

THE GREAT BEAST

'vid Buttaro

vid@vidbuttaro.com
415.328.5504
vidbuttaro.com

FADE IN

EXT. THE MERCHANT SHIP "BEATRICE"/SHIP'S DECK - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: Somewhere on the Mediterranean. Late Middle Ages.

A violent summer storm batters a hapless merchant ship, as desperate SAILORS cling to the tattered rigging.

SIMON, 30s, hardened by seafaring life in a handsome, windblown way, wrestles the ship's wheel as a wave breaks over him.

MATEY, the grizzled first mate, hauls himself to Simon's side, yelling to be heard over the gale.

MATEY

We've got to dump the cargo!

SIMON

You can't do that, Matey!

MATEY

The rigging is in shreds!

SIMON

Damn it, this is my fortune!

MATEY

Drowned men spend no gold, Captain!

A mighty wave sweeps a SCREAMING SAILOR overboard.

SIMON

We're not going down!

With a deafening crack, the mizzen mast snaps and plunges into the sea, sweeping the deck with rigging and shreds of sail.

A tangle of ropes snares Simon and yanks him toward the edge. The ship's wheel spins, out of control.

In an instant, Simon draws a knife and cuts one of the ropes, while Matey lunges after him and grabs his coat.

MATEY

I've got you, Captain!

SIMON

Save the ship!

Another mighty wave submerges them, and when Matey's vision clears, Simon is gone.

EXT. IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Simon spins underwater in a tumult of currents and flotsam. He cuts the ropes which entangle him and gasps to the surface. He lashes himself to the broken mast.

When the next wave hits, everything goes black.

EXT. ALEXANDRIA/HARBOR - DAY

EGYPTIAN FISHERMEN hoist the unconscious Simon from the sea.

They cut him free of flotsam, chattering in Arabic. Someone gently slaps his face, at which Simon stirs, then coughs.

MAHMED, his wizened fisherman's face grinning, laughs kindly.

INT. MAHMED'S HUT - DAY

Simon sleeps on a simple mattress of pelts and straw. His clothes have been cleaned and lie folded beside him.

Mahmed and his WIFE squat by the cooking fire. They chat in Arabic. Mahmed ladles broth from a cauldron into a clay cup.

Simon cries out from the bedroom, startling Mahmed. He spills broth on his tunic and squeals as the hot liquid scalds him.

Simon thrashes dazedly, then calms himself and looks around.

SIMON

Could be worse.

Mahmed bustles over, carrying the cup. He babbles in Arabic.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Sorry, friend, my babble is a tad rusty.

MAHMED

(in accented English)
You are English?

SIMON

Yes.

Mahmed offers the steaming cup.

MAHMED

Please, try to drink something. If you wish more, you may suck my shirt.

This perplexes Simon, but he drinks gratefully.

SIMON
Where am I?

MAHMED
Alexandria.

SIMON
Egypt?!
(then)
My ship?

MAHMED
I am sorry, it was not with you
when you arrived.

Simon lowers his head in grief, and Mahmed sympathetically grips Simon's shoulder.

MAHMED (CONT'D)
Please, you are my guest, until you
recover your strength.

Simon rises unsteadily and nearly topples as he dresses.

MAHMED (CONT'D)
Or you could stagger about like a
drunkard. As you wish.

SIMON
What's your name?

MAHMED
Mahmed.

SIMON
Mahmed, I am Simon. You are very
kind. But your tea is bloody awful.

MAHMED
It is not tea. It is broth of camel
urine and fish parts. Treats
dehydration and nourishes the soul.

SIMON
Funny.

MAHMED
No, truly.

EXT. ALEXANDRIA/HARBOR - DAY

Simon and Mahmed push through the crowds.

MAHMED

Trust me, if you open your heart
you will find your way.

SIMON

Not a single English ship! I may as
well swim.

MAHMED

There will be one tomorrow. Or next
day. They come often for Crusades.

SIMON

Crusaders. My favorite people.

MAHMED

Must it be an English ship?

Mahmed points.

GREEK SAILORS load a merchant ship with supplies.

An aged VIZIER stands on the dock beside a HOODED FIGURE.

Six dour Egyptian BODYGUARDS protect these two.

Simon approaches the GREEK CAPTAIN as Mahmed waits patiently.

SIMON

Ho, there! Are you bound for England?

GREEK CAPTAIN

I cannot say.

SIMON

All right, are you going in the
direction of England?

The Vizier follows the conversation with some interest.

GREEK CAPTAIN

The entire ship has been hired out-

SIMON

I don't bloody well care-

The Vizier steps forward and interrupts.

VIZIER

You are English?

SIMON
What gave me away?

VIZIER
You know London?

SIMON
What merchant doesn't?

The Vizier retreats to confer with the Hooded Figure.

SIMON (CONT'D)
That was cryptic.

MAHMED
Perhaps he's Zen. It's a koan.

SIMON
(to Captain, indicating Vizier)
Is that old chap the one who hired you?

The Greek Captain tightens his lips: he's not telling.

Simon shoulders past him to the Vizier, but the Bodyguards pounce on Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Hey, steady, there, ow!

The Vizier barks in Arabic, and the Bodyguards release Simon.

VIZIER
If we were seeking a guide to London-

SIMON
I've made the journey a hundred times.

VIZIER
You would leave at once.

SIMON
(bargaining, now)
What's in it for me?

VIZIER
You will be most well rewarded.

SIMON
Most well? How well? How most?

VIZIER
We have an unusual cargo.

SIMON
I don't care what—

Simon trails off as his eye catches:

An ELEPHANT. Huge. Enormous ears and tusks. It lumbers toward the Greek Ship, ridden by an EGYPTIAN HANDLER. The Elephant wears a harness with rope stirrups, which the EGYPTIAN HANDLER uses to descend from the elephant and lead it forward.

While Simon gawks, the Vizier whispers with the Hooded Figure.

SIMON (CONT'D)
What in the name of God? Mahmed?

MAHMED
That? It's just an elephant.

SIMON
Elephant. I've heard of elephant.

MAHMED
You don't have them in England?

SIMON
No, just sheep. Say, it's, um,
coming closer. It's not dangerous?

MAHMED
Is it charging?

SIMON
No.

MAHMED
Then it's not dangerous.

Simon shrinks behind Mahmed as the Elephant gently taps the Hooded Figure with its trunk in greeting. The Hooded Figure pats the Elephant's trunk in return.

SIMON
What does it eat?

MAHMED
Sailors, usually.

Simon makes as if to bolt.

MAHMED (CONT'D)
I joke. It eats trees and grass.

The Vizier and the Hooded Figure share a long embrace. The Vizier says a quiet farewell, and the Hooded Figure boards the ship followed by the Bodyguards.

Next the Elephant ascends the gangplank, which bows and creaks.

SIMON

That Great Beast is your cargo?

VIZIER

You will be the guide to London.

EXT. ALEXANDRIA/HARBOR - DAY

The Vizier, on the dock, watches the Greek ship sail off.

Three tall Moorish ASSASSINS, wearing black robes, turbans, and armed with scimitars, silently approach. Each Assassin wears a jeweled medallion: one red, one silver, one gold.

The Vizier turns, as if expecting them. He smiles, sadly.

VIZIER

You come too late.

Instantly, the RED ASSASSIN draws a dagger and eviscerates the Vizier, letting his body fall into the water below.

The GOLD ASSASSIN peers into the distance and wordlessly points to the Greek ship with the Elephant at its prow.

The SILVER ASSASSIN's hiss is an eerie, guttural thing.

EXT. GREEK SHIP/SHIP'S DECK - DAY

Four of the Bodyguards, helplessly seasick, vomit over the ship railing. A fifth Bodyguard staggers up from below deck to join them.

A dozen Greek Sailors cower at the stern of the ship. They mutter in Greek, and cast nervous glances toward the bow.

There, like some colossal prow ornament, stands the Elephant, calmly munching on bales of hay.

The Hooded Figure sits on a silk cushion beside the Elephant.

Simon approaches, skirting the Elephant, but the Hooded Figure ignores him.

SIMON
 Your guards aren't doing so well.
 (no response)
 Guess they're not used to boats?
 (no response)
 Speak English? Français? Italiano?
 (beat)
 Babble?

Simon leans forward for a look at his companion, but the Hooded Figure hastily turns away.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 Wait a minute!

Simon grabs the Hooded Figure's hood and yanks it down.

Beneath the hood is KIYA, 20s, a stunning young Egyptian woman with long, jet-black hair, a haughty bearing, and fiery eyes. She leaps to her feet, furious.

KIYA
 (in accented English)
 Unhand me!

SIMON
 Ah, English! Good.

KIYA
 Filthy peasant.

SIMON
 Or not so good.

KIYA
 I could have you killed for that!

SIMON
 If your guards could stand, you could.

KIYA
 Never lay hands on me again!

SIMON
 Fine. What are you, some sort of monk?

KIYA
 I am Princess Kiya, of the house of Meryt-Amon.

SIMON
 (underwhelmed)
 A princess. Well! I am Simon, of the house with that tasteful shrubbery.

KIYA
You will speak to me only when bidden.

 SIMON
As I am your hired guide to London-

 KIYA
Only when bidden!

Simon mimes gruesomely cutting off his tongue and throwing it into the sea, then wanders off, whistling.

EXT. GREEK SHIP/SHIP'S DECK - DAY

The Elephant and Kiya still reside at the bow.

The Bodyguards continue vomiting at the railing in shifts.

The dozen Greek Sailors mutter amongst themselves.

Simon sits nearby, whittling and whistling.

 KIYA
Must you shriek so?

 SIMON
Am I bidden to speak, now? My
thanks, most high and royal-

 KIYA
You will stop that noise.

Simon obliges with a wry smile, and continues whittling.

 KIYA (CONT'D)
Why are the all so uneasy?

Simon looks at her, eyebrows raised, holding his breath.

 KIYA (CONT'D)
Speak!

Simon exhales in mock-relief.

 SIMON
We've had no wind for three days.

 KIYA
Why is that a problem?

 SIMON
Sailors. Superstitious lot. No
wind, no good.

KIYA
Surely it will blow again.

SIMON
Of course it will. Except, they
think the elephant is responsible.

KIYA
That is foolish.

SIMON
Yes, it's foolish. They're Greek
sailors. Between them, they've got just
enough brains to fill a pot with piss.

INT. GREEK SHIP/BELOW DECK/SIMON'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Simon sleeps on a hammock in a tiny room.

Rustling noises and hushed talking awaken him.

INT. GREEK SHIP/BELOW DECK/BODYGUARDS' QUARTERS

Simon, pulling on his boots, peers into the barracks where
the Bodyguards sleep.

Kiya kicks at the nearest Bodyguard with her slippered foot.

KIYA
Wake up! Attend me!

The Bodyguard, very ill, mumbles a refusal in Arabic.

SIMON
Problem?

Kiya whirls on him angrily.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Oops. Sorry. When bidden.

Simon again makes a cutting-off-his-tongue gesture and wanders
off looking for a place to discard his imagined severed tongue.

KIYA
Wait! The sailors! The Elephant!

EXT. GREEK SHIP/SHIP'S DECK - NIGHT

Six Greek Sailors lead the Elephant to the side of the ship,
and push with all their might to send it overboard.

The Elephant does not budge.

Another group of Sailors has rigged a lever with a plank and a barrel, and they try to dislodge the Elephant's feet.

The Elephant patiently takes a step each time the plank approaches, and thus avoids the lever.

Simon and Kiya clamber up a ladder to the deck and witness:

SAILOR #1 slips a folded sail around the Elephant's belly and tied it to part of the rigging. All six Greek Sailors haul on the rope, struggling to lift the Elephant but instead hoisting themselves into the air.

SIMON

What are you doing?

SAILOR ONE

Sending this demon back to hell!

SIMON

It's an elephant!

SAILOR #1

Bad luck to bring an elephant on ship.

SIMON

Bad luck? How would you know? Have you ever heard of anyone freighting an elephant? Ever even heard of an elephant?

SAILOR #1

Then why no wind for three days?

SIMON

Did you people begin sea travel just yesterday? It happens.

The other Sailors, meanwhile, tie a few barrels to one end of the rope and throw the barrels overboard. This succeeds in hoisting the Elephant's haunches a few inches off the ground.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Hey!

Simon rushes forward and cuts the rope.

This infuriates the Sailors, who curse mightily in Greek and swarm about Simon and Kiya.

Simon punches SAILOR #1, and flings a SAILOR #2 to the ground, but others grab his arms.

Kiya draws a slender dagger from her robe and slashes SAILOR #3 in the hand.

Enraged now, the Sailors hurl Simon and Kiya overboard.

The Elephant bellows and lumbers after Kiya, smashing the railing of the ship as it tumbles into the sea.

EXT. IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Simon and Kiya shriek as the Elephant narrowly misses them in its plunge into the water.

SIMON
You bastards!

The Sailors make rude gestures from the safety of the ship.

The current gradually carries Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant further and further from the ship.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Hey! Throw us a rope! Help! Help!

Shortly, the ship drifts out of earshot, lost in darkness.

SIMON (CONT'D)
They left us! I can't believe it!

The Elephant taps Simon's shoulder with its trunk. Simon cries out, alarmed, and turns to see Kiya straddling the Elephant's back. The Elephant, nearly submerged, paddles calmly, using its trunk in the fashion of a periscope.

KIYA
You may climb up here.

SIMON
It can swim!

KIYA
Of course it can swim. Come here!

SIMON
No! That thing got us into this mess.
I want nothing more to do with it.

KIYA
How long can you tread water?

SIMON
We're on a major trade route. A
ship is bound to come by soon.

EXT. IN THE MEDITERRANEAN - NIGHT

With its trunk, the Elephant assists the exhausted and sputtering Simon to its back.

SIMON

No, I'm all right. Just -- phew.

The Elephant lifts its trunk, sniffing, then begins to swim.

EXT. A BEACH IN ITALY - DAWN

The Elephant wades ashore and Simon and Kiya, exhausted, slip to the ground and collapse.

The Elephant wanders off to graze on vegetation.

EXT. ELSEWHERE ON THE MEDITERRANEAN - DAWN

The Greek Ship sails on, as the eastern horizon glows.

From out of the mists, a small and swift sailing vessel approaches. The three Assassins man this craft. They lower the sail and row closer.

EXT. GREEK SHIP/SHIP'S DECK

Sailor #1 peers into the distance, not seeing the Assassins.

The Red Assassin climbs silently aboard and slits the Watchman's throat as the other two Assassins join him on the ship deck.

INT. GREEK SHIP/BELOW DECK - DAY

The Assassins emerge from the Bodyguards' barracks, wiping blood from their blades, stepping over bodies of slain Greek Sailors.

The Silver Assassin kicks open the door to Kiya's quarters, and finds the room empty. The Assassins share an angry look, and commence searching the ship.

EXT. A BEACH IN ITALY - DAY

Simon and Kiya awaken, bedraggled and sandy. The Elephant patiently rolls about nearby, spraying itself with sand.

KIYA

Where are we?

SIMON
I have no idea.

Simon studies the sky for a moment, then shrugs.

SIMON (CONT'D)
For all I know, this could be the Americas.

KIYA
Is that far from London?

Simon shoots her a "stupid-question" look and walks off.

KIYA (CONT'D)
Where are we going?

SIMON
We? I am going this way.

KIYA
You are our hired guide to London.

SIMON
Hired guide? I got thrown overboard,
thanks to you. Deal's off.

KIYA
What of your reward?

SIMON
Do you have a bag of gold hidden on you?

KIYA
I do not trouble myself with money!

SIMON
Well, Princess, no reward, no guide.

Simon sets off walking again. Kiya and the Elephant follow.

KIYA
You cannot leave! I must go to London!

SIMON
Why? Why is that? What would an
Egyptian princess want in London?

KIYA
I go there to be married.

SIMON
Married?

KIYA

To the youngest son of the Duke of Wellingford. The union will make an alliance vital to the Crusades.

SIMON

I've got a thing or two to say about the Crusades.

The Elephant sprays itself with sand.

SIMON (CONT'D)

And why the elephant, may I ask?

KIYA

It was to be a - your word is "dowry?" - to the Duke.

SIMON

What will a Duke do with an elephant? No one has even heard of an elephant.

KIYA

In my country, it is an honored gift.

SIMON

Not in England, it's not. Except maybe in a freak show.

KIYA

Then I will give the elephant to you.

SIMON

Oh, well in that case, let me kiss the nethermost hem of your mantle.

KIYA

When you bring me to London, you may take the elephant and make your reward in one such "freak show."

SIMON

That's, why, that's just the most ... extraordinary ...

KIYA

Yes?

SIMON

Let me think.

EXT. A DIRT ROAD - DAY

Simon and Kiya walk, the Elephant spraying itself - and Simon - with the occasional trunk-full of dust.

SIMON
Can you make it stop that?

Kiya utters in Arabic and the Elephant stops its dust-baths.

Then, Simon spies the outskirts of a village.

SIMON (CONT'D)
At last! Civilization!

KIYA
Or cannibalistic natives who will
roast us for supper.

SIMON
(mock joyful)
Or cannibalistic natives who will
roast us for supper!

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant approach.

An OLD WOMAN looks up from her wash, sees them, and blenches.

OLD WOMAN
(in Italian)
Aiee! Il diavolo!

The Old Woman screams and takes flight.

SIMON
Wait! Wait, it's all right! It's
only an elephant!

VILLAGERS come running, regard the Elephant, and flee.

Simon chases after them, calling reassurances in vain.

Kiya chases Simon. The Elephant, of course, chases Kiya.

Mayhem: Villagers wailing, dogs barking, CHILDREN screaming.

Within moments, the village is deserted, leaving Simon, Kiya and the Elephant behind.

SIMON (CONT'D)
No, no, no, no, no!

The Elephant calmly nibbles on a thatched roof.

KIYA
You were right.

SIMON
Huh?

KIYA
No one has heard of an elephant.

SIMON
Yay.

KIYA
Do you know where we are, at least?

SIMON
They sound Italian.

KIYA
Is that good?

SIMON
Well, they won't be eating our
flesh. Only Christ's.

KIYA
Oddly, I am not encouraged.

SIMON
It's not as bad as it sounds.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Simon and Kiya devour stew from wooden bowls. They wear a villager's laundry while their clothes dry on a line nearby.

The Elephant continues to devour thatched roofs.

KIYA
Will we be safe here for the night?

SIMON
I don't think they're coming back.

KIYA
And if they do?

SIMON
I'll explain everything.

KIYA
 Yes, that worked so well the first time.

INT. VILLAGE/HUTS - NIGHT

Simon and Kiya, on separate straw mattresses, sleep soundly.
 They don't notice the flames.

EXT. VILLAGE/OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

The Villagers have returned with torches, setting everything ablaze.

The VILLAGE PRIEST prays aloud, crossing himself repeatedly.

INT. VILLAGE/HUT - NIGHT

Simon and Kiya sleep as flames engulf the roof of their hut.

SIMON
 Too damn hot. Italy.

Simon bolts awake as he realizes what is happening.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 What in blazes? Kiya, wake up.

Kiya sits up, regards the scene.

KIYA
 This is not normal, is it?

SIMON
 Are you Joan of Arc?

KIYA
 Not last I looked.

Simon kicks open the door, but beyond it is a wall of flame.

SIMON
 What are we going to do?

Just then, a grey tentacle smashes through the wall of the hut and grabs Kiya's waist, dragging her out.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 Kiya!

The grey tentacle reappears. It now grabs Simon's waist, and hoists him up. He thrashes, terrified.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Aah! Monster! Land squid! Run!

EXT. BURNING VILLAGE - NIGHT

It is, of course, the Elephant's trunk that lifts Simon free.

SIMON
I knew that. I knew that.

The Elephant dumps Simon on its back with Kiya and flees.

EXT. VILLAGE/OUTSKIRTS

The Villagers watch as their homes burn.

VILLAGE PRIEST
Lord, let this inferno send the Devil
back to hell, and bless us with -

Just then the Elephant, bearing Simon and Kiya, charges through the flames, trumpeting, scattering the Villagers.

EXT. WOODED GLADE - NIGHT

The Elephant eventually slows to a trot, then stops, letting Simon and Kiya slide to the ground.

SIMON
What the hell was that? Torches! And
burning!

KIYA
Will this happen at every village?

SIMON
Of course not. Sooner or later we'll
find someone who's heard of elephants.

EXT. ANOTHER VILLAGE - DAY

Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant run, full speed, away from a mob of ANGRY VILLAGERS with pitchforks and torches.

EXT. ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The Elephant munches contentedly on foliage, while Kiya cleans a scrape on Simon's forehead.

SIMON

When your elephant makes me rich,
I'm never coming back to Italy.

KIYA

When I am married, I, too, will
never return.

SIMON

How did I get into this?

KIYA

We got thrown overboard.

SIMON

And whose fault was that?

KIYA

Before that, you agreed to transport
me in exchange for a reward.

SIMON

And whose fault was that?

KIYA

Before that, you lost your ship.

SIMON

And whose fault was - ouch!

Simon recoils from Kiya's attempt to clean his wound.

KIYA

Must we travel in hiding all the
way to London?

SIMON

With an elephant? How the hell do
you travel in hiding?

KIYA

We could dress it as a stack of hay.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

Simon and Kiya, sweating and exhausted, glue wheat stalks to the Elephant's body with tree sap.

SIMON

This was a terrible idea.

KIYA

Your "I'll explain everything"
nearly got us killed.

SIMON

So we're walking to London with a
haystack? Which looks more like a
giant sphere of mange?

KIYA

Are you helping? It sounds instead
like the opposite of that.

Suddenly the Elephant shakes itself, dislodging the hay,
which it then begins to eat.

SIMON

That's it. No more.

KIYA

What is your idea, then?

SIMON

Behold my genius.

Simon sets off on foot.

KIYA

Where are you going?

SIMON

Away. I can get to London on my
own, thank you very much.

KIYA

This? Again? What of the fortune
this elephant will bring?

SIMON

Dead men spend no gold, princess.

KIYA

You cannot simply leave us.

SIMON

Oh, look at me, leaving.

KIYA

You have sworn to be my escort-

SIMON

I'm a merchant sailor. Sometimes I
cut and run. Works like this.

Simon runs off.

KIYA

Ooh! I hope they burn you!

EXT. OPEN FIELD - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP - SIMON'S FACE

SIMON

Help! Help!

BACK TO SCENE

Simon is tied to a stake atop a pyre of kindling. VILLAGERS
circle him holding torches, a ZEALOUS VILLAGER in the lead.

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

You brought the Devil to two villages.

SIMON

It was an elephant! Just an elephant!

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

The Evil One has many forms. But it
was you who conjured the Great Beast.
Are you a sorcerer?

SIMON

Oh, God, please! I'm a merchant. I
just want to go home.

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

Only the Devil would deny himself.

SIMON

What? That makes no sense!

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

Admit your sins!

SIMON

About those torches-

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

Burn him.

Simon blows vainly at the torches as if they were candles.

EXT. DIRT PATH NEARBY - NIGHT

Kiya gripes to the Elephant as they stroll the countryside.

KIYA

My fault he's with an elephant? My
fault he's thrown overboard? My fault
he lost his ship? Why always my fault?

The elephant snuffles.

KIYA (CONT'D)

Are all men like this? He blames me
for his own mistakes.

The Elephant pats her shoulder with its trunk.

KIYA (CONT'D)

I have tried to be civil. I have
let him speak, unbidden.

The Elephant sniffs, and lets out a concerned bellow.

KIYA (CONT'D)

What is it?

EXT. OPEN FIELD - NIGHT

The flames grow higher, as Simon shrieks nonsensically.

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

Burn, sorcerer! Burn!

VILLAGERS

Burn, sorcerer! Burn!

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

Free us from this evil!

VILLAGERS

Free us from this evil!

The Zealous Villager sees something terrifying approaching:

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

Jesus Christ!

VILLAGERS

Jesus Christ!

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

No, look!

The Zealous Villager points: the Elephant charges toward them.

The Villagers scatter, howling in terror.

The Elephant encircles Simon's torso with its trunk, snaps the stake to which Simon is tied, and carries Simon away.

EXT. UNDER A TREE - NIGHT

Stopping, the Elephant places Simon down before an annoyed Kiya. Still tied to the stake, Simon cannot balance and falls rigidly to the ground.

The Elephant stands him up again, but he once more topples.

SIMON

This isn't working!

Kiya cuts Simon free with her knife.

KIYA

Are you all right?

Simon, in shock, looks from Kiya to the Elephant.

SIMON

I, I, ayuuh-

Simon faints.

LATER

Kiya sits at a campfire, while Simon still lies unconscious.

The Elephant approaches, carrying in its trunk an orange tree, heavy with fruit. Kiya selects and peels an orange.

SIMON (CONT'D)

(stirring)

What happened?

KIYA

You fainted.

SIMON

What? I did no such thing. Must have been all the smoke I inhaled.

KIYA

Or, you fainted. Like a child.

Simon collects his wits. His gaze lingers for a long time on the Elephant. He turns to Kiya.

SIMON

Thank you.

KIYA

(indicating the Elephant)

Thank him.

SIMON

Will he understand?

KIYA

Of course.

SIMON

Thank you.

The Elephant tenderly pats Simon's head with its trunk, then sets about devouring the uprooted orange tree.

KIYA

I am trying to be sympathetic, but I think you are a cretin.

SIMON

Not very forgiving, are we?

KIYA

I am in a strange land with a strange creature.

SIMON

Yes.

KIYA

Not to mention an elephant.

SIMON

Hey.

KIYA

We had a bargain, and you will honor it, or next time I will order my elephant to trample your skull.

INT. ROME/POPE'S CHAMBER - DAY

POPE PIUS sits at an ornate desk, poring over scrolls and surrounded by ATTENDANTS.

In bursts CARDINAL GREGORY.

CARDINAL GREGORY

Your Holiness!

POPE PIUS
 Cardinal, you enter unannounced?
 (to an Attendant)
 Did I say I was not to be disturbed?

ATTENDANT
 You did, Holiness.

CARDINAL GREGORY
 You will pardon my intrusion,
 Holiness, when you hear my news.

Pause.

POPE PIUS
 Well, let's wait all day, shall we?

CARDINAL GREGORY
 Several towns in the south have
 been visited by the Devil!

POPE PIUS
 I see.

Pope Pius returns to his scrolls.

CARDINAL GREGORY
 The Devil, Your Holiness!

POPE PIUS
 Yes, the Devil. Again.

CARDINAL GREGORY
 This time, I believe they are right.

POPE PIUS
 Why this time, and not the time a
 milkmaid gave birth to a goat? Or
 the time a gypsy woman turned a
 man's testicles into a haddock?

CARDINAL GREGORY
 Several townsfolk rushed here to warn
 us. If Your Grace will admit them?

POPE PIUS
 Are they clean?

CARDINAL GREGORY
 They are peasants, Holiness.

POPE PIUS
 Alas. Well, show them in. Have them
 stand over there.

The Cardinal beckons in four TOWNSFOLK, among them the Zealous Villager. They prostrate themselves before the Pope.

POPE PIUS (CONT'D)

No, no groveling. It's a new rule.
Tell me your news.

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

Your Holiness, it was terrible! The Devil visited our poor village. He drove everyone out. Even when we set fire to him, he would not die.

POPE PIUS

Foolish. Foolish. The Devil dwells in infernal Hell. How could your flames do more than amuse him?

Murmurs of approval for the Pope's flawless logic.

POPE PIUS (CONT'D)

So. What did the devil look like?

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

Vincenzo, here, carved a likeness.

One of the Townsfolk holds up a statuette. The carving looks nothing like an elephant. It is laughably exaggerated, yet everyone takes it very seriously.

POPE PIUS

Goodness! Did he say what he wanted?

ZEALOUS VILLAGER

No, Most Holy, but he and his henchmen are moving north!

Gasps. Horror.

Pope Pius strokes his chin, smiling.

EXT. GROVE OF TREES - DAY

Kiya and the Elephant wait in a grove of trees.

Sounds of Simon screaming startle them.

Simon sprints toward the grove, carrying two wool blankets that flap behind him like flags.

SIMON

Oh God! Help! Kiya! Elephant! Help!

In pursuit, and gaining, run four HOUNDS, out for blood.

Just as the Hounds overtake Simon, the Elephant bursts from the grove, rears up, and bellows.

This impressive display bowls Simon over, while the Hounds skid desperately and scatter, yowling.

Simon crawls into the grove with the blankets, gasping.

KIYA

Where did you get these?

SIMON

From a clothesline.

KIYA

You stole them?

SIMON

We can't just sleep outside all the way to London without blankets. What else can I do?

KIYA

You should work in return for them.

SIMON

What?

KIYA

When you are rich, perhaps you can afford to be cavalier with your blankets.

SIMON

When you are married, perhaps your husband can get gnawed on by dogs to keep you warm.

Kiya stares at him, her hands on her hips.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Not going back there. Absolutely not.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Simon takes orders from a FARMER on a HORSE.

The four Hounds cower by the farmhouse, still terrified.

Simon glances at a copse where Kiya and the Elephant hide.

FARMER

(Italian accent)

Turn that earth, dig out those trees,
and drag them to the woodpile. When
you're done you keep the blankets, and
I give you all the food you can carry.

SIMON

All as I can carry, eh?

FARMER

I'll be back in a few hours. We'll
see how you're doing. Good luck.

The Farmer rides off.

Kiya approaches as Simon fights to place a yoke on two OXEN.

The Oxen, smelling the elephant, shuffle nervously.

KIYA

Simon?

SIMON

Not now.

KIYA

But Simon-

SIMON

Damn it, Kiya, this is hard-

Just then, an Ox turns, smashing the crouching Simon in the
head with the yoke. Simon collapses, unconscious.

LATER

The two Oxen watch in amazement.

Kiya has hooked the plow to the Elephant, which paces the
field, turning the earth with astonishing ease.

LATER

The Elephant butts its head against the designated trees and
pushes them over, then drags them to the chopping block.

LATER

Simon still lies unconscious. Kiya and the Elephant wait
beside him. Then, they hear hoof-beats: the Farmer returns.

KIYA

Hide! Hide! Hide!

Kiya desperately leads the Elephant into the stable.

The Farmer rides up to the unconscious Simon, and gapes, astonished that all the work is done.

Simon, bolting awake, mistakes the Farmer's amazement.

SIMON

It's those damned oxen-

And then Simon notices that every task has been completed.

SIMON (CONT'D)

-that are the, um, finest beasts
I've ever worked. With.

FARMER

What? How did-? What did-?

The Farmer regards Simon with suspicious admiration, and leads his horse to the stable. Simon walks beside him.

SIMON

I'm a hard worker?

INT. STABLE

Simon follows the Farmer, who is occupied with his Horse's bridle, into the stable.

Simon does a double take as he sees the Elephant crammed into one of the horse stalls, Kiya beside it gesturing that they mustn't let the Farmer see.

SIMON

Aah!

FARMER

What? What?

SIMON

Sharks!

FARMER

Sharks?

SIMON

I mean wolves!

Simon points outside, and as the Farmer peers out the door, Simon struggles to cover the Elephant with a saddle blanket.

FARMER
Nothing there.

Simon tries to lead the Farmer out by the arm.

SIMON
Must be a shrub. You're tired. Let
me tend your horse.

FARMER
No one tends Aurelio but me.

SIMON
(muttering)
Of course not.

The Farmer leads the uneasy Horse into the stall next to the
blanket-covered Elephant.

The Elephant's blanket slides to the ground.

Simon slaps the Horse's rump, and it takes another step into
the stall, knocking the Farmer to the ground.

Simon seizes the blanket and holds it up as the Farmer
scrambles to his feet, hiding most of the Elephant but for
its flicking tail.

FARMER
What are you doing?

SIMON
Readying the blanket?

Simon flings the blanket, covering Horse and Farmer.

FARMER
Hey!

While the Farmer extricates himself, Simon and Kiya drape an
additional blanket over the Elephant, more or less.

FARMER (CONT'D)
Since when do you put a blanket
over a saddle?

SIMON
Never, of course. Where is my head?

The Farmer tosses an armload of hay into the horse's trough
as Simon nonchalantly adjusts the Elephant's blanket.

FARMER
Hand me that brush, eh?

Simon, leaning for the brush, notices the Elephant's trunk reaching into the stall to grab bunches of the horse's hay.

He grabs the Elephant's trunk and pushes it back into hiding.

The trunk takes the horse brush out of Simon's hands. Simon wrestles with the trunk.

FARMER (CONT'D)

The brush?

In the dim light of the stable, it looks to the Farmer as if the Elephant's trunk, holding the brush, is Simon's arm. The farmer takes the brush.

FARMER (CONT'D)

Thank you. Help me with the saddle.

Together they lift off the saddle.

FARMER (CONT'D)

Put it in that stall, there.

The Farmer indicates the stall wherein lurks the Elephant.

SIMON

Perhaps over there, instead?

FARMER

No, no, in that stall.

Simon regards his destination: the Elephant's rump blocks all passage. Kiya hides underneath the Elephant's belly.

With a shrug, he heaves the saddle onto the Elephant's back.

Simon returns to find the Farmer brushing his horse.

The Elephant tosses the saddle into the horse's stall, where it strikes Simon.

FARMER (CONT'D)

Ecco! I said put the saddle away.

SIMON

Ow. Ow. Ow. Ow.

Simon steps out again and this time stuffs the saddle between the Elephant's legs, where it nearly buries Kiya.

When Simon returns, he finds the horse staring in horror as the Elephant's trunk once again steals hay from its trough.

The Farmer, bent on brushing, doesn't notice.

Simon leaps upon the trunk and pushes it out of view, and the Elephant lets out a guffaw of displeasure.

FARMER
What did you say?

Simon tries to cover by clearing his throat:

SIMON
I said "ahuungh!"

FARMER
Why?

SIMON
It - it's supposed to calm horses.

FARMER
It is not working.

The Elephant grunts again, and Simon feigns a coughing fit.

FARMER (CONT'D)
What is the matter?

Simon exaggerates his seizure to distract the Farmer from the Elephant's trunk, which again pilfers hay.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

The Farmer helps Simon outside to his well and draws a bucket of water from which Simon drinks.

SIMON
Thank you. Much better.

Over the Farmer's shoulder, Simon sees Kiya leading the Elephant out of the stable.

Simon stages another coughing fit, seizing the Farmer's shirt so he cannot turn around.

Kiya ushers the Elephant into the chicken coop, pushing against its haunches to urge it through the door.

This, of course, causes panic among the chickens.

The Farmer struggles to turn toward the disturbance, but Simon clings to him in mock-seizure.

Just as the Farmer breaks free, Kiya and the Elephant get inside and slam the door to the chicken coop.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Well, shall we finish the horse,
then? Wait! Where are you going?

FARMER

There must be a fox in with the chickens!

SIMON

How? The door's closed.

FARMER

Foxes dig.

SIMON

What if it's a wolf? Or a bear?

FARMER

Then we run.

The Farmer hastens over and flings open the coop door.

INT. CHICKEN COOP

There, the Elephant, stuffed into the chicken coop surrounded
by squawking chickens, stares the Farmer in the face.

The Farmer, dumbstruck, looks from the Elephant to Simon.

SIMON

Sir, you have the strangest chickens—

And the Farmer faints dead away.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Simon and Kiya load sacks with food supplies, water, and
blankets, and tie them to the harness the Elephant wears.

The Farmer lies unconscious, and Simon has done his best to
make him comfortable with a blanket.

KIYA

Will he be all right?

SIMON

He'll live.

EXT. WOODED GLADE - DAY

The three Assassins track the Elephant's footprints and stare
off into the distance.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Simon and Kiya walk, nibbling bread and cheese, while the Elephant follows.

They clear a small rise and stop short.

There in the valley waits the Italian Army. Hundreds of SOLDIERS, HORSEMEN, and ARCHERS form a huge, menacing arc.

SIMON

This is a first for me.

KIYA

That is not a good thing, is it?

A contingent of cavalry rides forward. Leading this contingent rides Cardinal Gregory, holding a golden cross.

CARDINAL GREGORY

Seek not to escape, O Satan.

SIMON

Simon. How do you do?

CARDINAL GREGORY

You and your Great Beast are hereby commanded to surrender to Rome.

Simon looks at Kiya. What else can they do? Simon whispers:

SIMON

I'm betting on the army.

EXT. HORSE-DRAWN CAGE - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Simon and Kiya sit in a wooden, horse-drawn cage. They have pillows and food, and thus are not uncomfortable.

The Elephant follows, in chains, surrounded by the Army.

SIMON

This isn't so bad an arrangement.

KIYA

We are prisoners, Simon. What happens when we get to Rome?

SIMON

Who knows?

KIYA

If this Pope says so, can we not
all be burned at the stake?

SIMON

You know what I love about you?
Your sunny world-view.

KIYA

What is a Pope? Is it a king?

SIMON

Much worse. He is head of the Church.

KIYA

Perhaps he will be understanding.

SIMON

Yes, the Catholic Church is known
for that.

EXT. VATICAN/COURTYARD - DAY

The procession enters the courtyard, where, at the far end,
Pope Pius sits in an ornate throne surrounded by ATTENDANTS.

A GUARD releases Simon and Kiya, followed by the Elephant.

CARDINAL GREGORY

Your Holiness, a great day in the eyes
of God. The Devil stands before you,
bound and awaiting your judgment.

Pope Pius stands from his throne. The multitude awaits. Then:

POPE PIUS

It is an elephant.

Simon breathes a sigh of relief.

CARDINAL GREGORY

Your Holiness, reflect a moment.
The Evil One is clouding your mind-

Pope Pius smites Cardinal Gregory with his crosier.

POPE PIUS

Bumbling fool. Why do we have the
largest library since Alexandria's
if you do not read?

SIMON

You tell him, Your Holiness.

POPE PIUS

So I shall. Hannibal marched on this
very city with elephants. It is no
more than a dumb animal, from Africa.

(to Simon)

What brings it here is another matter.

Simon bows.

SIMON

Your Holiness is gracious and wise.

POPE PIUS

I should be. I'm the Pope. Why are you
here with this beast and this heathen?

KIYA

To me, you are the heathen.

SIMON

(reprimanding her)

Kiya!

(to Pope)

I was lost at sea, Your Holiness,
on my way to London with this
elephant and this ... heathen.

POPE PIUS

And now you seek to travel all the
way to England? On foot?

SIMON

Yes, Holiness.

Pope Pius ponders for a moment. Then:

POPE PIUS

Bathe and rest. You will join me for
supper. You and your Great Beast.

INT. VATICAN/SIMON'S GUEST ROOM - DAY

Simon bathes gleefully in his lavish quarters.

INT. KIYA'S GUEST ROOM - DAY

Likewise.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

The Elephant stands, knee-deep, in a magnificent fountain in the courtyard, spraying itself.

Two drenched STABLE-BOYS stand nervously by with towels.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A STEWARD leads Simon and Kiya down a hall.

SIMON

Is this what being rich is like?

KIYA

Yes, it feels like home with all these Eunuchs around.

SIMON

Oh, they're not ... actually, that's close enough.

KIYA

This place is badly decorated.

SIMON

Would you hush? The Pope lives here.

KIYA

I do not like him. His hat is foolish.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Simon, Kiya and Pope Pius sit at an ornately carved table in the lavish dining hall. Near one side of the table rests an enormous cushion.

The Pope gestures, and the Elephant walks to the cushion.

POPE PIUS

It is very intelligent, isn't it?

As the Elephant sits, the cushion explodes, inundating the room with a hurricane of goose down.

SERVANTS bustle about, uncertain what to do.

POPE PIUS (CONT'D)

No matter. Leave it.

Feathers cascade everywhere - in food, wine, hair, clothes - and the Elephant delights in blowing them about with its trunk.

Servants set plates of food on the table. They then return with a trough filled with hay, grains, meats, and vegetables, which they place before the Elephant.

POPE PIUS (CONT'D)

We didn't know what an elephant eats, so we brought everything.

SIMON

Good thinking. Holiness.

POPE PIUS

Call me Louis. I have a distinctly non-pontifical proposal for you.

SIMON

Would you like us to plow some fields, O Louis? Uproot trees? Demolish buildings?

POPE PIUS

Interesting. It might be nice to besiege the castle of that Polish Czar, but no. Tell me, it can be trained?

SIMON

I don't think-

KIYA

Yes. Absolutely.

SIMON

Certainly. Very well.

POPE PIUS

Excellent. You see, the Church faces troubles in these modern times. We are not the Holy Empire of old. People are losing faith.

SIMON

They seem to like burning things in God's name. Things like me.

POPE PIUS

Exactly. Rather than summon a priest, they take matters into their own ignorant hands. A bad sign.

SIMON

I can't help but agree.

POPE PIUS

What if we spread the rumor that the Devil - your elephant - is in Europe?

SIMON

Yes?

POPE PIUS

What if it is trained to submit to a certain symbol, say a golden crucifix?

SIMON

Yes?

POPE PIUS

The elephant storms into town, wreaks havoc, until the timely arrival of a wandering priest who brandishes his crucifix and drives the elephant off. Praise and glory to the Holy Church!

SIMON

And who would this wandering priest—?

EXT. VATICAN/COURTYARD - DAY

Simon, scowling, wears a monk's habit and carries an ornate gold crucifix.

Kiya and the Elephant stand beside him, while Pope Pius watches from a canopied divan.

SIMON

You must be joking. Kiya, tell him how impossible it is.

POPE PIUS

Humor me.

Simon waves the crucifix at the Elephant, which takes it in its trunk and tries sucking on it.

SIMON

See?

Simon extracts the crucifix and wipes it on his habit.

Kiya whispers a few words in the Elephant's ear.

KIYA

Try it now.

Simon brandishes the cross, and:

The Elephant bellows, then charges across the courtyard and smashes through the gate on the far side.

SIMON

Christ!
 (Recalls where he is)
 Sorry.

Pope Pius laughs hysterically.

POPE PIUS

Marvelous! Do it again!

Tumult from without as the Elephant terrorizes the Vatican.

EXT. VATICAN/GATES - DAY

Simon, Kiya, the Elephant, Pope Pius, and various ATTENDANTS bustle with activity. The Vatican Gates hang from their hinges, broken by the Elephant's earlier rampage.

Kiya leads the Elephant into a tremendous covered wagon drawn by two HORSES.

SIMON

You know how much an elephant weighs?

POPE PIUS

Not at all. Do you?

SIMON

Well, I ... no, but what if it's too much for these horses?

POPE PIUS

We can't very well have you seen with the "Devil," now can we?

As the Elephant enters the wagon, it creaks under the load.

Simon and Kiya climb into the seat of the wagon.

POPE PIUS (CONT'D)

God be with you, worthy Friar.

SIMON

Amen, Your Louis-ness. I never imagined a Pope could be so shrewd.

POPE PIUS

Believe me, it takes very modern thinking to stall religious progress.

Simon shakes the reins, and the Horses strain with the load. Slowly, ever so slowly, the cart moves out the Vatican gates.

EXT. ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The Horses lie on the ground, exhausted, still in harnesses.

Kiya sits atop the cart, while Simon paces angrily.

SIMON

Less than a league, the horses are
half-dead. We'll never reach London.

KIYA

Why don't we let the Elephant walk?

SIMON

Because we can't be seen with it.
Didn't you listen to Louis?

KIYA

Men.

LATER

The Elephant devours foliage in a clump of trees. Simon watches as Kiya, wielding a hatchet, hacks apart the entire wagon floor.

Kiya calls to the Elephant, which steps into the wagon and through the hole in the wagon floor, so that it is standing on the ground, yet completely covered by the wagon. Only its four legs are slightly visible through the wagon wheels.

SIMON

All right, so, that's pretty good.

Kiya speaks to the Elephant through the cloth of the wagon, and it strolls forward. The Horses get pushed along until they scramble to their feet, where they stagger to keep up.

KIYA

Pretty good?

SIMON

You're a genius.

KIYA

A genius would have got on the
wagon first.

SIMON

Details.

They scamper after the wagon.

INT. COUNTRY VILLAGE/TOWN INN - DAY

Simon, in his monk's habit, sits at a wooden table, eating a simple meal while speaking with the INNKEEPER.

INNKEEPER

Have you far to travel?

SIMON

Yes. Oh, yes. Long pilgrimage. Your hospitality is most kind, er, my son.

Just then, a FRANTIC VILLAGER bursts into the Inn.

FRANTIC VILLAGER

The Devil! The Devil!

SIMON

What a surprise.

General mayhem ensues to the sound of the Elephant bellowing, and Simon rolls his eyes.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Feareth ye not the Devil, my children!
If thou servest God, then Satan shall
hath - hast - have - be powerless!

EXT. COUNTRY VILLAGE/TOWN SQUARE

There indeed, charging about, is the Elephant, Kiya riding astride its back.

VILLAGERS scramble in panic, as Simon pushes forward.

SIMON

Back, Satan! Return to the wasteland
where thou dwellest! This I command
in the name of the Almighty God!

And with that, Simon brandishes the golden crucifix.

The Elephant roars and flees, toppling everything in its path.

Silence, as scores of formerly panicked VILLAGERS stare after the Elephant, then turn to Simon with astonished adulation.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Well. Thanks ever so. I'll just be
off then.

EXT. IMPOVERISHED VILLAGE - DAY

A scene much like the previous: the Elephant tramples the town, wreaking havoc with MORE VILLAGERS, until Simon wearily climbs a scaffold and brandishes the golden cross.

SIMON
Begone, O Satan. Shoo.

As the Elephant flees, More Villagers applaud Simon. Simon, for whom this is by now routine, pushes through them.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Amen. Thank you. Move, please.

A MOTHER holds up an INFANT and a LEPER seizes Simon's robe.

MOTHER
Bless my child, holy father!

SIMON
Oh, no, ew, no.

LEPER
Let me kiss thy foot and my leprosy
will be cured!

LATER

Villagers repair the damage the Elephant has caused, pausing to watch as the three Assassins ride by on horseback.

EXT. DIRT ROAD (SOUTHERN FRANCE) - DAY

Simon and Kiya sit atop the wagon, Simon furtively scrubbing his hands with a rag. The horses stumble along as the Elephant pushes them from within the cart.

KIYA
Who knew Europe had so many lepers?

A deep rumble, more felt than heard, resounds.

SIMON
What was that?

KIYA
The "danger" call.

SIMON
Whose danger call?

KIYA
The Elephant's.

An arrow hisses by Simon, imbedding itself in the wagon seat.

 SIMON
Egad, I hate arrows!

A dozen BANDITS leap from cover, armed with crossbows. The HEAD BANDIT steps forward.

 HEAD BANDIT
Stand and deliver!

 SIMON
Pirates!

 HEAD BANDIT
Bandits.

 SIMON
Pirates, bandits, whatever. We are but
poor travelers on a holy pilgrimage-

 HEAD BANDIT
You and everyone else on the road.
Throw down your packs.

Simon reluctantly tosses their bags to the ground.

 KIYA
What are they doing?

 SIMON
Robbing us.

 KIYA
Why?

Simon defers the question to the Head Bandit, who flummoxes, never having been asked such an obvious question.

 HEAD BANDIT
It's what we do.

The Head Bandit discovers the golden crucifix in Simon's pack.

 HEAD BANDIT (CONT'D)
Aha! Blessed are the poor, especially
if they have crossbows. Step down.

Simon and Kiya descend from the wagon.

SIMON

What are you going to do with us?

HEAD BANDIT

We can't very well have you
notifying the sheriff, now can we?

KIYA

You mean to murder us?

HEAD BANDIT

Murder. Such an ugly word. I prefer
to say "induce deep inactivity."

SIMON

(hatching a plan)

Just don't look in the wagon.

HEAD BANDIT

Ah! Carrying holy relics? Alms for
the poor? What have we?

The Head Bandit flings open the canvas cover to the wagon.

The Elephant looks back at him curiously and harrumphs.

HEAD BANDIT (CONT'D)

By the rood!

Reflexively, the Head Bandit throws up his hands, one of
which still holds the golden crucifix.

The Elephant sees the crucifix, trumpets loudly, and bolts.

Simon grabs Kiya and leaps into the wagon as it lurches away.

The Bandits scatter in horror, letting fly a volley of
crossbow bolts, one of which pierces Simon's arm.

EXT. BACK OF WAGON - TRAVELING

SIMON

Aargh! Bloody arrows!

Kiya, caught off guard, falls back, out of the wagon.

Simon lunges for her, catching her with his injured arm while
his other clings to the wagon frame.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I can't hold you! Climb over me!

KIYA
I cannot!

From her vantage hanging from the side of the wagon, Kiya sees:

 KIYA (CONT'D)
Cliff! Cliff!

 SIMON
Then tell the damn Elephant to stop!

 KIYA
 (yelling in Arabic)
Stop!

EXT. APPROACHING THE CLIFF - TRAVELING

The Elephant, of course, cannot see where it is going, but the Horses, which can, scramble backward futilely.

EXT. BACK OF WAGON - TRAVELING

 SIMON
Louder, please!

 KIYA
 (In Arabic)
"Stop! Stop! Stop!"

EXT. EDGE OF CLIFF

The Elephant stops just short of the cliff, with the whinnying Horses suspended from the edge by their harnesses.

Kiya and Simon roll off the wagon.

 SIMON
Back up! Back up! Back up!

Kiya speaks quietly to the Elephant, and it takes several steps backwards, returning the Horses to solid land.

Simon crawls to a tree and leans against it, nursing his arm. The crossbow bolt has pierced it completely.

 KIYA
How are you?

 SIMON
Very, very unhappy.

Kiya hands Simon a stick.

 KIYA
You should chew on this.

 SIMON
Why? Some healing herb?

 KIYA
No, merely to distract you while-

Kiya grabs the crossbow bolt and yanks it out of his arm.
Simon screams and passes out.

 KIYA (CONT'D)
I suppose we camp here, then.

EXT. A GROVE - NIGHT

The Elephant strolls, foraging for tasty foliage. It steps from the trees into a clearing and finds:

EXT. GYPSY CAMP

A band of GYPSIES dances about a campfire.

As they take notice of the Elephant, they stop and stare.

The GYPSY KING slowly approaches with a bunch of roast beets. He presents the beets one by one, and the Elephant eats each of them, following the Gypsy King toward the camp.

EXT. SIMON AND KIYA'S CAMP - NIGHT

Simon, his arm bandaged, sleeps beside the campfire.

Kiya watches over him until sleep overtakes her, as well.

EXT. SIMON AND KIYA'S CAMP - DAY

Simon, alone, wakes. He tests his bandaged arm, until Kiya races up to him, stricken.

 SIMON
What? What?

 KIYA
I've lost the elephant!

Momentary silence.

SIMON
Hah hah. Funny.

KIYA
I mean it.

SIMON
It's the size of a house! A canary I can see losing. A cat. Even a horse, if you're exceptionally nearsighted. But an elephant?

KIYA
You weren't much help, unconscious.

SIMON
I was shot! In the arm! Right here!

EXT. REMAINS OF THE GYPSY CAMP - DAY

Simon and Kiya ride the two Horses, having packed their belongings onto the animals and left the cart behind.

SIMON
A flute: easy to lose. Or a handkerchief. Or a very small piece of string. But an elephant? Nowhere on the list!

A tremendous path cuts through the forest where the Elephant and the Gypsies have clearly gone.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(deadpan)
My guess is they went through here.

EXT. GYPSY VILLAGE - NIGHT

A celebration in the center of town. The Gypsies decorate the Elephant with paint, plumes, jewelry, etc. It resembles a bejeweled peacock. Only bigger.

Simon and Kiya watch from the cover of nearby trees.

KIYA
What are they doing?

SIMON
Putting all their valuables someplace impossible to lose!

KIYA
What now?

SIMON

I suppose we wait for them to sleep,
get the elephant, and sneak out.

KIYA

Sneak. With an elephant.

SIMON

It sounds weird to me, too.

LATER

Simon and Kiya creep through the sleeping Gypsy Village.

They reach the Elephant, which rests in its laurels of
decoration. It snuffles a greeting when they approach.

SIMON

(whispering)

Shh! Come on, let's go.

Simon and Kiya lead the Elephant through the village.
Suddenly, a squawk pierces the night, like some unlucky
chicken getting squashed.

Which, alas, it was. Simon regards the flattened chicken.

SIMON (CONT'D)

It's like a poultry pancake.

KIYA

So much for sneaking.

The alarum sounds, the Gypsies leap to action.

Simon and Kiya climb the Elephant's harness and they flee.

Amid the frenzy, several gypsies throw a net. Quite a big net.
So big a net that it ensnares Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant.

INT. GYPSY CAMP/BRICK CELL - DAY

Simon pouts on the floor of the cell while Kiya looks out the
wee, barred window at:

EXT. COPSE OF TREES - DAY

Not far away, the Elephant stands tied securely to four trees,
trumpeting its discontentment.

INT. GYPSY CAMP/BRICK CELL - DAY

SIMON

We won't be sneaking anywhere with an elephant, I can tell you that.

KIYA

I did tell you that.

The GYPSY KING and a GUARD enter the cell.

GYPSY GUARD

Prisoners stand!

KIYA

I am standing.

SIMON

(standing)

You've stolen our elephant.

GYPSY KING

The Great Beast entered our camp, as was foretold, to bring us prosperity and joy. It is you who stole from us.

KIYA

Why do you have him tied up?

GYPSY KING

You have misled his trusting nature.

SIMON

Trusting? You should try playing him at cards.

GYPSY KING

Tomorrow at dawn you will be hanged, and your bodies left for the crows.

SIMON

Now that's just—

KIYA

May we have some blankets for warmth? And a bucket? Unless you would have us relieve ourselves on the floor of your tidy cell.

The Gypsy King nods, and departs with the Guard.

SIMON

Looks like I won't be rich.

KIYA
Perhaps, but I intend to be married.

SIMON
Better hurry.

The Guard tosses blankets and a bucket into the cell.
Kiya immediately tears the blankets into long strips.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Kiya, I know you're upset, but it
might get cold.

KIYA
Come here and help. You can braid?

SIMON
Please. I'm a sailor.

INT. GYPSY CAMP/BRICK CELL - NIGHT

Kiya breaks the bucket apart and ties a slat to one end of
their newly braided rope.

SIMON
We're going to hang ourselves to
deny them the pleasure?

Kiya slips the weighted end of the rope out the window and
hurls it to the Elephant.

Kiya ties her end of the rope to the bars of the window.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I would have thought of that.

Kiya hisses something to the Elephant.

EXT. COPSE OF TREES - NIGHT

The Elephant picks up the rope and pulls.

INT. GYPSY CAMP/BRICK CELL - NIGHT

The bars of the cell pop out of the wall.

SIMON
I could kiss you.

EXT. THE FOREST NEARBY

The Assassins hide in the shadows as the Elephant approaches.

Suddenly, in the darkness, the Elephant bursts through the brush, practically upon them.

The Gold Assassin throws his dart, which pierces the Elephant's haunch.

The Elephant rears, throwing Simon and Kiya.

SIMON
My noggin! What was that?

KIYA
By all the goddesses, no!

Simon rises and sees the three Assassins surrounding them.

In unison, the Assassins draw their scimitars.

SIMON
No. No. No. That's not right.

As the Assassins advance, Simon scoops up a stout stick.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Can't we talk this through?

KIYA
Simon. They will not answer.

SIMON
Never underestimate diplomacy—

KIYA
They cannot speak!

SIMON
Why not?

KIYA
They have cut out their tongues.

SIMON
They what? Ew! Why?

KIYA
So they cannot betray their mission if captured.

SIMON
The more I learn about these guys—

The Silver Assassin lunges, and Simon deftly fends him off with the stick. He blocks the Gold Assassin's attack, pivots, and shoves the Gold Assassin into the Red Assassin.

Suddenly, a dozen Gypsies burst through the trees on horseback, scattering the Assassins.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Oh, joy, the cavalry.

The Gold Assassin hurls a dagger, knocking a Guard to the ground.

The Gypsy King reins his horse and surveys the scene.

GYPSY KING

(to Simon)

So, you have found allies. And
strangely dressed ones. On, men!

The Gypsy King and his Guards attack the three Assassins.

Simon snatches up the fallen Gypsy Guard's sword, but Kiya grabs his hand and drags him away into the trees.

KIYA

No, Simon, we must flee!

Gypsies and Assassins alike dive for cover as the Elephant charges after Kiya.

EXT. MORE FOREST - TRAVELING

Simon and Kiya scramble onto the Elephant, and it races off, leaving the sounds of fighting behind.

Peering ahead, Simon can just perceive the edge of a cliff.

SIMON

Cliff! Cliff! Cliff Why is there
always a cliff?

KIYA

There is a river beneath.

SIMON

Bad idea! Bad idea!

They barrel off the cliff and tumble through the darkness.

The Elephant trumpets and Simon screams an eerie harmony.

EXT. IN THE RIVER

With a mighty splash, they land in the river and surface.

KIYA
Aah! Cold!

SIMON
I told you it was a bad idea. This
is snowmelt from the Alps!

The river, deep and swift, carries them along while Simon and Kiya cling to the Elephant's harness.

SIMON (CONT'D)
We have to get out of this freezing
water – hang on – this current is
awfully fast. Which often means...

Indeed, they approach a waterfall.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Oh, God, backpaddle, backpaddle!

Kiya calls to the Elephant, which struggles toward the bank.

EXT. TOP OF WATERFALL

They won't reach the bank in time. Simon covers his eyes in preparation for the worst.

The Elephant jolts to a stop, wedged against rocks atop the waterfall.

This unexpected stop propels Simon over the Elephant's head, and off the edge of the waterfall.

EXT. EDGE OF WATERFALL

As Simon tumbles, the Elephant's trunk catches his wrist.

Simon clings to the trunk, sputtering as water cascades about him.

KIYA
Simon! Hang on!

SIMON
You sure? I thought I might let go.

The Elephant picks its way along the lip of the waterfall.

SIMON (CONT'D)
God, if I get out of this, I swear
I'll stop eating kittens!

KIYA
What?

SIMON
I said, "Hurry! Please."

EXT. THE RIVERBANK

The Elephant reaches shore, and drops Simon on solid ground.

SIMON
(weakly)
Yay. Let's do it again.

KIYA
How many times have we nearly died?

SIMON
About a million.

KIYA
We need shelter. It is cold.

SIMON
From my unique and exhilarating
vantage, I saw a cave down there.

They scramble down the slope toward the base of the waterfall.

INT. CAVE BEHIND THE WATERFALL

Kiya's shivering worsens.

SIMON
Take off your clothes.

KIYA
What?

SIMON
Hurry! Before you freeze.

KIYA
Suddenly I am not so cold.

SIMON

Damn it, you'll die if you stay wet. Now strip. Make the Elephant lie down, and curl up against it.

Kiya speaks to the Elephant, and it lowers to the ground.

Simon struggles out of his clothing. He averts his gaze as Kiya, swallowing her modesty, does the same and curls up against the Elephant's belly.

Simon nervously lies beside her.

KIYA

What are you-?!

SIMON

Jesus bloody Christ, Kiya, we've been abandoned at sea, burned by mobs, attacked by, well, everyone - I'll be damned if I'm going to let us freeze to death in a cave.

KIYA

I see.

SIMON

I don't like this any more than you do, believe me.

And instantly Simon regrets saying that.

LATER

The Elephant snores.

Neither Simon nor Kiya sleeps, though it's less about the snoring beast and more about their nervousness at their naked closeness.

LATER

Kiya, having finally slept, awakens curled against the snoring Elephant. Simon is nowhere to be seen. Nor is her clothing.

KIYA

(yelling)

Where is my shift? I swear to you, if this is a prank!

Simon, dressed, enters the cave, covering his eyes. He carries Kiya's clothes.

SIMON

I was trying to warm them in the sun.

Kiya hastily dresses in her damp clothing.

Simon pulls a few wild radishes from his pockets, and hands most of them to Kiya. She chews at them hungrily.

KIYA

Where are we, do you think?

SIMON

France, I expect. I hate France.

Simon sits and gnaws dejectedly on a radish. Then, calmly:

SIMON (CONT'D)

So, um, what was all that about?

KIYA

(blushing)

Last night? We were naked.

Simon, however, is thinking of something else.

SIMON

Three Moorish, scimitar-wielding murderers just pop up. In France.

KIYA

I am sorry.

SIMON

Sorry? Sorry?! What aren't you telling me? Are they after you?

Kiya nods.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Oh. Well, that's not the sort of thing one would mention, *is it?*

KIYA

I did not think they would follow here.

SIMON

Who are they?

KIYA

They are from a caste of assassins. Highly trained. Very dangerous.

SIMON

So to summarize: I'm meant to get you to London, overland, with an elephant, normal people trying to burn us, Gypsies wanting to hang us, and now mute, cutthroat demon men after us too?

KIYA

After me.

SIMON

Why? Why are they after you?

KIYA

My marriage will create an alliance useful to the Crusades. There are many in my country who object.

SIMON

"Object" is rather an understatement, considering all the attempted murder.

KIYA

I never meant to endanger you.

SIMON

Well, funny, because thanks to you I've been thrown to sea, burned, shot, chewed by dogs, robbed, imprisoned-

KIYA

I am trying to apologize. I, a princess-

SIMON

-tossed off a cliff, drowned, frozen, starved-

Kiya picks up a clod of dirt and throws it at Simon's head.

SIMON (CONT'D)

-ow! Had mud thrown at me, and I just had this shirt washed-

KIYA

Shut up! Just shut up! Shut up. You do nothing but whine, whine, whine! You are the most depressing man I have ever, in my entire life, met.

SIMON

But-

KIYA

Shut up! You are sometimes amusing, and I might like you, if for one instant you would stop hating the world.

Simon blinks at her, and bites his tongue.

KIYA (CONT'D)

You hate France. You hate Italy. You would rather do anything than spend a night naked with me in a cave!

SIMON

All I want, Princess, is to get the damn elephant to London so I can be rich, you can be married, and I never have to see you again!

A tense silence, as Simon realizes he's gone too far, then Kiya turns and storms out the cave.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Great. Just great.

(to Elephant)

What are you looking at?

The Elephant, now awake, issues a weak "harrumph."

SIMON (CONT'D)

I don't know how you stand her.

The Elephant merely lies there. Simon touches its trunk.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You all right?

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE THE WATERFALL - DAY

Simon hastens after Kiya and grabs her arm.

KIYA

Do not touch me, you arrogant, vacuous peasant!

SIMON

This is not the time for your haughty, self-righteous-

KIYA

You are a callow wretch!

SIMON

I? I am? I come here to tell you the elephant is sick, and now you, with your "arrogant, vacuous, callow" ... where did you learn your English?

KIYA

What of the elephant?

INT. CAVE BEHIND THE WATERFALL - DAY

Kiya tends to the ailing Elephant.

KIYA

Something's wrong.

SIMON

That narrows it down.

KIYA

This is serious. He's very hot.

SIMON

He's always hot.

KIYA

Not like this. He has a fever. What did he eat?

SIMON

Everything! He eats everything in his path. He's like a perpetual reaping day.

INT. CAVE BEHIND THE WATERFALL - NIGHT

The Elephant lies on its side, breathing heavily.

SIMON

We could feed it soup? Keep it warm?

Kiya nods.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Now where did I put all that soup?

KIYA

Warm. Build a fire.

LATER

Simon builds a fire while Kiya strokes the Elephant's face.

KIYA (CONT'D)

Water.

SIMON

Sure. Where did you put the bucket?

Kiya glares, and Simon stomps off into the darkness.

LATER

Simon scurries back into the firelight, wearing no pants. Fortunately, his tunic is long enough to prevent indecency.

His trousers are knotted at the ankles and filled with water.

The improvised bucket leaks badly, but there is enough water left therein for the Elephant to weakly drink from it.

KIYA

More.

LATER

Simon sits, filthy and bedraggled, before the fire beside Kiya. His trousers dry on a makeshift rack of branches.

SIMON

How is he?

Kiya shrugs.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Look, Kiya-

KIYA

You had really best be silent.

SIMON

Thanks, I'd just as soon not stop until I've got both feet in my mouth.

KIYA

That should not be difficult.

SIMON

What I said, earlier, about never wanting to see you again ... I'm an idiot. There, I said it.

KIYA

How noble. You are suddenly my god.

SIMON

I deserved that.

Kiya kicks Simon's trousers into the fire.

KIYA
No, you deserved that.

Simon rescues and extinguishes his trousers.

SIMON
That's my only - yeah, you're right.

As he sits, Kiya slips a sharp rock under his rear. He yelps.

KIYA
And that.

SIMON
True.

Kiya whirls on Simon and punches him in the chest. A lot.

KIYA
And that, and that, and that!

Simon withstands the blows until Kiya calms herself.

SIMON
I know I'm a cretin. Hardly news. My mother said so often. I'm just confused.

Kiya says nothing.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Look, nothing to eat, the Elephant's sick, God knows what will happen next, and now assassins, and I'm just scared.

Kiya says nothing.

SIMON (CONT'D)
When a storm hits at sea, there are things you do. Drop the sails and ... but here, there's so much I just don't ... and I'm not used to women, let alone a really ... a princess.

Kiya says nothing.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Me, trying to apologize. Look at me go. "Hey, Simon, ever apologized to anyone in your life?" "Why no, I haven't." "Why not?" "Because I'm a worthless clot of dung, of course."

Kiya says nothing.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Kiya punches him once in the shoulder, then leans her head against that spot.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Yeah, best to soften it up before, you know, resting on it.

KIYA

Just be silent.

INT. CAVE BEHIND THE WATERFALL - DAWN

Kiya sleeps by the dwindling fire while Simon quietly struggles into his trousers.

SIMON

Cold cold cold cold.

Simon sits by the Elephant's head and murmurs to it.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You hear me? Those big ears, and all?
Look, I know you don't speak English...
(pause)
I'm talking to an elephant.

Simon pets the Elephant's face.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I know you'll make me rich. And that would be great. But if it doesn't work out ... look, Kiya needs you. She's in serious trouble. And she really wants to get married, which can't happen if you're ill. And I won't, absolutely won't, bloody carry you to London.

Simon sighs, and leans against the Elephant's hip.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Ouch!

Simon sits up, and feels along the Elephant's haunches. He discovers the Assassin's imbedded dart, and pulls it free.

The Elephant grunts, and the wound bleeds a little.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 What? Hey, Kiya! Thanks to my
 miraculous animal husbandry and
 great intuitive, um-

Kiya wakes and shoots him a perplexed look.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 I found this in him. Is it bad?

Kiya inspects the dart. She starts to cry.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 Oh. Bad.

KIYA
 A tranquilizer. It's been drugging
 him all this while. That's all.

Kiya laughs, then sobs and hurries outside.

SIMON
 Hey! Come back! What-?
 (to the Elephant)
 I don't get it. She's crying. You: all
 right. Everything: fine. She: crying.

The Elephant puts its trunk around Simon's shoulders.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant - now recovered - walk through
 fields of lavender.

SIMON
 So tell me about these assassin
 gents. Will they keep following us?

KIYA
 We can hope they and the gypsies
 killed each other.

SIMON
 We can hope.

KIYA
 Where did you learn to fight so well?

SIMON
 Huh?

KIYA
You fought them. Trained assassins.
With a stick.

SIMON
Oh, that. Forget it. Long story.

KIYA
I think we have time.

SIMON
I said forget it.

EXT. A GLADE IN FRANCE - DAY

As they walk, Kiya braids her long hair in one long plait.
But she has nothing with which to tie the end.

Simon tears a strip from his tunic, and helps tie her hair.

SIMON
Here, let me.

A moment of awkward silence, as Simons fees her hair beneath
his fingers.

KIYA
What are you doing?

SIMON
Um. Sailor knots, you know. Useful.

KIYA
Where are we now?

SIMON
The Loire Valley.

KIYA
Is that near London?

SIMON
Alas, no. Pat in the middle of France.

KIYA
How do you know?

SIMON
My mother lives here. I know this country.

KIYA
Your mother? Why did you not say so?

SIMON

I'd just as soon be on our way. You know, pass on by.

KIYA

But your mother!

SIMON

Never mind. Forget I mentioned-

KIYA

I will not forget, not for one instant. If your mother has a proper bath, a decent meal, and a change of clothes, I insist we visit her.

Simon resists, but Kiya makes a noise that brooks no argument.

EXT. LOIRE COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant hike, ankle deep in a stream that runs through the lush valley.

KIYA

Why are we doing this again?

SIMON

We'll be harder to track. If those assassins survived the gypsies.

KIYA

My feet are cold.

SIMON

Which would you rather: cold feet or a scimitar in the skull?

KIYA

I shall ponder. Are we near?

SIMON

Yes.

KIYA

It is so beautiful here. How can you hate France?

SIMON

Too much history, all right?

KIYA

With your mother?

SIMON
Oh, let's not-

KIYA
You have been speaking unbidden all these weeks. Will you now be silent when I bid you speak?

SIMON
My father had just died. He was English. I brought Maman back here so she could be with her family. She wanted me to stay.

KIYA
But you did not?

SIMON
I wanted to see the world. I promised her that when I came back, I'd have a fortune, a wife, all those things mothers want for their boy.

KIYA
Ah. And you have no fortune-

SIMON
My fortune went down with my ship off Alexandria.

KIYA
And no wife.

SIMON
Hm. Who would marry a thug like me?

Kiya opens her mouth to speak, but-

COUSIN LUC (O.S.)
Mon Dieu!

They look across the field to see COUSIN LUC, a hardy peasant, pushing a cart laden with vegetables. COUSIN LUC gasps at the sight of the Elephant, then turns tail and flees.

SIMON
Uh, oh. You wait here.

Kiya watches Simon charge after Cousin Luc, calling out:

SIMON (CONT'D)
Wait, Luc! Arrête! C'est moi, Simon!

They are out of earshot by the time Simon catches up. Kiya watches the two men talk, embrace, and gesture. The Elephant ambles up and eats vegetables from the cart.

Cousin Luc nods, and jogs away across the meadow. Simon returns.

KIYA

You frightened him off after all?

SIMON

Hah. He'll warn everyone we're coming.
Walking along with an elephant. As you do.

EXT. LOIRE COUNTRYSIDE/VILLAGE OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant turn a bend in the path.

There, hurrying toward them, comes a crowd of TOWNSFOLK. They all stop short when they see the Elephant.

SIMON

Bonjour, mes amis.

A cheer rises from the crowd, and everyone shoulders forward.

Simon's MAMAN reaches Simon first.

Simon and Maman look at each other for a long moment. Then, Maman throws her arms around Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Hallo, Maman.

MAMAN

Simon, dear. You've come home.

SIMON

Well-

MAMAN

And this must be your bride?

SIMON

Oh, this is just-

KIYA

(interrupting)

Yes. I am his wife. Kiya.

Simon is almost too stunned to speak.

SIMON

And this is my mother.

Maman seizes Kiya in a hug and kisses both her cheeks.

MAMAN

Delighted! Not English, are you? Good.
No English girl could handle my Simon.

KIYA

I am from Egypt. We met there.

MAMAN

(to Simon)

So! You kept busy in those Holy Wars!

KIYA

Holy Wars? You were-?

SIMON

(interrupting)

No, we met after that, Maman.

MAMAN

Ah. Well, welcome. Call me Beatrice.

(to Simon)

And you, tell me about this
fabulous beast of yours.

The Townsfolk have surrounded the Elephant, a few BRAVE LADS stepping closer than the others.

EXT. MAMAN'S FARMHOUSE/PORCH - DAY

A rustic but sumptuous celebration takes place, around a long, oak table laden with bread, wine, cheese, olives, etc.

Simon, Kiya, and Maman carouse with COUSINS and Townsfolk. Cousin Luc grabs Simon in an affectionate headlock.

COUSIN LUC

(to Kiya, in bad English)

You tire of him, you find me. Luc.
I show you adventures Simon never
dreams, eh?

KIYA

That is hard to imagine.

COUSIN LUC

So, Simon, how is that fortune?

SIMON

Well...

KIYA
Oh, he is a renowned sea-merchant.

COUSIN LUC
Oui?

KIYA
He has a kingdom-worth in cargo off
Alexandria right now.

COUSIN LUC
De vrais?

SIMON
Very off Alexandria.

COUSIN LUC
Then why come here on foot?

KIYA
We are on our way from an audience
with the Pope.

COUSIN LUC
Non! True?

SIMON
Well, yes, actually. Besides, you
couldn't sail my ship down the Loire.

Simon draws Cousin Luc aside for a moment.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Listen, Luc. Would you spread the
word among the lads? If any angry
Moorish types come looking for us,
send them to the Pyrénées, would you?

COUSIN LUC
Mais oui.

SIMON
And don't tell Maman. She'll worry.

Maman interrupts, drawing Simon and Kiya close.

MAMAN
Your elephant is making friends.

Maman leads them to the edge of the porch.

Just beyond, the Elephant stands in an enormous barrel of
fresh grapes, stomping them with great enthusiasm. It
occasionally lifts bunches of grapes with its trunk and eats.

Several Cousins cheer and throw more grapes into the barrel.

KIYA
You make wine?

MAMAN
This is France, chéri.

KIYA
I like it here.

MAMAN
Perhaps you can get Simon to stay.

SIMON
Maman, don't start.

Simon pulls away and walks off to be by himself.

MAMAN
He is a special boy, Simon is.

KIYA
Yes. Yes.

MAMAN
I did not think he would ever
settle down. You are lucky.

From the melancholy of her expression, one wouldn't think
Kiya considers herself lucky.

EXT. ABOVE THE VINEYARD - DUSK

Simon sits alone on a stone wall above the vineyard as Kiya
approaches from the farmhouse and sits beside him.

KIYA
It is lovely. The sunset.

SIMON
It always is, here.

KIYA
How can you not want to stay?

SIMON
Not you, too. They all think I'm
married. Rich. How can I stay, now?

KIYA
It would be...

Pause.

SIMON
It would be...?

KIYA
Nothing. They love the elephant.
They have him building a rock wall.

SIMON
Of course.

KIYA
I did not mean to make you
uncomfortable, pretending to be
your wife. I was trying to help.

SIMON
I know. And you didn't. Make me
uncomfortable. Hah! Imagine, me
marrying a princess.

KIYA
Yes. Hah.

INT. MAMAN'S FARMHOUSE/GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maman shows Simon and Kiya into a guest bedroom, which is
lavishly prepared with candles and a fire in the fireplace.

MAMAN
Eh? Do we know how to prepare for
the happy couple?

Maman departs with a grin.

SIMON
Now I'm a little uncomfortable.

KIYA
Pooh. We have shared a cave, and a wagon,
and many shelters together, sleeping.

SIMON
But this is a proper bedroom.

KIYA
Yes?

Pause.

SIMON

Oh, a floor! The floor is good. I can sleep there.

Kiya grabs Simon's arm, and for a moment he thinks she's going to kiss him. But instead:

KIYA

Tell me, first, about life in this place.

LATER

Simon and Kiya, wrapped in blankets, sit on pillows by the fire, sipping from clay cups.

SIMON

Otherwise, it's much like you've seen. Wine, cheese, goats, vineyards, olives. Simple. Even boring.

KIYA

Simple. Boring. Perfect.

SIMON

You should talk. You're a princess. Waited on, hand and foot. Soon, you'll be English royalty.

KIYA

I do not prefer it.

SIMON

You're kidding.

KIYA

Truly. Too lavish. Too formal. I never have a choice in what I do.

SIMON

But servants, comfort, riches? Eunuchs fanning you with palm fronds, rubbing myrrh into the webbing between your toes?

KIYA

You show me things that are more valuable.

SIMON

Like what?

Kiya leans her head on Simon's shoulder and closes her eyes.

KIYA

Freedom. Friendship. France.

INT. MAMAN'S FARMHOUSE/GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Maman opens the door, holding a tray of tea, bread, and fruit.

Simon and Kiya sleep in a tangle of blankets on the floor.

MAMAN

The bed was too lumpy?

Simon and Kiya awaken and realize their closeness.

SIMON

What time is it? Damn, I've slept well.

KIYA

I, also.

SIMON

I could make a habit of it.

Maman puts down the breakfast tray.

MAMAN

So, today? A tour of the village?

Simon and Kiya look at each other.

SIMON

(labored)

Sure.

MAMAN

Take your time. Whenever you are ready.

Maman departs.

SIMON

We'd better go.

KIYA

Go?

SIMON

We'll have to, more sooner than later.
I can't handle telling her goodbye
again. Let's just slip quietly-

EXT. MAMAN'S FARMHOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Simon and Kiya, dressed, tiptoe from the house.

The Elephant grazes on grapes nearby.

Maman stands on the porch, waiting for them sadly, holding a long bundle of linen.

MAMAN

You always think you can fool your Maman.

SIMON

I'm sorry. I just-

Maman shushes Simon and hands him the bundle.

MAMAN

Luc said you might be in some trouble.

Simon unwraps a beautiful broadsword and scabbard.

SIMON

Oh. Oh, Maman.

MAMAN

I've kept it safe all this while.

KIYA

Is it yours?

SIMON

It was, once.

MAMAN

A gift from some English Lord, no?

Simon nods, stroking the hilt, lost in memories.

MAMAN (CONT'D)

For bravery in battle. My boy here was even knighted.

SIMON

Maman. It was a long time ago.

MAMAN

Well? Have Kiya gird it on.

Simon hands the sword to Kiya, who belts it to his waist.

KIYA

Is this symbolic, me doing this?

SIMON

Sort of, yes.

Maman gestures to two loaded packs leaning against the house.

MAMAN

(onto his tricks)

I notice you came with nothing, dear married, rich son. Here are blankets, food, clothes.

SIMON

Thank you, Maman.

Simon and Maman embrace, then kiss on both cheeks.

MAMAN

Come back, sometime before never, eh?

(to Kiya)

And you. If only your story were true. You should both be so lucky.

Maman hugs and kisses Kiya.

KIYA

Thank you, Maman.

MAMAN

Idiots, both of you. Now get out of here, before Simon starts weeping and embarrasses us all.

EXT. A RIDGE IN NORTHERN FRANCE - DAY

Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant hike along the countryside.

KIYA

Tell me about the Holy Wars. Sometimes they passed through our lands, the Crusaders. I often wondered.

SIMON

Tell me, first, what is this alliance you have with the Duke?

KIYA

I do not know. They would never tell a woman. Emissaries came to speak with my father, and it was arranged.

SIMON

Were they armed, the emissaries?

KIYA

They were with the army, yes.

SIMON

I figured. They probably forced him into the agreement. Typical.

KIYA

Why, typical?

SIMON

We- no, not "we." The English, the French, the Spanish, they claim they want to liberate the Holy Land from the barbarians. Guess what? We're the barbarians.

KIYA

How do you mean?

SIMON

We invade, we plunder, pillage, steal. We force so called "alliances" at the point of a sword, not a pen. And worst of all, thousands of innocent people, just-

Simon makes a cutting gesture with an imaginary sword.

KIYA

You are certain?

SIMON

I was there!

KIYA

And you were knighted for it?

SIMON

Not for that. I saved an earl's life. It's not as great as it sounds.

KIYA

But you did not stay?

SIMON

Fled. Left the army. Swore I'd never fight again. Some knight, eh? I joined a merchant ship, liked it, signed on. My father was dead by the time I got back to London.

KIYA

I am sorry.

SIMON

I already hated myself, for my part in the Crusades. And not being there for my father didn't help. So I took Maman back to France, and...

KIYA

And?

SIMON

Fled. Again. Took to the sea. I've done rather a lot of running away.

KIYA

To find your fortune.

SIMON

Or not, as the case may be.

KIYA

In my country, we do not always measure a man's fortune by his wealth.

SIMON

Remind me to open some credit there.

KIYA

You are a very rich man, I think.

SIMON

I doubt many would agree.

KIYA

Many would be wrong.

SIMON

Hey, look!

There, along the coastline, sprawls a city.

KIYA

What is it?

SIMON

Calais.

KIYA

Is that close to London?

SIMON

Close as you can get without swimming.

INT. THE SHIP "METAXA"/CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Hesitant knocking on the door. CAPTAIN MARVEAUX, a grizzled seaman, grumbles awake. He lights a candle and opens the door.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX
I swear to God I will pull your
balls out your eyes for waking me!

There stands FRANÇOIS, a nervous sailor.

FRANÇOIS
A man above insists on seeing you sir.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX
Tell him to wait until morning.

Captain Marveaux mimes pulling François's testicles out through his eyes.

FRANÇOIS
He says he'll have his dragon destroy
the ship, sir, if he must wait.

EXT. THE SHIP "METAXA"/DECK - NIGHT

Captain Marveaux and François climb above-ships to find Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant.

SIMON
Marveaux.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX
Simon! You bastard, you woke me up!

Simon and Captain Marveaux clasp hands.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX (CONT'D)
Where is your dragon?

Simon gestures, and Captain Marveaux bursts into laughter.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX (CONT'D)
That's an elephant.

Simon throws his arms around Captain Marveaux.

SIMON
Yes! Yes, an elephant! Thank you!

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX
What?

SIMON

You've no idea what we've been through.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX

Well come below and tell me about it. François, take the beast to the hold. Can't have it seen come dawn.

François gulps and wets himself a little.

INT. THE SHIP "METAXA"/BELOW DECK - DAWN

Captain Marveaux guffaws as they regale him with tales.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX

Princess Kiya, I envy you. It must have been such fun with this jackanapes as your guide.

KIYA

Words fail me.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX

It should be light by now. Let's get sailing. I can get you as far as Dover.

EXT. THE SHIP "METAXA"/DECK - DAY

Simon is in heaven, back on a ship. He works with the SAILORS, hoisting the rigging. Kiya sits alone in the prow, looking out to sea.

Simon approaches, takes two apples from a bucket nearby, and hands one to Kiya.

SIMON

You all right? Kiya? What is it?

KIYA

We will be in London soon. And then?

SIMON

You'll meet your betrothed. Yes?

KIYA

And you?

SIMON

I'll set up shop. With the Elephant.

Kiya nods. She turns away.

SIMON (CONT'D)
You'll miss the elephant, won't
you? Maybe we can visit you.

KIYA
When you're rich, you can do
whatever you like.

SIMON
And when you're married ... tell me
about your betrothed.

KIYA
We have never met.

SIMON
Never? How do you know if you, if-?

KIYA
I have no choice. It was the will of
my father. The marriage will bring
honor and alliance to our families.
And a princess does not decline a
marriage arranged by her father.

SIMON
I've decided something.

KIYA
(hopeful)
Yes?

SIMON
After I've made enough to get
another ship commission, I'll give
you back the Elephant.

Kiya throws her apple at Simon's head and storms off.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I can't win. Just can't.

INT. THE SHIP "METAXA"/HOLD BELOW DECK - NIGHT

Simon, carrying a lantern and a blanket, creeps to the hold.

There, in a bed of hay amid crates and bundles, sleep the
Elephant and Kiya.

Simon stands at the door for long moments, looking at them,
then covers Kiya with the blanket, sighs, and departs.

Kiya opens her eyes and looks after Simon.

EXT. THE SHIP "METAXA"/DECK - DAY

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX

Land ho!

EXT. DOVER/HARBOR - DAY

With his ship harbored, Captain Marveaux approaches Simon.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX

What say the elephant stays below until dark? Then you can travel with less fuss.

SIMON

Thanks.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX

I've sent word ahead to the Duke of Wellingford that you're on your way.

SIMON

Mm.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX

All right, my boy. I haven't seen you this upset since that time your entire crew got syphilis.

SIMON

It's just - I've been trying to get to London for the longest time. And now that I'm nearly there, I wish I weren't.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX

You know me, Simon. I'm simple man, a sailor and a merchant. I follow my heart, and it says "open sea, high adventure." But if it doesn't, I'd damn well better pay attention. You follow?

Simon nods.

CAPTAIN MARVEAUX (CONT'D)

But now, my heart says I find a good English woman for a few hours. So, we part company here. Watch for my flag if you make the seas again.

SIMON

I will. Thanks for the ferry. I owe you.

EXT. STREETS OF DOVER - NIGHT

Simon, Kiya, and the Elephant creep through the town.

Occasionally, Simon tries to speak to Kiya, but he cannot muster the nerve. They walk on in silence.

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The three of them continue overland, in uneventful silence.

Suddenly, a fiendishly clever trap of ropes snare all four of the Elephant's legs, toppling the beast to the ground.

SIMON

Bad feeling. Very bad feeling.

The Red and Gold Assassins step forth from behind a bush. The Red Assassin has a bandaged wound on his head, and the Gold Assassin is missing his left hand.

SIMON (CONT'D)

At least the gypsies killed one of the three. Have to "hand" it to them.

KIYA

Even now, you are joking?

SIMON

Run.

Simon and Kiya bolt, with the Assassins in pursuit.

Just over the next hill, the Assassins catch up.

SIMON (CONT'D)

(to Kiya)

Keep going!

Simon whirls, draws his sword, and engages the two Assassins.

Simon fights well, but even as he wounds the Gold Assassin, the Red Assassin disarms him and kicks him in the face.

KIYA

Simon!

SIMON

Run!

The Red Assassin raises his scimitar over Simon's head.

But then, with a grisly hiss, an arrow impales the Red Assassin.

The Red Assassin regards the arrow bristling from his chest with resignation, then crumples, dead.

Simon and the wounded Gold Assassin turn to see:

The ROYAL GUARD of the DUKE OF WELLINGFORD charging on horseback.

The Gold Assassin smiles. Then he raises his scimitar to his neck and cuts his own throat. Blood sprays Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Oh, that's just disgusting!

Kiya runs to Simon as the Royal Guard surrounds them.

GUARD CAPTAIN

His Grace, the Duke of Wellingford,
greet's you.

The Duke, 50s, a pompous and pimpled man, rides forward.

DUKE

Indeed, I do. Welcome, Princess.

KIYA

Your Grace.

DUKE

We received word you were coming,
and I thought it fit to meet your
entourage. Where is your entourage?

SIMON

We're it.

KIYA

And an elephant.

DUKE

A what?

SIMON

Never mind.

DUKE

I was expecting something grander.
No matter. Shall we be off, then?

KIYA

What?

DUKE

Back to the estate, you know. The
wedding is Sunday next.

(MORE)

DUKE (CONT'D)
 (to a Guard)
 You, give the Princess your horse.

The Guard obligingly dismounts.

Kiya hesitates, looking desperately at Simon.

DUKE (CONT'D)
 Come, come. You can ride, can't you?

KIYA
 Yes. But I'd like to say goodbye-

DUKE
 No time. Here, I'll say it for you.
 (to Simon)
 Goodbye. Thank you for your escort.
 I'd invite you to the wedding, but
 you're hardly royalty, now, are you?

SIMON
 Not if you measure a man's fortune
 by his wealth, no.

Kiya embraces Simon with all her might.

KIYA
 (whispered)
 Say goodbye to him for me.

Kiya rides away with the Duke, looking back at Simon, as an anguished Elephant bellow sounds from beyond the hill.

Simon returns to the Elephant and cuts it free.

SIMON
 She's gone. Just like that. There
 was so much I wanted to - at least
 I could have said a proper goodbye.

The Elephant starts off after Kiya.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 No, no. We've got to let her go, now.

The Elephant stops, and moans.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 Yeah, me too. Me too.

INT. LONDON/FREAK SHOW TENT - DAY

Simon talks to the vulpine freak show proprietor, MR. SCREED, while Screed's serving BOY paints a banner that reads "OELIPHANT - THE GREAT BEAST OF EGYPT."

The Elephant stands in a cramped cage.

MR. SCREED

I tell you, Simon, this will be the best thing to happen to business since I bought a walrus off a Viking.

SIMON

Don't walruses need water?

MR. SCREED

Yes, that was the eventual problem. How long do elephants live?

SIMON

I don't know.

MR. SCREED

As long as it lasts a few weeks, we'll make a pretty sum, you and I.

INT. DUKE OF WELLINGFORD'S ESTATE/DINING HALL - NIGHT

Kiya dines uncomfortably with the Duke of Wellingford and his son CHAUNCY, 12, a goatish boy who shifts and scratches.

CHAUNCY

Why is her skin so dark?

DUKE

I've told you, my boy, she's from Egypt.

Chauncy addresses Kiya loudly and slowly, miming, as if assuming she has no English.

CHAUNCY

Do people have the heads of animals in Egypt?

KIYA

I've told you, no. And, once again, my English is adequate. You needn't shout.

DUKE

Here, now, don't address my son so curtly. It won't do.

CHAUNCY
Did you eat people, where you're from?

KIYA
(exasperated)
Yes. Often.

EXT. LONDON/FREAK SHOW TENT - DAY

Simon watches Mr. Screed, standing on a soapbox, lure a line of eager PATRONS that stretches around the block.

MR. SCREED
-world's most fantastical beast! A creature so powerful it destroys castles, ravages cities, swims the open seas!

INT. LONDON/FREAK SHOW TENT - DAY

Simon enters and sees the Patrons crowd around the cage. Instead of showing reverence or fear, they mock the Elephant.

PATRON #1
Ere, you're not so tough, are you?

PATRON #2
Come on over here and let us touch that great beak of yours, eh?

PATRON #3
(to her child)
Now you be good, or the Great Beast here will come for you in the night.

SIMON
Stop! Stop it! All of you! Shut up!

Everyone falls silent and turns indignantly to Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Out! Or I'll - do this!

Simon flings open the door of the cage. The Elephant doesn't stir, but the Patrons flee in a tumult of shrieking terror.

Mr. Screed bursts in, flummoxed.

MR. SCREED
What's all this, then?

SIMON
Enough, Screed. I can't do this.

Mr. Screed scowls. He pulls a blackjack from his coat.

MR. SCREED

See here, you. We've got a decent business going on, and if you-

Simon punches Mr. Screed full in the face. Screed crumples.

INT. THE ELEPHANT'S CAGE

Simon goes to the Elephant, and hugs its face. The Elephant wraps its trunk around Simon's shoulders.

SIMON

You all right?

He leans his head against the Elephant's trunk and sighs.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I know. I'm sorry I put you up to this. Wait here. I have to clear my head. I'll figure out what to do next.

EXT. LONDON/HARBOR - NIGHT

Simon paces the harbor, looking nostalgically at the ships, as MERCHANTS hawk their wares and SAILORS carouse.

A meaty hand grabs Simon's shoulder.

Simon seizes the hand and spins, preparing to drive his would-be assailant to the ground, but then recognition sets in.

SIMON

Matey?

Sure enough, there grins his old crewman Matey, looking hale and rested, months after the storm onboard Simon's ship.

MATEY

It is you! Captain, you made it! And what's with nearly breaking my arm?

Simon and Matey embrace and cackle their joy.

SIMON

You'd understand if you knew what I've been through.

MATEY

When I lost you in that storm, I feared the worst!

SIMON

I thought you went down with the wreck!

MATEY

Wreck? What do you mean, wreck?

Matey drags Simon along the harbor, then stops and points.

MATEY (CONT'D)

Feast your eyes, Captain.

There, moored just offshore, is Simon's ship, the "Beatrice."

SIMON

That's my ship. My ship. That.

MATEY

Lost both masts, drifted for weeks until we hit Cyprus. Took forever for repairs, just got back here last week.

SIMON

But you dumped the cargo?

MATEY

Your orders was not to.

SIMON

Don't play with me, Matey.

MATEY

Swear to God. The silks were ruined, I'm afraid, what with all the water we took in. But the spices, they were sealed, and the gems and coin were safe.

SIMON

And? And?

MATEY

You're a rich man. I was about to carry the lot to your mum in France, with a "sorry" for the bad news.

SIMON

And my men?

INT. "THE GOLD COMPASS" PUB - NIGHT

LOCALS and SEAMEN carouse, Simon's SHIPMATES among them, as Matey kicks open the front door and screams for silence.

MATEY

Ladies and gents! Behold!

Matey gestures grandly, and Simon leaps through the door. Cheers and shouts and hugs all around ensue.

INT. "THE GOLD COMPASS" PUB - LATER

Simon sits at a table, surrounded by his Shipmates, drinking beer from a tankard. But his heart just isn't in it.

SHIPMATE

What then? What then?

SIMON

Oh, he just sits there on his papal throne and says, "It's an elephant."

The Shipmates chortle. Simon makes his way to the window.

JANE, a worn yet cheery prostitute, approaches.

JANE

Well, then, what'll it be?

SIMON

Huh?

JANE

Your lads, they paid for me. And a room upstairs. Whatever you like. We got all night. Come on then, I never met a sailor who didn't care to dock it in a safe harbor.

SIMON

I - I'm sorry.

Simon regards her sadly, and turns to go. But just then, Matey approaches and slams a heavy purse down on the windowsill in front of Simon.

MATEY

And there she be.

Simon just gawks at the purse, so Matey opens its drawstrings and pulls out a handful of gold.

MATEY (CONT'D)

I paid off the men, the creditors, and all. This is yours. Every jot. Eh, what's the matter? I thought you'd be happier.

SIMON

Oh, Matey, thank you. Truly. The only other friend I have as loyal as you is an elephant.

MATEY

Aye, my trunk has never let me down, neither!

SIMON

I have to go.

INT. FREAK SHOW TENT/ELEPHANT'S CAGE - NIGHT

Simon dozes next to the Elephant, which munches on hay.

Mr. Screed's serving Boy creeps into the freak show.

BOY

Sir! Wake up! Oh, sir, help, murder!

The Boy makes to run into the street and sound the alarm, when Simon starts awake.

SIMON

Wait! What? What is it?

BOY

Oh, sir, you're alive! I thought for sure the beast had killed you.

SIMON

I wouldn't blame him.

BOY

Shall I go for help?

SIMON

Help? Don't be silly. What's your name, boy?

BOY

Adam, sir.

Simon climbs to his feet and beckons to the Boy.

BOY (CONT'D)

Oh no, sir, I couldn't. I daren't come no closer.

SIMON

Adam, he's not going to hurt you. Look. Am I hurt?

BOY

No.

SIMON

Wouldn't you like to touch him?

Hesitantly, the Boy enters the cage.

SIMON (CONT'D)

There, now. Stand right here. Hold out your hand.

The Elephant lays its trunk on the Boy's hand ever so gently.

BOY

It's soft.

SIMON

There, now, see?

BOY

Can I ask something, Sir Simon?

SIMON

Only if you never call me "Sir" again.

BOY

I wot you were a knight. Your sword—

SIMON

Forget my sword. Ask your question.

BOY

It doesn't look very happy, does it? Neither do you.

SIMON

No. I suppose not.

BOY

Are you all right? Both of you?

SIMON

Oh, yes. Maybe. No. I thought I'd lost a fortune, but it turns out I lost much more than that.

BOY

I lost my mother when I was wee.

SIMON

And your father?

BOY

Never had one. Mr. Screed took me in, here. He's not nice to me, but I ain't starving.

SIMON

You miss her? Your mother?

BOY

All the time. I think, if there were anything I could do to get her back, anything at all, I'd do it. I'd fight a hundred of these things-
(i.e., elephants)
-if it would bring her back.

Simon puts a hand on the Boy's head. Then he draws out his purse, his fortune, which he presses into the Boy's hands.

BOY (CONT'D)

What's all this?

SIMON

You want to get out of here? Listen carefully. You know the Gold Compass Pub? Find a man called Matey...

INT. WELLINGFORD ESTATE/KIYA'S CHAMBER - DAY

Kiya sleeps in her richly furnished chamber.

Until, that is, her SERVING MAIDS burst in, awakening her.

A SERVING MAID

Get up, milady! We have so much to do!

ANOTHER SERVING MAID

Must make ready for the wedding!

EXT. WELLINGFORD GROUNDS/THE WEDDING SITE - DAY

Lavish beyond compare. Flowers everywhere, tents, tables laden with roast boar, tumblers, hundreds of GUESTS, etc.

Chauncy waits before the altar with the ARCHBISHOP.

Momentarily, MUSICIANS play, and Kiya, the Duke, and BRIDESMAIDS, proceed down the aisle.

DUKE

Well, Princess Kiya. After today I shall be calling you "daughter."

KIYA
And how shall I address Your Grace?

DUKE
"Your Grace," of course. Are you ready?

KIYA
Does it matter?

DUKE
Not in the least. If you have opinions,
which are dangerous for a woman to
have, you may keep them to yourself.

KIYA
Even if I do not love your son?

DUKE
Who requires you to love him? Marriage
is not for love. Lovers are for love.

KIYA
I do not wish for lovers.

DUKE
Well said. If you cuckold my son I
shall have this marriage annulled and
you thrown onto the street. Or worse, a
nunnery.

They reach the altar, and the Duke steps back.

Kiya and Chauncy approach the Archbishop, who raises a golden
cross on a staff before them.

ARCHBISHOP
In nomini Patris, et Filii, et
Spiritus Sancti-

KIYA
(to Chauncy)
What is he saying?

CHAUNCY
It's Latin.

KIYA
I cannot understand him.

CHAUNCY
Shh! Father says you are to speak
only when bidden.

Then, a mighty, trumpeting bellow sounds from beyond a hill.

Everything grinds to a halt as each Guest turns to the sound.

A thunderous gallop shakes the earth. Kiya grins as:

Over the rise charges the Elephant, with Simon astride it wearing resplendent knight's armor.

Kiya beams, Guests scatter, and Chauncy, the Bridesmaids, the Duke, and the Archbishop throw themselves to the ground.

Simon and the Elephant stop at the altar. Simon lifts his helmet visor, which slowly, comically, lowers to cover his face as he speaks, forcing him to keep raising it.

SIMON

O most beauteous Princess Kiya. I
pledge my love, and beg thee not to
marry unto yon stripling thither.

(to Kiya)

Seriously? That pimply kid?

KIYA

You should see the thank you letter
I wrote to my father.

SIMON

If thou wilt have me, I offer my
humble self for thy husband.

KIYA

What will we do? Where will we go?

Simon tosses the helmet from his head. It lands on Chauncy.

SIMON

I've sent my boy to ready my ship for
France. We can do anything we want.
Grow grapes, fight gypsies, I don't
care. So long as it's with you.

The Duke rises from his prone position.

DUKE

See here, you, or Sir Knight, or
whatever. Kiya has been betrothed
to my son. She cannot simply ride
away with you on your Great Beast.

KIYA

I most certainly can, you pompous,
overweening eunuch.

SIMON
 (admiring her insult)
 Oh, good!

DUKE
 How dare you speak to me in that
 fashion! Guards! Seize them!

The Duke looks about him: all his guards hesitate, then bolt.

Simon offers his hand to Kiya, and the Elephant lowers itself to one knee. Kiya climbs up and kisses Simon full on the lips.

SIMON
 (in French)
 Ma Princesse.

KIYA
 Monsieur le Chevalier.

SIMON
 You speak French? You never cease
 to amaze.

DUKE
 (to Archbishop)
 Do something!

The Archbishop, terrified, brandishes his golden cross.

ARCHBISHOP
 Back, O Devil!

The Elephant beholds the golden crucifix.

SIMON
 Uh oh.

And the Elephant, remembering its old gig for the Pope, bellows and flees through the wedding grounds, overturning banquet tables, smashing statues, and scattering Guests.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 Hold on! Make it stop!

Kiya laughs hysterically.

KIYA
 This is too much fun! To the house!

DUKE
 Not my manor!

Simon closes his eyes as the Elephant charges through the front door of the manor, smashing it to pieces.

INT. THE WELLINGFORD HOUSE/VARIOUS ROOMS - DAY

The Elephant rampages through the Wellingford estate while the Duke, Chauncy, Guards, and Attendants race about trying to salvage pieces of silver, statuary, artwork, and so forth.

Soon, the Elephant shatters the rear door of the house and bears Simon and Kiya away over the hill.

The Duke and Chauncy peer miserably through the wreckage.

EXT. THE WELLINGFORD GROUNDS - DAY

The Elephant, Simon, and Kiya ramble off into the hills.

SIMON

To France!

KIYA

Encore!

FADE OUT