

DE BROCAS PILOT

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Inspired by a True Story

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ACT ONE

OVER BLACK

SCROLL:

"In the year 1296, King Edward I of England also ruled as Duke of Gascony, France through inheritance. War between the two countries began in 1294, as the French King Philip IV sought to seize Gascony from England. The overburdened King Edward was also facing a brutal war in Scotland. Many noble Gascon families were loyal to England and her king."

FADE IN:

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - MAIN STREET - DAY

SUPER: "1296, Saint-Sever, Gascony, France"

A HORSE, glossy black, face elegant. She wears a WAR BRIDLE branded with the stylized letters 'MB'. Her carefully-brushed mane shimmers as she walks.

We stay with her as hooves CLIP-CLOP over cobbles.

We drift back, away from the mare as she passes in front of a BENEDICTINE ABBEY.

COMMON PEOPLE hustle past STONE HOUSES, SHOPS, and wood MARKET STALLS. A HORSE-DRAWN CART hauls lumber.

Riding our mare, ÉCLAIR, and wearing a TUNIC with CAPTAIN'S INSIGNIA, is WILLIAM DE BROCAS, 32. Brilliant, driven, hot-tempered.

William talks to two other mounted SOLDIERS, LOUIS, 30's, and JACQUES, 20's. They listen to him, rapt.

As they near we begin to make out what he's saying.

WILLIAM

(French accent)

...the English have Bordeaux under siege. This is the end of the war for Gascony! King Edward has already won. Philip the Fair can go to the devil!

MESSENGER (O.S.)
 Captain de Brocas!

A MESSENGER canters up from behind them.

The soldiers turn to him and stop next to a NOTICE BOARD peppered with rusted NAILS, shreds of PAPER. Nailed to it are notices, advertisements, warnings.

Most are poorly written, but one is in exquisite handwriting:

"Citizens displaced by the war with
 France see Captain William de
 Brocas for assistance."

Another flyer hangs, tattered, bearing a crude drawing of a HOWLING WOLF HEAD. Underneath, in childish writing:

"Les loups enragés sont de retour!"
[Rabid wolves have returned!]

Several CHILDREN and a mangy STRAY DOG run past, unacknowledged by the soldiers. A BOY chases after them, HOWLING like a wolf. The others LAUGH and SCREAM.

The messenger hands William a message, nods, departs.

William POPS the seal on the message. His eyes drift over the parchment while his soldiers watch. William's face becomes agitated.

WILLIAM
 Shit.

The children run by again, this time the dog is chasing them. They're all GIGGLING wildly.

William pushes the mare back into a walk. His men hurry after him, goad him to talk.

LOUIS
 What does it say, Captain?

William doesn't answer.

The wolf flyer FLAPS in the wind, detaches.

PRELAP: the THREE-BEAT pounding of a cantering horse.

EXT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - DAY

A two-story stone FARMHOUSE squats at the base of a grassy hill, along with several OUTBUILDINGS, PADDOCKS, and a FORGE.

In one paddock, a YOUNG WOMAN canters on a BLACK DESTRIER-IN-TRAINING.

In the other, a young BLACK STALLION bucks at the end of his lunge line.

EXT. Paddock - CONTINUOUS

Holding the lunge line: SIR ARNALD DE BROCAS, 28, lean, oozes lithe competence.

ARNALD
(French accent)
Halt!

The horse slows, turns in towards Arnald and stops, breathing heavily. Arnald notices the horse cantering towards them.

William de Brocas rides up, dismounts from his horse.

Arnald glances at the sun - MID-DAY. He goads William, voice dripping sarcasm.

ARNALD (CONT'D)
Cousin. Did you forget a coin for
the pie lady?

William doesn't take the bait. He's dead serious.

WILLIAM
King Edward has summoned an army to
invade Scotland.

ARNALD
He's calling up Gascons?

William nods. Arnald's face falls. He goes to the stallion, pats his neck, speechless.

MARGARET (O.S.)
(French accent)
What did you say?

The men's eyes go to the woman on the mare who has ridden up. MARGARET DE BROCAS, 26, an elegant tomboy. She peers at them uneasily.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Why don't you answer me? William!

INT. MARGARET AND ARNALD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SQUEAK. SQUEAK. SQUEAK.

In the dark room, the bed ROCKS. HEAVY BREATHING from both Arnald and Margaret. Finally she collapses on top of him, eyes closed.

Margaret slides off a bit, uses his chest as a pillow. Her small hand clings to his, white-knuckled.

MARGARET

It's not right. You don't belong in Scotland.

He strokes her hair.

ARNALD

They're rebelling. I'm under contract. I can't say no.

She moves Arnald's hand to her belly.

MARGARET

What if the French attack Saint-Sever?

ARNALD

William will keep you safe.

He kisses her brow reassuringly, but his face is taut.

ARNALD (CONT'D)

I'll try to be back for the birth.

EXT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - DAWN

In front of the farmhouse, Margaret clutches her son, JOHN, 3. She's tiny...insignificant against the stone house, the empty hillside.

Devastated, she watches Arnald ride away from her.

EXT. DE BROCAS FORGE - DAY

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

A HAMMER BEATS a HORSESHOE. SPARKS fly. A HISS and steam as it's dipped in water. Back into the fire and then --

We drift out until we see Margaret holding the TONGS. Drift out more: her sweaty face, concentrating on the shoe she's shaping. Arms bare, toned, streaked with sweat and soot.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

Behind her, against a STORMY SKY, is stablehand ÉTIENNE, 50. He grips the lead of a surly BLACK HORSE.

Beside Margaret, her elflike niece FAYETTE, 13, blows the bellows.

Unheard over the noise, a MAN ON HORSEBACK rides up to the forge. Pompous dress, horse's HARNESS HEAVILY DECORATED WITH PENDANTS: the rakish GARCIE-ARNAUD DE NAVAILLES, 20's.

Behind him are four other SOLDIERS, including officers FRANCES, 30's, and HELIOS, 50's. Their saddle blankets are the BRILLIANT BLUE OF NAVAILLES.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

(French accent)

Did your mother teach you how to do that?

Margaret looks up, recognizes him without pleasure.

MARGARET

My mother died birthing me.

Clanging resumes. SPARKS COIL. Fayette lifts her chin at him and crushes the bellows handles together. Flames ERUPT.

Garcie-Arnaud stares awkwardly, then dismounts.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

I'm looking for William.

Margaret continues shaping the shoe. CLANG! CLANG! She holds it up, inspects it.

MARGARET

He's on patrol protecting us from the French. Since you love the French so much maybe he should be protecting us from you.

We don't know what she's referring to, but it angers him.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

Margaret, you deserve better than this! Your stable hand here could do this --

Étienne meets his eyes with open dislike.

ÉTIENNE

(French accent)

Margaret is the only one who can
shoe this horse.

Garcie-Arnaud scowls.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

Your husband fights in Scotland --

The mare turns her head, eyes Navailles with equine disdain,
SNORTS. Her halter is marked with the brand 'MB'.

MARGARET

He fights for King Edward, who
treats us well.

She goes to the horse, lifts a foot, tries the shoe. She
pulls nails from her apron pocket, hammers on the shoe.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

You mean he buys your war horses.

MARGARET

Yes. He's at war with Scotland, at
war with France. You should know
all about that.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

Maybe you've heard things, but...

Garcie-Arnaud's face softens as he watches her work. She's
lovely, even all dirty like she is now.

Étienne gives him a warning look. Garcie-Arnaud looks away.

MARGARET

William is not here.

Before he can respond they hear a woman's voice.

MARIE (O.S.)

(in French; subtitled)

Margaret! Your mare!

Margaret and Fayette turn towards the voice. Running towards
them is MARIE DE BROCAS, 32.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Your mare! Cerise is in labor!

Fayette claps a hand to her mouth in excitement, eyes wide. Margaret glances at Étienne, who nods. She hands him her tools, pulls off the apron and lays it on the work bench.

Garcie-Arnaud notices the small bulge at her waist with jealousy.

BOOM! Thunder shakes the forge.

MARGARET
Sounds like it's going to storm.
(glances at Garcie-Arnaud)
Lord.

She leaves without waiting for his response. He fumes as she walks away.

EXT. BERWICK, SCOTLAND - DAY

SUPER: "Berwick, Scotland"

A black stallion, VICTOR, 5, the quintessentially loyal war steed. His breath steams like dragon's smoke. On his bridle, the familiar 'MB'. On his back, Sir Arnald de Brocas.

CHANTING fills the air. It's the citizens of Berwick, MOCKING THE LISP of King Edward I.

CITIZENS (O.S.)
(chant repeats throughout scene)
What meaneth King Edward, with his
long shankth, to win Berwick and
all our unthankth. His shipth don't
float, ith's looking bleak. Poor
Edward cannot even thpeak.

SNOWFLAKES hang in the bleak FOG, adorn Arnald's black cape. Horses PAW impatiently. Chainmail and harness pendants CLINK.

Arnald watches the castle's human-lined stockade and ramparts -- BLOATED MERCHANTS, RAGTAG TROOPS, OPULENT CITIZENS -- all of them taunting the King.

CITIZENS (CONT'D)
...Edward cannot even thpeak...

In the estuary below, OILY BLACK SMOKE spirals from RUINED ENGLISH SHIPS.

Arnald's eyes shift to KING EDWARD, 56, atop BAYARD, his restless STALLION. White curls jut from Edward's helmet, his face a study of violence --

-- to the castle's flimsy WOODEN PALISADE, enclosed by a shallow DITCH.

-- to the THOUSANDS OF TROOPS MASSED BEHIND THE KING.

-- and settle on the ARROGANT, MEATY FACES of TOWNSPEOPLE, blotched from both the cold and the wine from Bordeaux.

An OBESE MAN laughs, showing pink-stained teeth. He exposes his GIANT ASS to the King. Others follow suit.

CITIZENS (CONT'D)
...his shiph don't float, ith's
looking bleak....

EDWARD I
(speaks with a lisp,
English accent)
Bleating fucking sheep.

PRELAP - A CRACK of thunder leads us back to --

INT. DE BROCAS STABLE - DAY

CERISE, a PREGNANT BLACK MARE, paces in her stall. Another FLASH lights up the barn.

Fayette looks at Margaret with something bordering on worship. Her voice is soft.

FAYETTE
(French accent)
Can I help, Tatie?

Margaret nods. Another FLASH and...

EXT. BERWICK CASTLE - DAY

Back to thick fog, JINGLING chainmail, SNORTING horses. The CHANTING louder, faster, meaner.

CITIZENS
What meaneth King Edward, with hith
long shankth...

Arnald breathes warmth into his hands.

A PREGNANT WOMAN SPITS at the King. The citizens laugh.

CITIZENS (CONT'D)
...hith men can't fight...

Arnald turns to the irate, RED-FACED King.

ARNALD

My three-year-old could have dug a
better ditch.

Edward holds his gaze...then turns to his captain, ROBERT DE
CLIFFORD, 22.

EDWARD I

Three days is enough time for any
man with wits to thurrender.

De Clifford nods.

The King DRAWS HIS SWORD. Trumpets BLARE. Bayard CHARGES,
JUMPS THE DITCH, HURDLES THE STOCKADE. Townspeople CAPSIZE
under his hooves.

Horses and soldiers swarm the town of Berwick. Villagers are
crushed, slashed, pulverized.

Citizens scatter and SCREAM. Horses SQUEAL. Swords CLANG.

EDWARD I (CONT'D)

Spare no one, whatever the age or
sex!

Arnald hunts the fat man who mooned the King. The man's jowls
jiggle as he huffs away, panicked, just for a second before
he's trampled by Victor.

EXT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - EVENING

Marie hurries past YOUNG MENALD, 4, and John playing in the
rain in front of the house.

INT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

The cramped, lamp-lit room is dominated by a massive carved
table. Packed cupboards and shelves line the back wall --
elegant furnishings imprisoned in a farmer's cottage.

Marie enters, wet with rain, followed by the boys.

William leans against the cupboard with a WINE BOTTLE
upended, DRIPPING over a mug. Marie pecks him on the cheek.

MARIE

Foaling season just started!

CATHERINE, 24, pale and thin, enters from upstairs. She beams at Marie, then sinks into a chair at the table, pushes some leather scraps out of her way.

WILLIAM

I'll take John and Menald to the
tavern to celebrate our first foal.
We'll have ale and play cards.
These two always let me win.

CATHERINE

At least there's someone you can
beat at cards, Brother.

William feigns offense, but winks at young Menald, who
GIGGLES.

Thunder CLAPS as Marie grabs bread from the cupboard.

MARIE

(to William)

Don't give the boys ale. Did the
Lord of Navailles find you? He was
here, said he was looking for you.

WILLIAM

No.

MARIE

Hmmm. Strange.

WILLIAM

(under his breath)

I doubt it was really me he wanted.

EXT. BERWICK - DAY

KING EDWARD (O.S.)

Kill them all!

A YOUNG WOMAN runs, clutching a TODDLER GIRL. The woman is
struck by an arrow, THUNK! She hits the cobbles, loses the
child. The girl sprawls, bounces away from her.

YOUNG WOMAN

Lucie! Run!

The tiny girl SCREAMS, runs CRYING away from her mama.

King Edward sees the girl, yells at Arnald, spittle flying.

EDWARD I

All of them!

Arnald hesitates, looks from the toddler to his King.

ARNALD
She's a baby!

Edward gestures furiously at the girl with his sword.

Stone-faced, Arnald kicks Victor into a run. The toddler CRUMPLES under his hooves.

Arnald looks back, horrified but unable to stop himself. *WHAT DID HE JUST DO?*

The girl's EYES ARE STILL OPEN, unseeing. Behind her, hundreds more MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN litter the streets.

Arnald's eyes staring, his mind STARTS TO SNAP.

FLASHBACK - EXT. DE BROCAS PASTURE - DAY

John runs up a hill, Margaret chases him, LAUGHING. Sunshine. BIRDSONG.

BACK TO BERWICK

Arnald's face a MASK, his BLOOD-STREAKED sword slashes at Scots while Victor STRIKES at them.

In the BODY-STREWN COURTYARD:

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD
No good will come of slaughtering
innocents! They'll remember --

EDWARD I
(looks at bodies)
These people won't be remembering
anything.

The cobbles shimmer red. SCREAMS. Ale FLOODS from a cask into the courtyard, RIPPLES THROUGH BLOOD.

A soldier PLUMMETS his sword into a man's belly. He wipes the sword clean on the man's fancy tunic while the man watches.

Arnald HACKS at a merchant, stony-eyed.

FLASHBACK - EXT. DE BROCAS PASTURE - DAY

Margaret on her back on a grassy hillside, LAUGHING.

BACK TO BERWICK - INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

The PREGNANT WOMAN from the wall cowers in a storage room. BLOOD AND FILTH on her clothes, hair hangs in a stringy mess.

A soldier slams the door open. She throws a bag of flour in his face and runs.

EXT. BERWICK - DUSK - LATER

Arnald slashes, emotionless. BODIES surround him. Through glazed eyes, he watches --

-- The pregnant woman SPRINTS through the courtyard, slips in HORSE SHIT, then runs towards the ditch. She HUFFS in the fog.

INT. DE BROCAS STABLE - NIGHT

Margaret, exhausted, coaxes the pregnant mare. Her face is ETCHED WITH WORRY. Fayette watches, helpless, holds back tears. Lightning FLASHES.

EXT. BERWICK - NIGHT

The pregnant woman RUNS, BELLY HEAVING, ridiculous fancy shoes covered in MUD, BLOOD, and HORSE SHIT.

Her feet slip in BLOODY SNOW. She falls, face down...on the body of a YOUNG BOY. An arrow hits her throat. She GAGS, eyes bulge, BLOOD GUSHES from her mouth.

FLASHBACK - John GIGGLES, runs through a pasture, horses silhouetted behind him. Sunlight FLASHES.

EXT. BERWICK - DAWN

Arnald shakes his head, blinks, WIPES BLOOD from his face.

Blood. Everywhere. In the streets, on soldiers, on DEAD CHILDREN whose eyes stare at nothing.

INT. DE BROCAS STABLE - DAWN

The mare lays MOTIONLESS, eyes closed. Margaret's face is panicked. She strokes the mare's belly, pleads to the horse with shaking voice.

MARGARET

Please Cerise... you can do
this...Cerise! You have to push!

Fayette caresses the horse's neck, wipes angrily at a tear.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BERWICK CASTLE COURTYARD - DAWN

BLACK SHAPES. A spear of sunlight breaks them up into --
Bodies.

Matted BLACK BLOOD on men, women, children.

SCREAMS.

Soldier's LAUGHTER. The SLAUGHTER continues.

CLIP-CLOPS and the CLACK of boots on cobbles, then Edward's voice booms.

EDWARD I (O.S.)
Get these fucking things out of
here!

Robert de Clifford looks up. Edward's towering figure strides towards him, leading a BLOOD-STREAKED Bayard and pointing at bodies.

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD
Yes, Lord!

De Clifford shouts to a group of soldiers and gestures for them to remove the bodies.

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Just start making piles somewhere
for shit's sake.

EDWARD I
Where's de Brocas?

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD
Lord?

EDWARD I
The Gascon Knight.

De Clifford gapes, clueless.

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD
There are so many Gascons...

EDWARD I
Arnald de Brocas! The horse
breeder. Who the fuck elth would I
be talking about? Look at my
fucking horse!

He gestures angrily at Bayard.

EDWARD I (CONT'D)
Some of that blood belongth to
Bayard, so I need de Brocas!

Robert bobs his head, wanting to avoid Edward's rage.

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD
I'll find him.

INT. DE BROCAS STABLE - DAWN

Light CASCADES through the small windows. Fayette sleeps in a
pile of straw. Margaret lays leaning against the horse's
back, awake but exhausted.

From outside, MORNING BIRDSONG.

Suddenly the mare HEAVES, GRUNTS. Margaret bolts upright.

Liquid GUSHES from the mare. TINY HOOVES emerge.

MARGARET
Fayette! Wake up!

LATER

The mare WHUFFLES. A shiny foal lays in the straw. Fayette
reaches out a hand to it.

FAYETTE
I thought there would be blood.

Margaret shakes her head.

MARGARET
Blood attracts predators.

EXT. BERWICK CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY - LATER

Berwick castle, where BIRDSONG dissolves into SCREAMS.

Soldiers BRRAAAP from drinking ale. Boots SQUISH on bodies.
PINK WATER pools on the courtyard cobbles.

Arnald squeezes solution from a linen rag over Bayard's leg. It SPLASHES on Edward's boot, but the King doesn't notice. He's too busy talking.

EDWARD I
...the fat muck-spout fell before I
could thtab him again. One of the
foot soldiers finished him off.

Arnald wraps a BANDAGE around the horse's leg. Behind them, the BLOODBATH continues.

ARNALD
You got enough of them yourself.

EDWARD I
Yes. I like how Scots bleat when
thtabbed!

Arnald hides a grimace, stands, gestures to Bayard as he wipes his hands on the rag.

ARNALD
Don't ride him for a couple days.

Edward examines the leg critically.

EDWARD I
Thank you, Arnald. Bayard doesn't
always listen. He's a temperamental
bastard.

Arnald glances from Bayard to the King.

ARNALD
Are we talking about the horse?

Edward laughs at the cocky Gascon. He likes him.

EDWARD I
However I ended up with you, it
must have been God's will.

Arnald scans the body-littered grounds of Berwick ironically. Edward also contemplates the massacre, unironically.

ARNALD
God's will.

Edward sighs, looks back at Arnald, in a chummy mood.

EDWARD I
How's William?

ARNALD
(caught off guard)
William?

EDWARD I
Your kinsman?

Arnald wipes blood from Bayard's shoulder and neck. Pink water DRIPS from the rag.

ARNALD
He is well. Has the same two moods
he's always had. He's either deadly
serious or angry.

Edward nods appreciatively.

EDWARD I
I like that about him. Smart man.
He thaved my skin at the siege of
Castle Conwy last year.

Off Arnald, surprised.

ARNALD
What do you mean? He said there was
a storm, and men were hungry
because the baggage train was
stolen in an ambush.

Edward calculates, adds that to his arsenal of information.
He is impressed.

EDWARD I
So he didn't tell you. The storms
were so bad we thought we would
freeze to death, with almost no
food. Many of the men wanted to
thurrender to the Welsh. William
caught wind of it and convinced
them to stay loyal. Apparently his
sword was involved.

Arnald is struck silent. He wipes at Bayard's coat, processes
Edward's words.

ARNALD
That does sound like William.

EDWARD I
I wonder what else he doesn't tell
you.
(off Arnald's frown)

EDWARD I (CONT'D)
 Whatever he said, the men stayed loyal. At times it seems Gascons are more devoted to me than Englishmen. You know some of them abandoned last week, before we reached Berwick. Fuckers. Miss a few meals and they scatter like rats on a burning ship.

Arnald stops cleaning the horse.

ARNALD
 My family is loyal, as ever, Lord.

Edward's eyes begin to get misty.

Arnald shuts that down with a distraction. He can't afford emotions, not here. He TAPS Bayard's foot with his boot.

ARNALD (CONT'D)
 His shoe is loose. I'll reset it.

Edward looks at the shoe, duly distracted. He opens his mouth to comment --

-- and is interrupted by a line of priests, carrying the Host (unleavened bread) towards Edward.

The head priest throws himself at Edward's feet.

PRIEST
 Please, Lord. Stop the slaughter.

Edward, still misty-eyed, catches Arnald's eye. Arnald glances away, emotionless, starts fucking with Bayard's shoe.

ARNALD
 I'm not a politician, Lord.

Edward surveys the hellscape. Shrugs. He bellows to the man dragging bodies near the castle wall.

EDWARD I
 Robert!

Robert releases a corpse from his grasp. It hits the ground with a FLUMP. He hurries over.

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD
 Yes, lord.

EDWARD I
 Tell the men to thtop. It is over.

Robert nods, then runs back to the castle wall. He cups his mouth and bellows to his soldiers.

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD
The King has ordered the killing to
stop!

He pauses, waits as the noise subsides a little. A voice answers from below.

SOLDIER (O.S.)
What'd ye say?

Robert cups his hands again and yells more loudly.

ROBERT DE CLIFFORD
No more killing sheep fuckers!

EXT. SAINT-SEVER WEAPONS YARD - DAWN

THWUP! An arrow shaft impales a target, dead center.

WILLIAM
See? Like that! Easy!

He hands the bow to Louis.

LOUIS
Sir.

William moves to the next soldier, Jacques, who nervously aims at a target.

Next to them, another NOTICE BOARD sports FLYERS:

A crude wolf drawing says "Rabid!"

MESSENGER (O.S.)
Captain!

Jacques exhales, relieved as William looks up.

William waits. The MESSENGER rides up, hands over a message. William BREAKS THE SEAL. *He reads...*

The wolf flyer FLAPS in the breeze.

William's face contorts with fury. He glances up, grumps at Jacques.

WILLIAM
Forearm parallel to the ground!

Jacques flinches, drops his quiver. Arrows scatter.

William doesn't notice. He stares at the message, hisses under his breath.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
The hedge-born Lord of Navailles.

EXT. BERWICK - DAY

The ENGLISH STANDARD cascades over the castle wall. English SOLDIERS mill about, celebrate, and drink.

JOHN DE WARRENNE, 65, Earl of Surrey, directs soldiers. Battle-scarred, impatient, shrewd.

JOHN DE WARRENNE
Get these Scottish shifts to the
Tower of London. They're the King's
hostages so try not to let any die.

Arnald nods from atop Victor. Other mounted soldiers surround a handful of disheveled prisoners.

JOHN DE WARRENNE (CONT'D)
(to Arnald)
Collect your pay in London, then
get back to Gascony.

Arnald lets out an inaudible sigh of relief. De Warrenne hands him a folded parchment.

JOHN DE WARRENNE (CONT'D)
Edward needs horse stock at
Windsor. Don't disappoint him.

Arnald's relief flees.

ARNALD
How many horses?

JOHN DE WARRENNE
As many as you can bring.

ARNALD
Our lands in Sault-de-Navailles
were confiscated by the French...

De Warrenne ignores him, moves to the next soldier.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - MAIN STREET - DAY

The town is in its midday hustle. Jacques stands at the cart of a FEMALE PIE VENDOR, 30's. The town STRAY DOG sniffs around the cart.

The vendor hands him TWO PIES.

Jacques starts to walk away with the pies when out of the corner of his eye he spots --

-- CATHERINE. A BEAM OF HEAVENLY LIGHT falls on her, and HARP MUSIC descends on Saint-Sever as she walks with her mother GUIRAUT, 60's, and father MENALD, 60's, towards the abbey.

YELP! CLUNK! Jacques STUMBLES over the dog. One of his PIES SETS SAIL, lands unceremoniously at Catherine's feet.

Catherine watches the DOG DIVE FOR THE PIE as Jacques SHOVES him away. She picks up the pie, BLOWS SOME DIRT OFF, hands it to Jacques.

He takes the pie, flustered.

INT. SAINT-SEVER WATCH TOWER - DAY

A tiny room at the top of the stone watch tower. William and Jacques use an overturned crate as a table and play cards. William eats his pie as he stares at the cards in his hand, mind roiling.

He sets the remains of his pie on the crate, wipes his mouth with his hanky.

WILLIAM

The pie is not as good today. Maybe
it was leftover from yesterday.

Jacques' eyes stay on his own cards.

JACQUES

Mine was fine.

William glances from the offending pie to his shitty cards, sighs.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

(impatient)
Captain?

WILLIAM

Are you sure you shuffled all the
cards into the deck?

JACQUES
Of course. I'm not dumb.

WILLIAM
(not so sure)
Hmmm.

Jacques hides a smile behind his cards.

JACQUES
Your parents and sister were at the
abbey earlier.

William, focused on his cards, answers distractedly.

WILLIAM
We have been benefactors of the
abbey for many generations.

JACQUES
(awkward)
Catherine is...

William looks at him, surprised.

WILLIAM
Her heart is weak, Jacques. The
monks treat her.

Jacques shifts, gets even more awkward.

JACQUES
She's so pretty...willowy.

William is dumbstruck, but catches movement out the window:
several HORSEMEN on the road below. He jumps up, tosses his
cards on the table.

Jacques protests.

JACQUES (CONT'D)
Captain, I was winning --

William leans out the window, clocks the horseman.

WILLIAM
It's Estibeaux!

INT. WILLIAM'S WATCH TOWER OFFICE - DAY

Light filters through the unglazed window in the otherwise
unlit stone chamber.

William sits at an austere wooden desk. Neatly arranged on the desk: his PERSONAL SEAL, an UNLIT CANDLE, an INK WELL, a QUILL. A single sheet OF PARCHMENT is in front of him.

LORD ESTIBEAUX, 35, fit, infuriated, paces the small room.

ESTIBEAUX

His men attacked my family and
forced us off our lands, claiming
it was under orders of the King.
Why would the King do that?

William takes careful notes.

WILLIAM

That's an excellent question.

Estibeaux leans in on William's desk, unmollified.

ESTIBEAUX

What will you do about it?

William rises abruptly, causing Estibeaux to back off.

WILLIAM

I swore an oath as an attorney.
We'll proceed through legal means,
which entails petitioning the King.

ESTIBEAUX

While the Lord of Navailles uses
violence and duplicity?

WILLIAM

Trust the law, Lord Estibeaux!
Justice will be done.

INT. WILLIAM'S WATCH TOWER OFFICE - DAY

William at his desk, QUILL in hand, looks expectantly at Garcie-Arnaud de Navailles. Garcie-Arnaud sits motionless, annoyed, trapped under William's stare.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

I had orders from the King to
remove Estibeaux from his lands.

WILLIAM

You had orders from WHICH King?

Garcie-Arnaud's lip TWITCHES ever so slightly.

William waits, quill hovering, watches him with raptor eyes.

Garcie-Arnaud stares back, also with the eyes of a predator.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

You know what I think? I think you're still angry that Edward forgave my family. Gave us back the castle at Sault. You think your shitty little family deserved to keep it -- your shitty little family from the marsh. No amount of sucking up to Edward, or even becoming an attorney, is going to change what you are.

Internally, William fumes. He neatens his seal, the candle, the ink well. SQUARES THE PARCHMENT in front of him just so.

WILLIAM

"Edward." Just "Edward". Not "King?"

GARCIE-ARNAUD

His name is Edward.

He stands to leave but his eyes stay locked on William's.

GARCIE-ARNAUD (CONT'D)

Not every writ goes through you, de Brocas.

WILLIAM

I know KING Edward doesn't condone his subjects attacking each other. Especially not nobles.

Garcie-Arnaud smirks.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

What would you know about nobility, William?

William's eyes are lethal as Garcie-Arnaud exits.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - EVENING

William rides up in a huff, dismounts, tosses his reins to Étienne. The men exchange nods.

INT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

Marie, Fayette, and Margaret are scattered around the table. When the door BANGS open Marie looks up from her EMBROIDERY.

The servant JEANNE, 60's, sees William and hurries to the cupboard, pours him wine.

Margaret, cutting leather into strips, glances up.

Fayette beams at her dad, sees the look on his face, grimaces, goes back to her project. She's also got leather in front of her. She watches Margaret and mimics her work.

MARIE

Mmmm. What happened?

William stops to kiss her forehead, then heads to Jeanne, takes the cup.

WILLIAM

Oh, Garcie-Arnaud de Navailles is a filthy sucker of pig teats. No! That's too good for him! Even a pig wouldn't let him suck her teats!

Marie nods and continues sewing. Margaret turns over the colt-sized halter she's making, starts attaching a buckle.

MARGARET

What did he do now?

William scowls, takes a deep drink.

WILLIAM

He's attacking noble families and seizing their lands. If he was ever truly loyal to Edward --

MARGARET

It should have been obvious that he wasn't loyal when so much land under his protection fell to the French. OUR land!

MARGARET (CONT'D)
His loyalty lies with whoever pays
the most, like it always has with
his family.

He looks at her grudgingly, knowing she's right. A SIGH
escapes him.

WILLIAM
The King's attention is on the
rebellion in Scotland. I'll
petition him now.

He stomps to the great LEATHER-BOUND CHEST in the corner,
grabs PAPER, QUILL, and INK. He seats himself next to
Margaret and mumbles to himself as he writes.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
...traitor...France-loving
gluttonous lecher...lineage from
goats...

Fayette glances at him, eyebrows raised.

William looks up at the sound as the door opens again. The
elder Menald, Guiraut, and Catherine enter.

Catherine COLLAPSES in a chair, skin sallow and breathing
rapidly. William jumps up, feels Catherine's wrist.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
You should eat, Catherine.

He hurries to the cupboard, starts rummaging.

CATHERINE
I'm tired, not hungry.

Guiraut and Menald glance at each other, years of grief in
their eyes.

William sets fruit and cheese in front of her.

WILLIAM
Sure, you are. Have some wine.

He sets a cup in front of her, pours wine, his hand on her
back to comfort her. Catherine SAGS.

Guiraut pushes his hand off of Catherine, annoyed.

GUIRAUT
She needs to lie down.

She leads Catherine upstairs while William watches, rejected.

William glances at his father, wounded, then collects his thoughts.

WILLIAM

I have bleak news, Father. The
French refused to give up Bordeaux.
The English were forced to end the
siege and retreat to Bayonne.

Menald slumps into a chair without looking at William.
William goes back to his petition.

MENALD

Why?

WILLIAM

They couldn't pay their troops. And
then Prince Edmund died.

MENALD

Died of what?

WILLIAM

A broken heart! What else?

MENALD

I thought you said the war for
Gascony was almost over. Our family
is being destroyed!

William waves impatiently, dips his quill in ink, and speaks
with assurance.

WILLIAM

In spring the English will force
the French out of Gascony for good.
We will have our lands restored,
and the Lord of Navailles will hang
from the gallows at the Tower of
London.

EXT. TOWER OF LONDON - DAY

SUPER: "The Tower of London"

In the cobbled courtyard, Arnald makes a final adjustment to
Victor's girth. Behind him, wheels CREAK as a HORSE pulls a
CART OF MANURE past, led by an ELDERLY MAN.

Hurried FOOTSTEPS. Arnald looks up. A tall YOUTH approaches.
PRINCE EDWARD: 12, flamboyantly elegant, out of breath.

PRINCE EDWARD
(English accent)
I was hoping I would catch you!

ARNALD
Prince Edward. I'm about to take my
leave and return to Gascony.

Prince Edward takes off his floppy HAT, toys with the feather
that sticks out the top.

PRINCE EDWARD
Excellent, because I would like a
de Brocas stallion. I'll pay.
(arrogant laugh)
Obviously.

Arnald is dubious. The prince speaks rapidly.

PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)
You know I'm interested in horse
breeding. You said you would --

ARNALD
Your father is already asking me
for any horse I can sell.

PRINCE EDWARD
Just one stallion.

Arnald concedes, but his face is strained.

ARNALD
I'll bring a stallion. If your
father says you can have him, fine.
But it will cost.

The prince nods, starts to walk away, turns back to Arnald.

PRINCE EDWARD
Make him your best horse, Gascon. I
like that stallion you ride.

INT. MARGARET AND ARNALD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Soft light filters in from the window in the blessedly quiet
room. Margaret lays on the bed, on her side, in her chemise,
about halfway through her pregnancy.

Marie rubs her back vigorously.

Catherine TEETERS IN A RICKETY CHAIR beside the bed, watches. Anxious, shy, wanting to tell them something but unable to work up the guts.

BLEEPPPPPPP! Margaret emits a belch.

MARIE
That should help.

MARGARET
Mmmmmph. It still hurts. It's foot
is gonna come through my ribs. I
think this one will like to argue.

She glances at Catherine, who watches with much interest.

CATHERINE
(softly)
I think it would feel...exciting.

Margaret reaches for Catherine's slim hand, squeezes it.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
There's a soldier...

INT. WILLIAM AND MARIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

WILLIAM
JACQUES?

William stops disrobing, stares at Marie. He's heavily muscled, and peppered with battle scars.

MARIE
Quiet!

WILLIAM
But she can't --

MARIE
Why not?

WILLIAM
Her heart! You KNOW why! What if --

She takes his hand.

MARIE
What if WHAT, William?

William has no answer.

EXT. ROAD TO BORDEAUX - DAY

Arnald rides on a narrow dirt road. Thick deciduous forest, rolling hills.

In the distance, men's VOICES speaking French.

Just in time, Arnald steers Victor into the forest, dismounts, and gently places his hands around Victor's mouth to keep him from calling to the other horses.

FRENCH SOLDIER 1
(In French; subtitled)
*...Gascon wine is enough to make me
switch sides.*

Several mounted French soldiers appear.

FRENCH SOLDIER 2
*Why do you think King Philip wants
Gascony? All that tax money going
to England!*

FRENCH SOLDIER 1
*I don't want to know what goes on
in that lunatic's head, I'd never
sleep again. But I put in a request
with Captain Dubois asking to stay
here until the war is over.*

FRENCH SOLDIER 3
*If he grants it he won't remember
it the next day. He spends all day
sucking on a wine bottle's tit.*

FRENCH SOLDIER 1
*So, you'll be my witness in case he
forgets, no?*

Arnald listens as their voices fade away.

EXT. HILLSIDE OVERLOOK - EVENING

DANDELION FLUFF in the air. Cerise grazes with her foal, who is being fussed over by John.

Margaret shades her eyes and looks at the road below.

Suddenly Cerise WHINNIES, loud and long, calling to another horse. She is answered with a NEIGH from the road below. Arnald and Victor come into view.

Margaret grabs John and plops him on Cerise's back.

MARGARET
Papa's home!

INT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner time. The lamplit table is crowded with vegetables, fowl, bread, jugs of wine. Grievances are aired, emotions run high, not always listening to each other.

ARNALD
...they mocked the King's lisp and
burned his ships. I've never seen
Edward so angry.

William gulps wine. Arnald drains his mug, wipes his mouth.

WILLIAM
Idiots! With Edward's temper --

ARNALD
-- they were too stupid to live.

WILLIAM
Too stupid to live!

His father scowls in disapproval.

MENALD
How many were killed?

Arnald shifts uncomfortably.

ARNALD
Thousands.

Menald's face softens at Arnald's obvious discomfort.
Catherine intervenes.

CATHERINE
Arnald, did you see the new foals?

Arnald nods, beams at Margaret. Margaret scowls.

MARGARET
I'm never breeding Cerise again! I
almost lost her. We need more
mares. OTHER mares.

She WRAPS AN ARM AROUND HER OWN BELLY. Arnald catches it.

WILLIAM

This farm is too small for horse breeding! And that shithead Lord of Navailles...

He TRAILS OFF, annoyed and deep in thought. He refills both his and Arnald's cups.

MENALD

(to William)

Your service for King Edward in Wales was supposedly distinguished. I would think the King would have compensated us for our losses by now.

Arnald FLASHES an angry look at his uncle, cuts him off.

ARNALD

The King wants too much --

WILLIAM

You should be home, raising war horses like God intended. The Scots are animals! They fight with rocks? And the sheep, you know they say...

Margaret frowns at them in confused horror.

ARNALD

They DO throw rocks! As far as the sheep --

MARGARET

There is no way that can be true!

Arnald shrugs. William scowls. Marie rolls her eyes.

ARNALD

Edward wants more horses, and the prince wants a stallion for breeding --

MARGARET

I won't be able to get on the horses much longer.

FAYETTE

I can help!

They all stop talking, eyes go to Fayette. William frowns.

FAYETTE (CONT'D)
Tatie's been teaching me! I can
train.

(to Margaret)
You know I can. Please?

William looks distressed. Marie nods.

WILLIAM
No, no...

MARGARET
Fayette can help. I started
training when I was younger than
her.

WILLIAM
But you were raised half wild by
your brothers!

Margaret smiles, winks at Fayette.

INT. WILLIAM AND MARIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

William's EYES, wide open, stare into the dark. BLINK.

MARIE (O.S.)
You can't sleep again?

William glances sideways at her, then back into the void.

WILLIAM
Am I keeping you awake?

MARIE
No.

William rolls toward her. Her face is just visible.

WILLIAM
My mind won't stop trying to fix
everything.

She strokes his cheek affectionately.

MARIE
You'll never fix everything. Some
things can't be fixed.

She takes his hand. GRIEF and PANIC fill his face.

WILLIAM
Catherine --

MARIE

Has been dying since the day she
was born.

WILLIAM

Navailles --

MARIE

Is a filthy sucker of pig teats.

William nods, squeezes her hand, pacified.

INT. MARGARET AND ARNALD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight filters in, bathes Arnald's bare form stretched on the bed. FRESH PINK SCARS on his chest and arms attest to physical battles. But the real damage is invisible, and just emerging. His eyes are haunted.

Beside him, Margaret lies naked, watches him with concern.

ARNALD

...there were soldiers...and
children, women, and civilians.

She presses her mouth to his, puts his hand on her breast. He allows it, then opens his eyes and pulls away.

ARNALD (CONT'D)

You don't understand what I did --

She whispers fiercely against his neck.

MARGARET

When William returned from Wales he
felt the same way. He was so angry,
said he would never recover, and
yet, he did.

Arnald face is stubborn. His eyes shift around the room. His voice is soft, almost inaudible.

ARNALD

That was different. Madog had an
army of men, they were soldiers.

She kisses his chest, neck, then cheek.

MARGARET

I'm not letting war take you away
from me, not in this way. It's bad
enough that you have to leave me --

He rolls on top of her, kisses her fiercely. Hungrily seeking forgiveness, healing...peace.

ARNALD'S NIGHTMARE - EXT. BERWICK - DAY

The toddler girl, LUCIE, trampled but still alive. BLOOD TRICKLES from her mouth, eyes fearful.

Next to her, Margaret KNEELS IN BLOOD. Blood SPLATTERS her swollen BELLY, her ARMS, her FACE.

She pushes a strand of hair out of the child's eyes, then HUGS HER CLOSE.

MARGARET

Who did this to you?

Lucie looks at her, accusing. Knowing. Margaret stands, lifts the girl to Cerise's back.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You're my daughter now. I'm bringing you home.

INT. MARGARET AND ARNALD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A ragged GASP. Arnald bolts upright, covered in SWEAT. Horrified. Terrified. He takes in his surroundings -- the dark bedroom, and Margaret, who he's just woken with his nightmare.

She strokes his arm, sees the living hell on his face.

MARGARET

You're safe. You're home.

ARNALD

I can't bear it!

He buries his face in his hands, body shaking.

INT. MARGARET AND ARNALD'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Margaret opens her eyes, looks at the spot next to her. Arnald is GONE. She feels his side of the bed for warmth, looks anxiously towards the door, calls to him.

MARGARET

Arnald?

INT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Margaret hurries through the empty main room.

EXT. Paddock - CONTINUOUS

Margaret rushes towards the paddocks. She stops, relieved when she sees Arnald carrying John towards a paddock and leading Cerise's foal. Arnald talks to his son.

ARNALD

...you named him Storm? That's a perfect name for your horse.

INT. MARGARET AND ARNALD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In bed, Margaret rests her cheek on Arnald's chest.

ARNALD

I'll be back as soon as I can.

Margaret nods, but her heart isn't in it.

MARGARET

William protects us. The French have left Saint-Sever alone.

EXT. HILLSIDE OVERLOOK - DAWN

Margaret stands with Cerise on a lead, John rides bareback.

She watches the forest swallow Arnald, Étienne, the horses. Their entrance STARTLES up a MURDER OF CROWS, who fly above, SQUAWKING.

Now unobserved, she lets her face reflect the truth: she's terrified.

She glances down. A flicker of panic.

Wolf tracks. Faint, disturbed, but they're there.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - DAY

Jacques strides towards the watch tower. He gesticulates and murmurs to himself out loud.

JACQUES
You look nice today Catherine...
that's a lovely smock...what a
pretty brooch...I like your
socks...

INT. WILLIAM'S WATCH TOWER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PLOP. Wax drips on a folded parchment, is immediately SMASHED with the seal of William de Brocas. He carefully sets the seal back in its place.

A shadow blots the doorway. It's Jacques.

JACQUES
You wanted me, Captain?

WILLIAM
Take Louis with you and do a wolf
patrol. There were tracks through
our horse pasture yesterday.

Jacques salutes, turns to go, causing the candle to FLICKER.

EXT. DE BROCAS FORGE - DAY

FLAMES. The backwards letters 'MB' on the BRANDING IRON GLOW RED. Margaret pulls it from the fire and STAMPS a bridle.

She inspects the BURN: the maker's mark of Margaret de Brocas.

John PERCHES on a stool in the corner, eats cake and watches his mother work.

GARCIE-ARNAUD AND HIS MEN RIDE UP, stop outside the forge.

Margaret eyes him coldly, hangs the bridle on a hook. A FLASH of fear...

MARGARET
William isn't here.

Garcie-Arnaud dismounts, hands his reins to Helios, approaches Margaret. He doesn't notice John.

Margaret SETS HER BRAND BACK ON THE FIRE. She GLANCES AT JOHN, who has forgotten about his cake and watches Garcie-Arnaud with apprehension, CRUMBS on his lips.

GARCIE-ARNAUD
I know. I'm here to talk to you.

MARGARET
I have nothing to say to you.

Garcie-Arnaud GLANCES BACK AT HIS MEN. They move a little further away, out of hearing.

Margaret watches the small exchange warily.

GARCIE-ARNAUD
Leave Arnald and come with me.
You'll be the Lady of Navailles.
I'll return the Brocas family
lands.

Margaret is incensed.

MARGARET
You disgust me! You have no honor.
You're a traitor to King Edward!
You kill Gascons for that devil
Philip the Fair, you think nobody
knows? You think I'm a *traître* like
you? You think I would betray my
own family?

She spits at his feet.

He LUNGES for her. She GRABS THE IRON AND SHOVES IT AT HIS FACE. Garcie-Arnald RECOILS, SCREAMS, ARMS TO HIS THROAT.

Margaret holds the iron back in the flame, waiting. John lets out a SOB.

Garcie-Arnaud jerks his head to John, just noticing him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Arnald and William will hear that
you've done this.

Garcie-Arnaud goes to his horse, mounts.

GARCIE-ARNAUD
(slowly)
I will destroy the Brocas family!
(MORE)

GARCIE-ARNAUD (CONT'D)
 They will be nothing! You think you
 see devils, Margaret, but Edward is
 no better than Philip. They're one
 and the same, two monsters battling
 for the same little corner of hell.

EXT. ROAD TO BORDEAUX - DAY

Arnald and Étienne ride, leading the sale horses.

As they round a curve they come upon TWO BODIES HANGING FROM
 A TREE. Arnald stops his horse, looks at Étienne --

Several mounted French SOLDIERS come around the curve, led by
 the haughty CAPTAIN MIRANDE, 45.

CAPTAIN MIRANDE
 (in French; subtitled)
Stop!

Arnald and Étienne stop. The French soldiers do their best to
 surround them and the horses.

CAPTAIN MIRANDE (CONT'D)
*Names? And where are you going with
 these horses?*

ARNALD
*Pierre de Roquefort. This is my
 stable hand, Fidel. We're bringing
 them to Captain Dubois at Agen.*

Mirande squints at him, suspicious.

CAPTAIN MIRANDE
*Why? Horses are needed in the
 south, not at Agen.*

Arnald feigns confusion.

ARNALD
*Maybe he was drunk when he ordered
 them, sir. You know how he is. We
 are doing what was asked of us.*

Mirande looks at his soldiers, who shrug. He scrutinizes the
 horses, Arnald, Étienne.

Mirande WAVES Arnald past him.

CAPTAIN MIRANDE
*Go. Watch out for English
 sympathizers. We've come across
 several lately.*

The soldiers SNICKER. The BODIES sway behind them.

ARNALD

We know what to watch out for.

Mirande moves aside and Arnald pushes past him.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - MAIN STREET- DAY

William patrols with two SOLDIERS.

JACQUES (O.S.)

Captain!

William waits for Jacques and Louis to ride up.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

We found some tracks, but no
wolves. I don't know where they're
hiding.

William frowns, ponders.

From the corner of his eye he catches movement. Garcie-Arnaud de Navailles, Frances, Helios and a few other soldiers race towards them on SWEAT-FLECKED horses.

Garcie-Arnaud, furious, RIDES UP CLOSE TO WILLIAM.

William and his men move HANDS TO SWORD HILTS.

Garcie-Arnaud stops. Neck RED AND BLISTERED, eyes enraged.

WILLIAM

Whatever you're angry about, watch
your words with me! What happened
to your neck?

Garcie-Arnaud practically spits his response.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

You'll never get your land back! Do
you know why? Because I'm the Lord
of Sault and Navailles, and I say
who gets land in my bailiwick. Not
the fucking English King! Me!

William leans, inspects Garcie's neck with the hint of a smile.

WILLIAM

Did someone brand you? Looks like
an 'M'...

Garcie-Arnaud fumes. His anxious horse spins under him, adding to his frustration.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

De Brocas! You're not even true
nobles. You're marsh rats! I'll
make sure you end up either back in
the marshes or dead!

William's RAPTOR EYES are back, black and dangerous.

WILLIAM

What separates my family from yours
is that we are loyal, while yours
runs to whoever is paying the most.

Garcie-Arnaud MEASURES UP Jacques, Louis, the others. Their eyes glitter, DARING him to attack William.

Garcie-Arnaud rides past them, his men following. He hisses at William under his breath.

GARCIE-ARNAUD

A thousand years from now nobody
will know the name Brocas.

EXT. DE BROCAS PADDOCKS - EVENING

Sunset, lilting BIRDSONG. Margaret and Fayette in the GOLDEN HOUR lead horses from pasture to paddock. They watch William ride up.

William rides beside them, gesticulating angrily.

WILLIAM

Garcie-Arnaud stopped by on his way
through town. Said he's not giving
our lands back. And...

His eyes settle on Margaret.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

...his neck was blistered, like he
had been branded.

Fayette laughs, indignant.

FAYETTE

That's because Tatie branded him,
Papa.

William tries not to look pleased.

MARGARET

He said if I didn't leave Arnald and go with him he would destroy our family. Then he attacked me.

WILLIAM

(scoffs)

Bastard. He called us marsh rats!

MARGARET

I'd rather be a marsh rat than a French weasel!

WILLIAM

He must be stopped! Edward isn't known for being kind to traitors.

EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

Starlight SHIMMERS on the glassy water. The ship ROCKS like a giant cradle. LUTE SONG drifts from somewhere down ship.

Water SMACKS the hull. Horses WHUFFLE, content. The mast CREAKS. Étienne HUMS along with the lute, out of tune, and sips wine.

BLECH! Arnald heaves over the side of the ship. He clings to the rail, hair and face slick with sweat.

Étienne pats Arnald's back paternally.

INT. SHIP QUARTERS - NIGHT - LATER

Moonlight streams in the small chamber. Arnald and Étienne lay in bunks.

Étienne SNORES, crashed, empty wine bag on his belly.

Arnald SWEATS and TWITCHES in his sleep.

ARNALD'S NIGHTMARE - EXT. BERWICK - NIGHT

Lucie, wrapped in Margaret's arms, her EYES VACANT in the moonless dark. Both are spattered with black, gleaming blood. Margaret's bloated belly is impossibly large.

Beside her, CATHERINE holds Cerise's lead. Her alabaster skin glows, and her eyes are on Arnald, accusing.

MARGARET

There, Lucie. You can ride Cerise home.

Margaret sets the girl on Cerise, then turns, notices Arnald. She's confused, suspicious.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Arnald. Why are you here? You need
to go.

INT. SHIP QUARTERS - NIGHT

Arnald wakes, sweating and terrified.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

In the moonlit stable, the WHUFFLES of CONTENT HORSES.

Éclair's coat gleams. William BRUSHES her methodically as she snoozes. His face, troubled.

He moves the brush to her mane, carefully separates out a section. He runs the brush through it with the gentleness of a mother caring for her daughter's hair.

He glances up at the sound of SOFT FOOTSTEPS. Margaret enters, gives him a brief smile, goes to Cerise's stall.

WILLIAM
You shouldn't walk down here by
yourself at night.

Margaret doesn't answer. She strokes Cerise, the colt, clearly getting comfort from them.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
How is Fayette doing with the
training?

MARGARET
She's got natural talent. She's de
Brocas.

William doesn't immediately respond. Margaret catches a proud smile as he turns his face back to Éclair.

WILLIAM
Marie and I think we should use the
money Arnald gets from this horse
sale to buy broodmares from your
father.

Margaret is surprised.

MARGARET

There's so much else we need.

William doesn't respond.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - WEAPONS YARD - DAY

Early morning sun. JACQUES, LOUIS, and other SOLDIERS shoot at targets, practice swordplay while William observes.

The notice board has a NEW MESSAGE, in William's perfect script:

"Wolf sightings must be reported to
Captain de Brocas."

A YOUNG MESSENGER canters up. William hands him a LETTER.

EXT. STUD BARN AT WINDSOR, LONDON - DAY

Arnald adjusts his collar against a cold winter wind. In the stable courtyard, he holds a stunning black STALLION while Prince Edward inspects it.

Étienne stands with the other tied horses.

The prince walks slowly around the horse, smiling.

ARNALD

You said you liked the stallion I
ride. This is Vaurien, his brother.

Prince Edward picks up one of Vaurien's feet and inspects it.

PRINCE EDWARD

Vaurien. I like that. You brought
me the finest horse from Gascony,
like I asked, Arnald. I won't
forget this.

The prince rests his arms on the animal's back.

PRINCE EDWARD (CONT'D)

Now I need you to help me pick
mares from our stock. I want all of
my horses to look like this.

Arnald just wants to be home. He fights the urge to refuse.

ARNALD

Of course. But quickly. My wife is
due to give birth any day.

The prince nods sympathetically, claps Arnald on the back.

PRINCE EDWARD
Get to it then, Sir Arnald!

EXT. ROAD TO BORDEAUX - DAY

William's messenger canters down the shadowy road. Suddenly MIRANDE'S SQUAD EMERGES FROM THE TREES. The messenger's horse SLIDES TO A STOP, is immediately surrounded by soldiers.

Mirande holds out his hand. The messenger hands him his bag. Mirande pulls William's message from the bag, opens it.

CAPTAIN MIRANDE
(to his men, in French;
subtitled)
Do any of you bastards read Latin?

The men shake their heads. Mirande looks at the messenger.

CAPTAIN MIRANDE (CONT'D)
Do you read Latin?

The petrified messenger shakes his head.

Mirande looks quite disappointed.

EXT. ROAD TO BORDEAUX - LATER

The French soldiers ride away, leading the MESSENGER'S HORSE. Mirande carries the MESSENGER'S BAG.

The MESSENGER'S BODY lays motionless in the adjacent meadow.

EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

Arnald VOMITS OVERBOARD. Étienne absently pats him, drinks wine, and watches the stars.

EXT. ROAD TO BORDEAUX - DAY

Arnald and Étienne ride side by side. Étienne slows at a fork in the dirt road.

Arnald veers right.

ARNALD

We should take this road home. I don't want to run into Captain Mirande again.

ÉTIENNE

What makes you think they only patrol the main road?

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - ABBEY - DAY

Catherine, the elder Menald, and Guiraut approach the abbey. Catherine leans on her mother, ashen and frail. Menald yanks open the MASSIVE DOOR.

Catherine looks up to see Jacques watching her from his horse. She hesitates.

Jacques freezes, wide eyed and...

Catherine SMILES at him.

INT. WATCH TOWER OFFICE - DAY

A finger TAPS a map, a forested area west of Saint-Sever.

WILLIAM

The wolves must be in there.

Jacques isn't paying attention. He's almost giddy. William frowns at him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you thinking about?

JACQUES

Your sister.

William stares, STUNNED.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

She smiled at me.

For once William's not sure what to say. His expression is both angry and confused.

WILLIAM

Hmmm. Well...my little sister...

Louis tries desperately to change the subject, draws a large circle on the map with his finger.

LOUIS
We checked all through here.

JACQUES
Maybe they were just passing
through.

The three men ponder.

WILLIAM
Jacques, take some men and check
that area again. I'm apparently not
keeping you busy enough.

INT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Margaret descends the stairs, enters the main room as Marie,
Jeanne, young Menald, and Fayette return from the market.
They carry wine, bread, cheese, etc.

MARGARET
Where is everybody?

MARIE
They took Catherine to the abbey.
She isn't feeling well.

Margaret looks around, frowns.

MARGARET
Have you seen John? I thought he
was in here playing with Menald.

Marie shakes her head.

Margaret RUNS OUTSIDE IN A PANIC. Marie follows, trailed by
Fayette and Menald.

EXT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - DAY

Margaret exits the home and rushes towards the barn, calling
her son.

MARGARET
John! John!

She enters the barn as Marie runs out of the house.

INT. DE BROCAS STABLE - DAY

MARGARET

John!

Silence except for BIRDSONG from outside. The barn is EMPTY.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Oh no! This can't be happening!

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - MAIN STREET - DAY

SNIFF SNIFF. William, patrolling, catches a scent. He spies the PIE VENDOR pushing a cart of big, juicy-looking pies. She smiles at him, WINKS.

He nudges his horse towards her.

INT. DE BROCAS STABLE - DAY

Marie, Fayette, and Menald come running in.

FAYETTE

Maybe he went to see the horses.

Margaret hurries past them, back outside.

EXT. HILLSIDE OVERLOOK - DAY

Margaret hurries up the hill, near hysterics. As she clears the top of the hill she stops, looks through the HORSE HERD. The horses graze in a MEADOW adjacent to WOODS.

John is next to baby Storm, talking to him. Cerise grazes lazily next to them, unconcerned. She NICKERS when she sees Margaret.

MARGARET

John!

The boy looks up at his mama and waves.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Mon Dieu!

Young Menald POINTS TOWARDS THE ROAD.

YOUNG MENALD

Smoke.

Margaret and Marie look. A GIANT PLUME OF DUST RISES from the road.

MARGARET

Not smoke. That's horses...many horses.

Marie's voice is a whisper.

MARIE
 (in French)
It's the French.

They watch as mounted soldiers appear.

MARGARET
 Menald, Guiraut, William,
 Catherine...

MARIE
 I'm not going back to the house
 until I hear William's voice.

Margaret whirls, eyes searching for somewhere to hide.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - MAIN STREET - DAY

William hands the vendor a coin. He turns Éclair, slowly walks her as he sinks his teeth into the pie. Juice LEAKS down his chin. He PATS AT IT DAINTILY with a handkerchief.

The pie is delicious. He turns, nods appreciatively at the vendor.

She WINKS at him again.

William doesn't register the wink. He never does. He stuffs the rest of the pie in his mouth...and hears --

-- a SHOUT from the watchtower!

William swivels on his horse, tries to make out the guard's words.

WATCHTOWER GUARD
 The French! Attackers!

HORSE HOOVES POUNDING. William looks up. Jacques' party races towards him, PURSUED BY A FRENCH SQUAD.

William pulls his sword and, mouth stuffed, waves wildly to the men in the weapons yard.

WILLIAM
 Mmmffffttt!

Louis, seeing William's antics, shouts to the other men.

LOUIS
 The French attack!

The pie vendor runs, SCREAMING.

INT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

The door BLASTS OPEN. FRENCH SOLDIERS pour in.

Jeanne turns, shocked. A soldier leers at her.

SOLDIER
(in French; subtitled)
She's old for my taste.

He stabs her without ceremony.

One soldier heads upstairs. The others inspect the house: Margaret's LEATHERWORK, the cupboard, Marie's EMBROIDERY.

One throws open William's CHEST and rifles through papers.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
No money here. Wasting our time.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

From the woods adjacent to the horse herd, Margaret listens to the distant sounds of French soldiers pillaging their home. Marie watches young Menald and John play quietly at her feet.

Margaret spots something in the dirt: a WOLF TRACK. Marie hasn't noticed.

Under pretense of pacing, Margaret runs her foot over the track, obliterating it.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - MAIN STREET - DAY

FRENCH SOLDIERS POUR INTO SAINT-SEVER as William's men erupt from the weapons yard.

Shop shutters SLAM shut. Dogs BARK, swords CLASH. A WOMAN runs down the street carrying an INFANT as the two groups of soldiers meet violently.

William intercepts the nearest French soldier. Éclair SMASHES the man's leg with her hoof. William finishes him with a quick SWORD THRUST.

The soldier FALLS, SMASHING the precious pie cart. PIES FLY.

Seeing his Gascon allies, Jacques PIVOTS to face his pursuers.

The stray dog races past William, snatches a pie off the street, runs off.

Jacques spins his sword and does an underhand cut that takes one by surprise. The attacker falls from his horse.

Jacques deliberately tramples him with his horse as he cuts another man down. The man's head is crushed under a hoof.

JACQUES

We're outnumbered, Captain!

William spins his horse, engages another French soldier.

WILLIAM

Being outnumbered by the French
makes it a fair fight!

INT. SAINT-SEVER ABBEY - DAY

Sunlight streams through stained glass windows.

Catherine, Guiraut, the elder Menald, and a MONK, 60, look towards the giant oak doors as the noise carries inside.

They listen to the sounds of chaos. Guiraut takes Catherine gently by the arm.

GUIRAUT

We can't stay in here! Lets go
through the side door to the
courtyard --

She is cut off as the doors CREAK open and the outside noise gets noticeably louder.

Guiraut pulls Catherine to the side door. But that door FLIES OPEN, and TWO SOLDIERS rush in.

They are TRAPPED.

Guiraut squeezes Catherine against her.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - MAIN STREET - DAY

A child CRIES. A woman SCREAMS. Steel CLASHES on steel.
Horses SQUEAL.

Blood-streaked horses mill through the streets, reins hanging loose.

Several BODIES of French attackers litter the street.

William spars with a FRENCH SOLDIER. William swipes, clangs on the other man's sword. The French man's sword SLICES WILLIAM'S THIGH.

Enraged, William swings mightily, BEHEADS his opponent.

FRENCH COMMANDING OFFICER
(in French)
Retreat! Pull back!

The last few French soldiers turn, run.

William sits, pants. He presses on his bleeding thigh, then looks around at the devastation.

WILLIAM
(to Jacques)
Looks like most of the dead are French.

But the abbey doors HANG AGAPE.

An EERIE SILENCE fills the air. A HORSE trots past him, RIDERLESS, WILD-EYED, and BLOOD-SPATTERED.

The abbot runs out, sees William, and waves.

ABBOT
William, you must come!

INT. SAINT-SEVER ABBEY - CONTINUOUS

Menald lies unmoving, face down in blood. It's impossible to tell whose blood it is, as Guiraut, Catherine, and the monk sprawl near him.

Catherine's face is peaceful, as if she's sleeping and having a sweet dream. Guiraut lays crumpled, in fetal position.

William sprints towards them in disbelief, runs past his parents.

He drops to his knees next to Catherine, lifts his sister's head, pleads with her.

WILLIAM
Catherine! Please wake up!

But she's LILY-WHITE, literally drained. Her tunic is blood-soaked. He gently sets her head down.

ABBOT
You're bleeding, William.

INT. SAINT-SEVER ABBEY - DAY - LATER

The abbot bandages William's leg. The bandage immediately starts to turn red.

Grief-wracked, William's breath comes as ragged gasps. He doesn't care if he bleeds to death.

ABBOT

Where is your wife?

William's eyes fly open. He jumps up to leave --

-- finds Jacques standing behind him, his eyes on Catherine.

Their eyes meet wordlessly, processing the loss. William reaches, squeezes Jacques' shoulder.

William hurries from the abbey, limping.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER ABBEY - CONTINUOUS

Outside, Éclair waits for him. He grabs her reins, looks around desperately, sees Jacques stumbling after him.

Jacques has tears in his eyes. He hoists William onto Éclair.

EXT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - EVENING

Golden hour. Evening BIRDSONG, and the APPROACHING HOOFBEATS of a galloping horse.

Soft light filters through the trees. Horses grazing in the pasture behind the house lend a sense of normalcy.

The approaching horse gets louder.

William rides up to the house and dismounts, winces as he lands.

INT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

William enters in a panic. The home is a mess: broken dishes, spilled wine and milk, Jeanne clearly dead.

He hesitates at Jeanne, horrorstruck. He hops up the stairs.

WILLIAM

Marie! Fayette! Menald! Margaret!
John!

Back downstairs.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

MARIE!

No answer. He bends and picks up Marie's ruined embroidery, stares at it. His vision blurs.

In the far distance, a female voice calls.

MARIE (O.S.)

William!

EXT. DE BROCAS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Marie races down the hill towards the house, trailed by Fayette, young Menald, and Margaret carrying John. When she reaches William they embrace.

William breaks down. Marie holds him.

Éclair wanders by, stops to grab a piece of grass here and there.

Margaret takes her reins. She stands with the mare, watches William...gives an unnoticed little FLINCH. Her hand shoots to her belly.

EXT. ROAD TO BORDEAUX - NIGHT

Arnald and Étienne come upon the MESSENGER'S BODY. They dismount.

ARNALD

That's the cobbler's boy. Claude, I think. He's a King's Messenger.

They look at each other, then into the woods, suddenly feeling quite vulnerable.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER - MAIN STREET - DAY

The street is a mess. William picks up a smashed pie, pottery shards, other detritus and throws it in a cart. Beside him, Jacques does the same.

The Lord of Navailles' men FRANCES and HELIOS approach on horses.

William stops cleaning, faces them.

WILLIAM

Ah. Here's proof that we are in
HELL, as I suspected.

FRANCES

Funny, de Brocas. We're just
passing through on our way home.

On William, suspicious.

WILLIAM

Coming from where?

Frances glares.

FRANCES

The French ambushed English troops
near Bonnegarde. Many English were
killed or taken captive. Looks like
Saint-Sever got caught in their
path.

WILLIAM

How many captives are there?

FRANCES

(guarded)

Many.

WILLIAM

Where were they taken? And how do
you know this?

Frances ignores the questions.

HELIOS

You think King Edward gives two
shits about your family, William?
You're so fucking loyal, so fucking
moral! What's it got you?

William's jaw CLENCHES, eyes hard.

FRANCES

We'll leave now.

WILLIAM

Beware of wolves. Some of them are
rabid. But I suspect you've
experience dealing with wolves.

William WATCHES THEM TROT AWAY. He turns to Jacques.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
See if the abbot needs help.

Jacques scowls after the men, but heads for the abbey.

William watches Jacques enter the abbey, then limps up the hill towards the watch tower.

EXT. SAINT-SEVER WEAPONS YARD - DAY

William grabs a BOW from the rack, and a QUIVER OF ARROWS.

He unties Éclair, hobbles to a BENCH with her. Heaves up on the bench using the horse to stabilize himself. WINCES as he mounts.

A blood stain appears on his leg bandage, slowly grows.

He passes the watch tower and enters the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

William rides on a narrow deer trail. The only sounds are Éclair's hooves crunching on leaves.

A bone-chilling WOLF HOWL pierces the forest dark.

William peers into the trees.

WILLIAM
Shit.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

THREE WOLVES sniff eagerly at a dirt track. In the distance, a fourth wolf HOWLS. The wolves perk, listen.

EXT. WOODS OVERLOOK - CONTINUOUS

William also perks, LISTENS, NERVOUS. He makes his way to a spot overlooking the road and stops his horse, dismounts.

He waits, bow in hand, hidden by trees and shadows. Sweat beads his forehead. His eyes dart from road to forest.

The SILENCE is thick, preternatural.

Another wolf HOWLS: long, desolate, and...CLOSER.

William SHUDDERS.

COO-OO! COO-OO! COO-OO!

A FLIGHT OF DOVES EXPLODE from the trees below.

The sound of men YELLING, nearing. William NOCKS AN ARROW.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The wolves break into a run, chasing something down.

EXT. WOODS OVERLOOK - CONTINUOUS

William swallows, keeps his eyes on the road below.

Frances and Helios thunder into view. HORSES PANICKED, wolves NIPPING AT THEIR LEGS.

PHHHHT!

Frances CLUTCHES THE SHAFT IN HIS NECK. BLOOD SPURTS between his fingers. He falls forward, bounces on the hard dirt.

Helios looks toward William, SPOTS HIM --

PHHHHT!

-- is STRUCK THROUGH THE EYE. Dies instantly. He slumps on his galloping horse.

Frances's horse, unencumbered, gallops off. Frances is immediately SWARMED with wolves.

Helios falls, but his foot has gone through the stirrup. His body drags behind his bucking chestnut. A DUST PLUME chases them down the dirt track.

William watches, satisfied.

The horse rids itself of Helios, BOLTS, leaves Helios dead in the road. Some of the wolves run for him.

William deliberates.

COO-OO! COO-OO! COO-OO!

He looks up at the doves. A flicker of SELF-DOUBT crosses his face, is replaced by ANGER. His fingers go to the crucifix around his neck.

His eyes return to the bloody scene below.

END ACT FIVE

TAG

EXT. ROAD TO BORDEAUX - DAY

Arnald, Étienne, and the horses droop from a long day's ride. Poor Claude is tied behind Étienne's saddle.

They ride up to a mangled, unrecognizable human corpse. Far behind them, the remains of Helios lie in the road.

Arnald dismounts.

He kneels, yanks an arrow from what remains of the body's neck.

He inspects the arrow, scans the woods around him, finds the overlook. Takes a moment to think, anxiety growing. His eyes go to Étienne.

Étienne catches movement in the road ahead.

ÉTIENNE

Look!

Arnald follows Étienne's eyeline to the chestnut mare, still wearing the BLUE BLANKET of Navailles and limping towards them.