likely she don't care.

Cyrus' eyes drift to the KNIGHTS, men in chainmail and royal finery, strong and surrounded by noble women pining for their attentions.

One of them, SIR LOFRICK, (30s) the largest and strongest looking one of his group, beckons Beatrice and kisses her hand, she blushes. Lofrick flashes a wolfish grin in return.

Cyrus looks away and faces Berret with new resolve.

CYRUS
 What if I were to become a squire?
 Then one day even I could become a
 knight.

Berret laughs UPROAROUSLY but stops, his friend is serious.

BERRET
 You? Piss to the thought young
 Cyrus. We're just lucky to get
 their scraps.

He stands up and CLAPS Cyrus on the back.

BERRET (CONT'D)
 Best we remember ours, grand
 ambitions don't suit the likes of
 us. Now, lets join the other poor
 non squires for a bit of wine.

Cyrus shrugs off the arm and looks at Sir Lofrick encircled by the crowd of women. He's made up his mind.

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - MOMENTS LATER

A young SERVANT GIRL, pours more wine into the king's glass. He doesn't look at it. His eyes reflect the light of the hall, and his gaze wanders from person to person.

His bones CRACK as he shifts in his throne, the crown hangs heavily on his head, seeming to weigh him down.

The jester juggles three strange eggs. Each of them have painted symbols upon them.

A crown, an eye and a flame.

He watches them move, following each throw.

The other members of the strange troupe, play music. An acrobat dangles from the rafters with colorful tapestries.

The king is lost in their movements, disconnected from it all.

He holds his temple from a sudden headache.

STEP. STEP. STEP. Footsteps echo in his head, each step is louder than the next. The king's gaze drifts to their source, Cyrus. He watches the young man's every move.

Cyrus approaches Sir Lofrick and bows, low to the floor.

Lofrick laughs nervously and looks down at him.

LOFRICK

Look's like the wine has already brought the servants to their knees.

The table chuckles along with the knight.

CYRUS

I am Cyrus Cobbler my lord and I humbly wish to enter your service.

The table grows quiet. Lofrick drinks a pint of ale.

LOFRICK

(mouth full of drink)

Well begone. I have no need of your service.

CYRUS

I would serve you faithfully and loyally, I can swing a sword and would be an aid in battle.

LOFRICK

I said I have no need of you... why
are you still here?

CYRUS

Please my lord. One chance is all I
need to prove..

Cyrus grabs the edge of Lofrick's cape, startling him and
causing him to spill his ale on himself.

CRACK. Lofrick swiftly KICKS Cyrus in the face, throwing him
to the ground. He stands up from his chair.

LOFRICK

Ask again and my good manner be
visited by something more fitting.

Lofrick tosses his ale mug at Cyrus. The drink's remnants
SPLASHING all over him.

LOFRICK (CONT'D)

And fetch another drink. Mine
spilled.

Cyrus looks up at Beatrice, pity in her eyes. He's crushed
and SCRAMBLES away in a hurry.

The king watches Cyrus go. He clutches a large METAL KEY
strung around his neck, tightly in his boney fingers.

INT. SERVANTS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus BURSTS in, wiping blood and tears from his nose.

CYRUS

Come on Berret. Berret?

A MOAN. Cyrus gives a concerned look. He turns a corner in
the room, past several rows of large wine barrels.

The moaning intensifies accompanied by a rhythmic THUD THUD
THUD. Cyrus passes some clothes strewn across the floor.

SLAP. SLAP. SLAP. Berret and one of the other servants,
MILDRED, (20s) are engaged in passionate intercourse.

Cyrus turns away quickly, wishing to unsee that.

With a bitter SIGH and defeated shrug, Cyrus grabs a vase of
wine with a look that says "Fuck it."

He takes a mighty swig, and COUGHS. He's inexperienced but takes another swig. Cyrus leaves for a distant door.

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - NIGHT

To the right of the throne, THE ARCHBISHOP, rises. The room quiets down and he raises his hands.

CLOSE ON: The last egg juggled is the eye. It lands in the jester's hand.

The eye opens, its human and looks directly at the king.

Terror washes over Uther.

The jester's hand closes around the egg and vanishes into the crowd.

ARCHBISHOP

Blessed be this day. For Christ has
risen. Rejoice, celebrate for we
his lambs will feast at his table
in a kingdom that has no end.

The feasting crowd CHEERS.

The king's fear turns to bitterness, gripping the key so hard, blood begins to drip from the palm of his hand. The queen notices and places a gentle hand on his shoulder.

THE QUEEN

My King?

The king's eyes dart to his wine glass, catching a glimpse of settling ripples within. Another BOOM, this time louder.

The king stands abruptly.

Amongst the performing troupe, THE MUSE, (30s) a singer with a painted face, long amber hair and a dark green dress, begins to sing as a lute is strummed.

Her voice carries over everything else.

INT. SERVANTS BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Cyrus looks out at the moon, and raises up his vase of wine.

Beside him lays a tattered sketchbook, with a lovingly sketched picture of Beatrice.

INT. STONE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Down the long stone hallway, the king walks with purpose with his hand on the hilt of his sword. Each step more determined than the last.

Rows of armed guardsmen, prepare their weapons wordlessly, readying swords, crossbows and spears.

INT. SERVANTS BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Cyrus RIPS out and CRUMPLES the drawing and stuffs it into his shirt. With a deep SIGH, he curls into a fetal position to sleep.

Through the window, clouds envelope the moon in darkness.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - NIGHT

The king stands outside with a contingent of his armed defenders, he looks to the sky as the moon vanishes.

The COMMANDER, (50s) tough, bearded and clad in a mixture of plate armor and chainmail, makes a silent command to his archers. They take up defensive positions on the walls.

The king feels for the key, gripping it intensely as he looks toward the darkened skies.

Snowflakes begin to fall, and a heavy white fog falls upon the courtyard like a blanket of haze

The armed men look around, mesmerized by the falling snow.

BONG. The CHAPEL BELL TOLLS three times before an eerie silence takes over - the calm before a storm.

A loud BOOM outside the castle walls, causes the ground to shake beneath the men, who mobilize toward the castle gate.

THE COMMANDER

Archers what do you see? Archers?

There is no answer. The fog clears, revealing an empty battlement. Blood drips from the stonework and a helmet SPINS and CLAMORS.

The commander draws his blade and points at a nearby guard.

THE COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Get his majesty to safety.

BOOM. The earth shakes again.

The men in the courtyard all take a fearful step backwards.

BOOM. The door stresses under pressure.

THE COMMANDER (CONT'D)
Stay your ground men.

A GUARD beckons the king to come with him.

BOOM. The HINGES CREAK, and the wood SPLINTERS.

A beastly ROAR vibrates through the castle walls and a green glow illuminates through the gate.

Men draw their swords, others take aim with their bows and crossbows. The king is led away and the doors to the castle keep are shut.

From a god's-eye-view we see the king re-enter the keep in protest.

We hear the sound of the gate BREAKING, and the SCREAMS of the men as they are torn to pieces. STEEL. FLESH. BLOOD.

We return to the window of the servant's bedchamber.

INT. SERVANTS BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: The slumbering Cyrus.

Time passes, he shifts and moves in his sleep, it is restless and filled with terrible dreams.

CUT TO:

BLACK

THE BEAST (V.O.)
Cyrus.

EXT. ASHEN FLOWER FIELD - DAY

Cyrus opens his eyes. He's standing bare foot in an ash coated field of flower set against a haze filled sky.

Its like no place he's ever seen.

CYRUS
Where... am I?

A distant green glow emanates from the horizon.

Cyrus takes a nervous step forward. The wind WHIPS through the field, and Cyrus shields his eyes from the ash.

After a few moments, he looks down. The flowers at his feet, wither, and are replaced by a scorched grey desert.

The glow comes from over a small nearby hill, Cyrus climbs it and looks beyond at a large crater that expands for miles.

EXT. ASHEN CRATER - CONTINUOUS

In the middle of the crater and on the edge of the horizon there is a silhouette. Its a young, strong man holding up his hands to the sky.

THE BEAST (V.O.)

Come. SEE.

AN ECLIPSE BEGINS as inky tendrils begin blot out the sun.

Cyrus turns and runs.

The ground shifts under him, his heartbeat becomes LOUDER and FASTER.

Long TENDRILS move like great earth-worms beneath his feet.

He trips and fall into the sand. Cyrus quickly tries to get up. He can't move. Cyrus's arms and legs sink into the quicksand below him.

He tries to scream and sand fills his mouth.

COMPLETE DARKNESS.

Bubbles. Cyrus opens his eyes. He's underwater. Illuminated by the distant green flame.

The flame burns brightly, unaffected by the dark water. Cyrus gets closer to the flame.

Now it is clear. In the center of the emerald flame is the king's burning crown.

Its light illuminates the tips of the tentacles in the water.

Cyrus screams and swims for the surface.

The tentacles reach for him from the darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. SERVANTS BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Cyrus sleeps in his bed with piles of drinks and leftovers from the evening's feast. He squirms from the nightmare.

The warm light from a candle illuminates his face. A raspy voice speaks to him with a whisper that quickly grows louder.

UTHER (O.S.)

Boy... BOY! Tarry in drunken rest
no longer.

A hot drop of wax DRIPS onto the sleeping Cyrus's face. It burns and he opens his eyes with surprise. An aged hand covers his mouth before he can make a sound.

Over his bed stands king Uther.

The king removes his hand and Cyrus wipes the wax off his face, blinking with concern at his situation.

CYRUS

My-my King. W-what are... um. How
can your servant aid you?

SHHHH. The king shushes Cyrus with a sharp command.

His deep set eyes flicker with rage and fear.

CRACK. CRACK. His bones make ample noise as he grabs Cyrus by the shirt, pulls him close and whispers...

UTHER

A nameless horror prowls my house
and shall not away until it has
taken all that is precious to me.

Spit flies as he speaks, splashing on Cyrus's face. He tries not to look away as the droplets dash his skin.

UTHER (CONT'D)

But I've outsmarted it. I know how
to end the beast.

The king holds out a the key attached to a cord around his neck.

UTHER (CONT'D)

We must go to the Western Tower,
there behind its iron doors, lays
the secret to slaying this evil.

Cyrus nods wordlessly with both respect and fear. The king releases him from his boney grasp. His fingers CRACK and he turns his head away from the boy to look out the window.

UTHER (CONT'D)
 (mumbling quietly)
 Watching... always watching.

CYRUS
 (putting on boots)
 My King, I will fetch Sir Lofrick
 at once. The knights and the...

The king holds up his finger "shush." He peeks through the curtains and looks out of the room's wooden doorway.

UTHER
 (in a hushed voice)
 Lofrick's corpse grows cold as we
 speak.

Outside of the bed chambers, a long stone hallway. Down its hall, draperies flutter in the wind.

The King tilts his head outside the door and his eyes go wide at the sound of heavy distant FOOTSTEPS. Uther's voice quivers with sudden terror and becomes a deathly whisper.

UTHER (CONT'D)
 As does Sir Blail, Fredrick,
 Hansel, the Archbishop, the
 knights, the servants, the hounds
 and even...

The king somberly closes the door.

UTHER (CONT'D)
 My beautiful queen. A BEAT. Youth
 boy, If I had an ounce of what you
 do now, I could still hold my
 blade, I COULD HAVE...

He turns to the terrified and confused Cyrus.

UTHER (CONT'D)
 (Menacing)
 On your knees.

Cyrus hesitates before falling wordlessly forward. The king takes his sword and makes the motion of knighting Cyrus.

UTHER (CONT'D)
 You know now my court has failed
 me. See to it, that you do not.

The king sheathes the sword and hands it to the dumbstruck Cyrus.

UTHER (CONT'D)
As this burden now falls to you.

Cyrus looks down at the sword in his hands and up at the king. The duty of this new task weighs heavy upon him.

UTHER (CONT'D)
So rise and prove thee worthy.

INT. STONE STAIRCASE - NIGHT

The King and the squire descend a spiral staircase -- cobwebs hang heavy in the air around them.

Cyrus moves watchfully ahead of the King -- he waves cobwebs out of their path with his sword.

CYRUS
What manner of enemy has taken the castle my king?

UTHER
We have not the time for your queries, all hope expires with the light of the flame. Even now the darkness writhes, ready to burst like some festering boil.

Uther pauses and looks off into the distance. Mentally he is somewhere else. He speaks in a hushed tone.

UTHER (CONT'D)
It is not a man, boy. It is a beast, cunning and beyond time. It does not age... or crave the desires of the flesh, like the rats which dwell in my halls.

CYRUS
This demon then, surely we are no match, let us head for the stables at once my lord. -- My Lord?

Cyrus almost steps into pitch darkness. The king is no longer following behind.

He turns to see the King stalled on the stairs, eyes filled with tears.

UTHER (SOBBING)

I remember this castle. When I was a boy. It always felt so grand. Now it just feels small.

CYRUS

(offering his hand to the king)

My king please, take my hand.

UTHER

The noble women of the court in their diamonds, gold and finery, and such music boy. The kind of music that could unveil the very gates of heaven.

Distant ghostly music plays.

Cyrus looks in its direction with sudden alarm. It sounds like the music one would hear at a great feast -- if it were played by the dead.

CYRUS

This is unnatural! Let us leave to your allies for aid.

He puts his hand on the king's shoulder.

The king stops sobbing with a mad look in his eye. He points a bony finger at Cyrus and curls his hand into a fist.

UTHER

And what say ye to them? That some monster has been allowed to defile my Christian home. That some beast has accosted such a holy place? That I failed to keep the horror within the moors of HELL?

The king pauses -- they both notice the flame on the candle.

IT FLICKERS WILDLY.

The king notices the light is at *risk*. He closes his eyes, calms himself and turns his back to Cyrus.

UTHER (CONT'D)

No one would come.

He walks past the confused Cyrus, who quickly follows.

High above -- in a stained glass window -- the silhouette of THE BEAST prowls, moves past and vanishes from sight.

INT. GRAND HALLWAY - THE WINDOW ROOM

Cyrus holds open a sturdy wooden door for his king and carefully closes it behind them.

The two men walk into a lavish royal hallway with draperies hanging above the large stone windows.

The king stoops down and begins to cough violently. His eyes dart left and right, searching the shadows for something.

Cyrus moves quickly to his king's side.

CYRUS

My lord, what is it? What is wrong?

The king holds up the burning candle to Cyrus.

UTHER

TAKE IT! Take it quickly now, he will not let me carry the flame any longer.

The king lurches and turns away from Cyrus TO HIDE...

A RAT TAIL oozing with green goo slipping out of his mouth. He SLUPS it back up -- like spaghetti.

Cyrus takes the candle from Uther's shaking hand.

WHOOOOSH.

A gust of wind comes in from the large window, causing the draperies to FLUTTER.

Both men cup their hands around the flame, protecting it.

The wind subsides.

Both men turn and see the moonlight REVEAL --

-- A MUTILATED KNIGHT upon the wall.

His face is flayed, peeled open like an apple.

His skin is stretched across the stonework. The center of his armor -- burned away -- a molten core bored through the center -- fusing the metal to the stone.

Blood drips from his BEATING HEART -- suspended in the air within the hole in his chest.

On the floor, the last embers within a torch kindle smoke that rises from its broken remains.

CYRUS
Sir... Lofrick.

Cyrus takes a step back in horror and turns his head away from the ghastly sight before looking back painfully.

UTHER
(motioning to the candle)
Do not let the flame go out.

The king shuffles away, still staying within the light. Cyrus continues to stare at the blood dripping from the knight.

Cyrus turns to follow and leave.

LOFRICK
Cy-rus...

Lofrick MUMBLES with overwhelming pain. He sounds barely human.

CYRUS
Sir... Lofrick.

Lofrick mumbles again. Too softly. Cyrus leans in closer.

LOFRICK
(In a deep demonic voice)
From darkness comes a king.

Cyrus pulls back and looks at the wall

The blood, has become alive -- animating an image like a crimson painting -- showing two great demonic hands crowning a man as King...

The king's distant voice from down the hall beckons Cyrus.

UTHER (O.S.)
(impatiently)
What are you doing? Time is not
ours to waste.

CYRUS
Y-yes my King.

Cyrus holds the candle out and covers its flame as he hurries to keep his King from the darkness.

CLOSE ON: The image of the bloody crown.

From a small opening to the outside of the castle and high above the rafters, a silhouette of The Beast watches unseen over the two men -- like a cat watching small mice.

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Both men enter the once great feasting hall.

The evening moonlight glistens in the dewdrops of cobwebs hanging in the hall's vast ceiling like it's been left unattended for one hundred years.

Across the floor the BODIES of many knights lay scattered across the stone surface. Their armored bodies are FUSED into the foundation -- just like Lofrick's.

CYRUS

Where are the noblemen and women...
Beatrice... Berrett...

UTHER

In the chapel... yes that's where
they went to pray.

Uther laughs, extends his arms and walks into the center of the grand hall like a conductor in an orchestra.

UTHER (CONT'D)

If we do not make it to the tower.
This terror will not stop. Do you
understand? None will be spared...

Cyrus stares in horror at the bodies of knights in the room.

CYRUS

Please God, keep her safe, spare
them and keep them in your mercy.

Uther laughs at the prayer and staggers away.

UTHER

Foolish boy...

CYRUS

Heavenly father, holy mother,
please guide us into your holy
light and protect us...

Chuckling, the king opens a wooden door leading to a hallway and leaves Cyrus's sight for a moment.

UTHER

No one's even listening.

Inside the doorway... THE MASSIVE EYE OF THE BEAST OPENS.

The many layers of its lid peel back to reveal its unnatural looking iris -- gazing into the eyes of the King.

Unaware, Cyrus continues to pray.

The king's eyes go white and his mouth GAPES OPEN in horror. He shuts the door calmly. Cyrus finishes his prayer.

CYRUS

Then should we not go to the
chapel? Surely we'll find refuge
there from this evil and the others
they'll be...

Uther runs at Cyrus wordlessly and leaps outside of the candle light.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

Your Majesty???

As the king runs past the windows, a shadow LOOMS over them, turning the throne room PITCH BLACK.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

King Uther?! Fuck!

Cyrus hurries after him with the light.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

No no no no no NO.

He searches frantically in the dark throne room.

Cyrus runs and stops suddenly -- standing in the silence of the room.

TAP. TAP. TAP.

His gaze darts at the soft sounds of footsteps all around him.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

Hello?

The King dances naked behind him, cackling wildly. His chains make a JINGLING sound like soft bells in the dark.

Cyrus whirls on his feet and holds his sword at the ready. His voice shakes with fear.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

My king?

The king starts to sing in the distance.

UTHER

(singing)

You wished for gold? You wished for
fame? So from the dark you called
my name? I'll dwell within your
heart and crown. Until the time
your soul will drown.

Behind Cyrus -- a rat SCRAMBLES across the great table...
with the king crawling after like a snake.

CRASH. A plate is knocked to the ground behind Cyrus, he
turns to face the noise and the flame on the candle flickers.

UTHER (CONT'D)

For sixty years the throne is
yours. The lord of the icy shores.
Then one day will come the time.
When I return to take what's MINE.

CYRUS

Please no more of this!

The song and music stop.

COUGH. GAG. COUGH.

A horrendous coughing comes from behind the squire.

Cyrus turns to see the king in the dark coughing something up
and hastens to his side.

UTHER

(to himself)

He cannot have it.
This body belongs to me. You will
not have it. This kingdom belongs
to **ME**.

CYRUS

Let us leave this infernal place my
king. Come with me now!

Uther reaches out his hands wildly.

UTHER

Who is it? Who is there?

CYRUS

It is I -- Cyrus my Lord, I beseech
thee -- take my hand.

Uther chews something thoughtfully with his back turned.

UTHER

Cyrus.... is that your Christian name? No... nothing Christian about you... a terror waiting in the dark.

The skin on the back of the King's neck BULGES -- a rat scurries beneath the surface like a boil ready to burst.

CYRUS (HORRIFIED)

It is my name my lord, loyal servant of your court.

UTHER

Cyrus... hyse. Come hither, quick boy. There's much to share.

Uther turns to face him and bites the head off a rat.

UTHER (CONT'D)

Those mongrels in the kitchens have prepared my favorite. The king bird, look how tender and rare. Would you not like a taste?

He takes the headless rat and swallows it as another BURSTS from his mouth.

The king gags -- a second small rat POPS out of his eye socket -- causing the eye to fall out.

He erupts with a crazed CACKLE and stumbles as the flesh begins to fall away from his body.

UTHER (CONT'D)

I should have cut your throat when you lay in your bed as a babe.

Cyrus takes a horrified step back as the King clutches at the key around his neck. The King laughs to the point of tears.

CYRUS

My King, you wait here I'll fetch the weapon to slay this beast.

The king stops laughing. His smile is illuminated by a green glow emanating from his eyes.

UTHER

Give it? To what? To you? What are you but some filth from under a stone? Your ears are like tree swallows, your cock a tangled snub.

(MORE)

UTHER (CONT'D)

YOU who have not ever tasted the juice of a young maiden's breast? I made you a knight, was that not good ENOUGH?! You will not rest until you take what is mine... will you? It is mine! Mine! Mine! MINE!

The king's bony CRACKING hands grip Cyrus's neck. He smiles and green bile streams down his crazed eyes.

Cyrus drops the sword and candle -- struggling against the king's inhuman strength.

CYRUS

(choking)

My king, for God's shake you must come to your senses! -- Please.

The voice of The Beast, deep and thunderous echoes with the King's next words.

UTHER

(AS THE BEAST)

IT. IS. MINE!

The king pulls Cyrus into the darkness. They struggle. Cyrus tries to pull the king into the light. The king's skin BURNS.

CLAWS sprout from the king's hands and he tears at Cyrus, narrowly missing him and cutting his shirt open.

Cyrus falls into the light and looks up in horror.

The king HOWLS and charges.

Cyrus quickly grabs the sword from the ground, and grips it with both hands.

The king runs at Cyrus with a mad beastly ROAR.

SLICE.

Cyrus runs the king through and impales him on the sword.

The life in the king's eyes returns for a moment.

UTHER (CONT'D)

Cyrus...

CYRUS

My.. my king.

The king takes the key, snaps it off the chain around his neck and hands it to Cyrus.

UTHER

Within lies the crucible of my sin -
and our only salvation, must burn
brightly.

Uther pulls himself backwards off the sword and walks silently away, his mad smile turns into a look of pure horror as he is enveloped by the darkness.

UTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Why am I alone in the dark?

Cyrus picks up the candle, sword still shaking in his hands.

He walks cautiously forward into the dark room. The candlelight reveals the king fallen to the floor.

UTHER (WHISPERING) (CONT'D)

Cyrus? Is that you my child? I can
no longer see the flame...

Tears steam down Cyrus's eyes. CLANG. He throws down the sword and takes the king into his arms, holding the light close to the dying man's face.

CYRUS

My king, please forgive me... I
didn't mean to... I didn't...

UTHER

Do you have it still? Is it warm? I
can't feel... I can't...

Uther dies. The green light in his eyes fades away and his flesh shrivels into a mummified corpse.

Cyrus SOBS quietly.

A SQUEEK. Cyrus's attention snaps to A RAT. It rips off a piece of the king's dried flesh. Cyrus drops the king, picks up his sword and swings wildly, scaring it off.

CYRUS

Back! Go away.

A MASSIVE SCURRING from the shadows. Cyrus stands. He holds up the candle revealing... A SWARMING HORDE of rats.

Cyrus lets out a BATTLE CRY. He SWINGS, SPLAT. SLICE. SPLAT. SLICE. SWING. Each swing carves away but to little effect.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

You cannot have him!

They skitter from all directions, ripping away pieces of the king until there is nothing left but bones.

With echoing squeaks, the horde vanishes into the dark.

All is quiet. Cyrus looks away from the remains of the king. He breathes heavily, and grabs at the key around his neck.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

I will end this nightmare.

A piercing emerald glow illuminates the room as an eye from The Beast behind Cyrus OPENS.

THE BEAST

Oh shall you?

Fear. Cyrus cannot move.

He holds the candle close and closes his eyes. He whispers the words of the only prayer he can remember. The Beast rumbles with a low roar behind him.

Cyrus can hear the movement but cannot see -- as the creature circles him in shadow, like a shark waiting to devour its prey.

CYRUS

Our father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name...

A rumbling and guttural sound comes from the dark as the green glow vanishes and the eye closes.

Cyrus shakes with fear and exhales.

His skin turns pale in the cool moonlight. A voice cuts through the dark and carries with it a force like a hurricane. A dark laugh echoes in the halls.

THE BEAST

The gods of man will not give you
what I could.

Cyrus stops praying. The candle shakes in his hands.

Tentacles SLITHER across the stone floor.

THE BEAST (CONT'D)

Don't you want what is rightfully
yours?

Cyrus opens his eyes and lifts up the candle.

The tentacles HISS, pulling away.

CYRUS

I seek no deals with devils!
Begone!

The Beast rumbles with laughter -- uttering a spell in an ancient tongue.

THE BEAST

Mor-kul-val-ka.

The hall is illuminated with light -- showing an image from a time long past -- the servants tend the tables, the men and women of the court laugh and sing.

Cyrus gasps.

He turns and sees Uther sitting in the throne.

MARTHA COBBLER, (40s) an older woman in humble clothes, approaches the king. Cyrus staggers at the sight of her.

CYRUS

Mother... and that's...

She holds a baby in her arms. It is BABY CYRUS, only a year old, hungry and crying.

MARTHA

Please my lord, have mercy on us.

THE QUEEN

You were told never to return.

The king turns them away without a word. Two guards position themselves in front of Martha, guarding their king.

MARTHA

I cannot afford to feed him. He is
your son.

Cyrus is dumbstruck.

THE QUEEN

Take them away.

The king shifts in his seat as guards come to grab Martha, baby cyrus lets out a cry.

UTHER

Wait... take them to the servants
quarters. They will have meals and
a bed.

The queen angrily protests and Uther holds up his hand.

UTHER (CONT'D)
I have spoken.

THE BEAST (V.O.)
Secrets in old halls.

CYRUS
I never... no this can't be. King
Uther? But... I never thought...

KING UTHUR
(as the beast)
It isn't a bastard's place to
think.

The darkness returns -- Cyrus walks to the throne.

THE BEAST
So reach out.

Cyrus reaches to the illuminated crown over a green ghostly
image of the King's head.

He pulls back slightly -- regaining his senses -- noticing
the candle in his hand.

THE BEAST (CONT'D)
Let us take what is yours.

CYRUS
Who among us doesn't dream of this.
Of glory and power but...

Cyrus looks around him and sees The Beast's tentacles moving
in the dark. He turns -- holding the candle aloft, revealing
nothing there.

Cyrus backs away from the Throne Room with the candle up
high.

CLANG. He backs into a suit of armor with the visor up.

He looks back at the suit -- it begins to move and turn it's
empty helmet towards him. The sound of RATS scream from
within.

Cyrus turns bravely to it. He holds out the candle. The suit
of armor shrinks backward -- repelled by the light. Steam
comes from the suit of armor as it HISSES and falls back.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
But I won't be a slave to a demon!

Cyrus grins triumphantly. WOOOSH. The wind comes in from outside the window -- blowing out the candle.

The light has GONE OUT.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

Oh no...

CRACK. The suit of armor uses a large claymore to help itself stand.

Cyrus BOLTS and runs away with all his might. He turns left -- into a long nearby hall with a door at the end.

He reaches it and tries in vain to open its wooden door. It barely opens, blocked by something heavy on the other side.

Cyrus glances over his shoulder at the sound of the suit of armor in pursuit as he tries again to open it. It's no use.

SLAM! Cyrus body-slams the door with all his might.

He glances at the armor -- oil bubbles out from inside it. SCRAPEEEEE... The knight drags a large claymore across stone.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

Shit shit shit!

SLAM. THUD. SLAM. THUD. Cyrus runs into the door repeatedly.

The sword CHURNS up SPARKS.

Cyrus screams with rage as he uses his adrenaline to overpower the door. SLAM. CRASH.

He tumbles to the other side and closes it behind him.

INT. CHAPEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus quickly SNAPS an old wooden bar into place, locking the door behind him.

He slumps against the door and catches his breath.

CRUNCH. The sword pierces the door right next to his face -- slightly slashing his cheek -- blood drips from the blade.

He quickly crawls backs away from the door and holds his sword in its direction. THUD. THUD. The armor walks away.

Cyrus briefly relaxes his grip and looks to his right shoulder where a skeletal hand is resting.

He quickly shakes it off and stands with his sword drawn.

The fresh bloody skeleton of the Archbishop falls apart. His body leaves a bloody trail deeper into the chapel. Several rats scamper out of his rib-cage.

CYRUS
Archbishop...

Cyrus makes the sign of the cross and raises his eyes to the chapel before him.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Cyrus walks into the Chapel and looks at the rows of pews. The unfortunate corpses of the faithful rest upon them.

Each person, frozen like marble statues and covered in COOLED WAX. They each hold wasted candles like a failed offering to an unforgiving God

Cyrus stops in his tracks... tears welling in his eyes.

Berret, Beatrice and Mildred are together, frozen holding each other close.

Cyrus approaches, his hand trembling.

CYRUS
(quietly)
No... please... No.

He places a hand on his friend's shoulder, and reaches into his night shirt for a moment taking out his crumpled drawing of Beatrice. Cyrus chokes back tears.

He turns away, and returns the drawing to his shirt. There's no time to grieve.

At the altar, a single shaft of moonlight illuminates six ALTAR BOYS, frozen in prayer.

A pair of wax covered severed hands lay on the altar right next to flint and tinder.

Cyrus GULPS at the sight. He knows he needs that.

He walks further inward. DRIP. DRIP. A green substance starts to creep over the windows like webbing.

The moonlight begins to fade and Cyrus rushes to the flint. He manages to grab it right as the glow coming in from the windows -- vanishes from the outside.

DARKNESS.

Only the sound of Cyrus's BREATHING can be heard.

He STRIKES the flint. Bodies RUSTLE in the dark..

He STRIKES the flint again. A single spark illuminates the darkness.

The dead altar boys with faces covered in wax blindly creep to where Cyrus sits with his back against the altar.

He GASPS and STRIKES it six more times in quick repetition.

He STRIKES it a seventh time and finally the candle TAKES LIGHT.

An altar boy is frozen INCHES from him, poised to attack.

Cyrus breathes a sigh of relief -- hears something behind him and turns the light of the candle to reveal the altar boys are closer.

He holds up his sword.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
Stay back!

The sound of wax moving to his left. Cyrus reacts and the candle light illuminates the stretched face of an altar boy, mouth unnaturally agape like a venomous snake. IT SCREAMS.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
SHIT!

Cyrus fumbles the candle -- it ROLLS down the isle.

SNAP. CRACK. CRACK. The Altar Boys all move to Cyrus.

On the edge of the light -- Cyrus crawls down the isle.

CRACKLE. CRACKLE. CRACKLE. The wax people in the pews turn their heads to watch him crawl.

Cyrus grabs the candle and shields the flame with his hand.

He stands, turns on his heel and slashes an altar boy with his sword. Wax falls on the floor.

He stands with the sword at the ready, a look of determination in his eyes.

He looks down at the floor. Green ooze DRIPS upon it.

Cyrus looks up briefly and quickly looks away -- The Beast's eyes light up on the ceiling above him.

THE BEAST

I am desire.

The sounds of The Beast moving closer and closer is all he can hear in the silence.

THE BEAST (CONT'D)

The woeful want of man made flesh.

Cyrus holds the dying candle close to him and looks up to the figure of Christ looking down at him.

CYRUS

Forgive me, my lord.

Cyrus uses the candle to light the tapestry under the figure and it goes up in flame. The Beast ROARS.

Cyrus turns to the nearest door -- his only escape.

He runs and cuts one of the wax altar boys in half. FIVE REMAIN. The others move around him in the dark.

Cyrus swings twice cutting through another two. THREE TO GO.

Another grabs his arm from the dark. He quickly whirls around and causes it to melt with the supernatural light of the candle.

The others back away from him as he walks forward.

Cyrus's arm bleeds from the attack, he flinches in pain as he touches the fresh wounds.

He looks to the exit and runs with all his might.

EXT. ROYAL GARDEN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Cyrus BURSTS through the doors of the chapel. Smoke follows him and he turns on his heel.

He quickly takes the sword and uses it to block the door, putting it through the handles.

BAM. BAM. BAM. There is a pounding from the other side.

Cyrus takes a step back and looks at the snow-covered ground. His breath is visible in the cold as he moves toward the great hedge entrance to the royal garden. Beyond it looms The Western Tower

He takes the key in his hand and looks at it briefly -- he runs his fingers along the strange eye shape at its base.

CRUNCH. Silence -- the pounding stops. Smoke pours from the door. A deep bellowing ROAR comes from within.

Cyrus looks over his head at the Western Tower. His palm clenches into a fist around the key.

CYRUS
(to himself)
A way to end this...

He looks up to the top of the chapel. Above and in the light of the moon the great Beast's silhouette can be seen.

He sees a glimpse of The Beast -- it's form too terrible for the human mind to comprehend. Tears of fear stream down his face. The Beast LAUGHS.

He runs.

The Beast follows -- running along the top of the castle. It bounds with great strides, remaining a distant silhouette - it is MASSIVE.

Cyrus exits the garden -- the tower door is within reach.

The door is frozen shut, he struggles to open it.

He holds the candle in his teeth. He grunts and uses all his might to open it.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
(through his teeth)
Not! Again!

INT. WESTERN TOWER - STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

CRASH. Cyrus tumbles into the tower, keeps his balance and runs upward.

The massive beast moves past one of the stone windows on the stairs -- it is also climbing up.

THE BEAST
Why run from your destiny?

Cyrus looks back down the stairs and sees a horde of rats ascending after him -- he holds out the candle -- the rats back away -- unable to enter the light.

Cyrus arrives at the top of the stairs. A inhuman SHRIEK comes from the rats -- the twisted corpse of THE QUEEN rises from within the hoard. She reaches out to Cyrus.

THE QUEEN
Cyrus? Don't. Leave. Me!

Cyrus looks back with horror and guilt.

CYRUS
I'm sorry my queen.

He turns and quickly fumbles for the key -- goes to put it in the door but... it gently pushes open.

Cyrus breathes deeply. Terror-stricken and confused, he pushes his hand against the door to open it further

EXT. WESTERN TOWER - HIGHEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus quickly enters the tower, shuts the door and exhales sharply.

He holds the candle aloft to reveal the room is empty -- except for one BARREL in the center.

Chains cover it and a lock rests on them. Cyrus quickly approaches -- unlocks it -- and peers within. Dark oil glistens in the candle light. He pauses -- defeated.

He looks down at the candle -- stares at the flame.

Realization dawns on him.

This is where the king meant to die.

CYRUS
So this is what you intended.

The rats BURST past the door -- forming a swarm around Cyrus. The candle is moments from burning out. Cyrus sets it on the floor in front of him.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
I'll take your deal demon! So come
and take me!

CRASH. The Beast's arms enter the ceiling of the tower and creep on the edges of the dying light.

Cyrus decidedly pours the bucket of oil on himself.

The great clawed hands of The Beast descend into the room -- lowering the crown.

As the crown is lowered, images flash through Cyrus's mind.

EXT. ASHEN CRATER - DAY

A younger king Uther stands in the crater, The Beast's tendrils extend giving him a crown as the sun is eclipsed.

THE BEAST
A deal struck.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

A young king strides into battle, using his sword to deflect an arrow, he plunges his blade into an enemy knight.

He roars with victory, leading his troops almost as if he were invincible. He cuts the knights head off and holds it aloft. His men CHEER!

THE BEAST
Power given.

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - DAY

The young queen (20s) is wed to the older king. He pulls up the veil from her face.

THE BEAST (V.O.)
A promise made.

INT. KING'S BED CHAMBERS - NIGHT

The queen waits in bed for the king. On a balcony The Beast appears, more human, with tendrils carrying him into the moonlit room. The Queen gasps and backs up.

The tendrils SLITHER along the floor.

THE BEAST (V.O.)
A promise...

The king watches, turns away in shame and closes the door.

The queen SCREAMS.

INT. GRAND DINING HALL - DAY

The newly born infant Cyrus, is handed to his adoptive Mother. The Queen cannot even bare to look at him.

THE BEAST (V.O.)
...unkept.

The child's eyes shimmer with a faint green light.

INT. WESTERN TOWER - HIGHEST ROOM - NIGHT

Cyrus GASPS. His hand shakes.

He laughs... a quiet laugh at first and then uproarious. The tendrils have almost lowered the crown on his head.

Cyrus slowly lowers his hand over the dying candle.

CYRUS
All hail the King.

The light dies and in the darkness Cyrus's eyes glow green.

BLACK

THE FLAME IGNITES.

The tower floods with light as Cyrus and The Beast BURN.

CREDITS PLAY OVER THE WRITHING BURNING CYRUS AND BEAST.

The crown melts - *it was made of wax.*

END