

EXT. KENILWORTH CASTLE - DAY

The walls of Kenilworth castle stand over a flood lake -- with a walled causeway -- which spans the water -- to a fortified gatehouse on the opposite shore.

SUPER: "KENILWORTH, AUGUST 2nd, 1265."

A dusty track hugs the edge of the lake -- for two hundred yards -- to the end of a single street of cottages -- which extends into a small 13th century town.

EXT. KENILWORTH TOWN CENTRE - CONTINUOUS

Younger Simon and Baldwin Wake lead a vanguard of mounted knights into Kenilworth. Sometime after high noon.

The market square is quiet. A young mother nurses her baby. A toothless old man sucks his gums.

A carpenter works in an open shop. He sees Simon and his soldiers ride into town. He sees trouble ahead.

Baldwin spies the defences of the castle close by.

BALDWIN

Very impressive.

YOUNGER SIMON

No, Baldwin. Very poor.

Simon spies the closed doors of a town centre tavern.

In the tavern yard, MILDRED the Alewife tidies chairs. She too sees the procession of hot young knights behind Simon de Montfort junior. She doesn't want no trouble.

YOUNGER SIMON

Alewife! Why are your doors closed?

MILDRED

Everyone's out at harvest, sire.

YOUNGER SIMON

But my men are here. Your name is Mildred, is it not?

Mildred likes the first-name terms. Still, she frets.

MILDRED

My new ale's all for the boon feast, Sir Simon.

YOUNGER SIMON

And so it shall be. We wish merely
to slake our thirst.

INT. KENILWORTH ALEHOUSE - LATER

The tavern is filled with knights and soldiers deep in drink.
Shouting. Roaring. Gambling. Wenching.

Mildred fills tankards of ale from a barrel. A long queue
awaits at the bar.

Arthur stands aside. Sober and disguised. She spies a
familiar face amongst the tavern tables.

SECOND SCHOLAR

Of course, Earl Simon has spent a
great deal of time in Italy.

The Oxford scholar's companion listens well.

SECOND SCHOLAR

And in Italy they have no kings at
all.

Arthur hears laughs from a corner table. She glances over.

YOUNGER SIMON

That beadle was not so bold when he
had my sword in his guts.

Younger Simon talks big. For the benefit of Baldwin, Gemma,
Charlotte and hangers-on around his table.

BALDWIN

And I had a man's tongue cut out
just because he called me baldy.

GEMMA

Good for you, sir knight! How could
any man call you baldy? I know I
could never call you baldy.

Simon laughs. All at the table laugh except...

BALDWIN

You insolent strumpet!

Baldwin raises his arm to strike Gemma.

Simon puts his own arm across.

YOUNGER SIMON

Nay, Baldwin. This be no strumpet.

Simon admires the pretty reeve's daughter.

YOUNGER SIMON
Gemma is a jewel indeed. A worthy
object of courtly love. Like the
Lady of the Lake herself.

CHARLOTTE
Well, she does live by the lake.

Ugly Charlotte laughs. All laugh. It's that sort of day.

Seagrave squeezes through the crowd towards the table.

YOUNGER SIMON
Nicholas! We'll be with you soon. I
promise.

SEAGRAVE
Sir Simon, I have news.

YOUNGER SIMON
But you have no drink! Mildred! Ale
for Baron Seagrave!

Mildred does not hear through the din.

SEAGRAVE
Simon! I have news of your father!

Simon hears that. Turns serious at once.

YOUNGER SIMON
Silence! Silence! Silence!

The noisy tavern quietens.

YOUNGER SIMON
What news?

Bearded Simon is keen to hear. So is fresh-faced Arthur.

SEAGRAVE
I will speak with you privily.

YOUNGER SIMON
Nonsense, man! We're all friends
here. Come on, Seagrave. Out with
it! What news of my father?

Seagrave thinks. What the hell. It is good news.

SEAGRAVE
He has crossed the Severn and makes
for Evesham in haste!

Get in! Simon thrills. The whole room buzzes again.

YOUNGER SIMON

Then we too shall make for Evesham!

Gemma gives Simon a look of affected sadness.

Simon cannot resist her go-to-bed eyes.

YOUNGER SIMON

On the morrow!

Arthur hears of the morrow. Thinks of today.

MONTAGE - ARTHUR'S RIDE

Arthur rides fast -- by a wheat field in harvest -- where peasants cut -- and gather -- and bind the stalks.

A well-tanned man stacks sheaves onto a cart. He sees Arthur ride by. Thinks for a moment. Gets back to work.

Arthur rides through a village at breakneck speed. A vicar sees the bonneted youth gallop by. He thinks for a moment. Turns away with a shake of his head.

A ford crosses a shallow stream. The hooves of Arthur's horse splash the sun-dappled water.

Arthur thrills with the excitement of it all.

An OLD HUSBAND AND WIFE lead two bullocks across the width of a lane. They hear the sound of hooves to their left.

Arthur rides straight for them. They have no time to move. The old woman is stunned as Arthur gallops on. And then...

She spurs her mount into a marvellous leap -- clean over the bullocks -- and down -- and away -- down the lane.

Medieval knieval.

The old couple attend to their beasts. No harm done.

OLD HUSBAND

What was that all about?

OLD WIFE

It'll be something to do with Simon bloody Montfort.

Over open ground, Arthur gees up a tired horse.

On the crest of a slope, she pulls up her mount.

She looks over the ridge and beholds...

Acres of parkland. Filled with tents in heraldic designs. The camp of an army several thousand strong.

She sees a tent with Plantagenet colours -- trimmed with the crenellations of the first-born.

She thrills to see the headquarters of her Prince.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. EDWARD'S TENT - LATER

EDWARD (O.S. AT FIRST)

If what you have said is false then
I will have you hanged. Woman or
not.

Edward sits stern at table. Mortimer beside.

ARTHUR

(with hair down)

But I speak the truth! Young Simon
is at Kenilworth. Now!

MORTIMER

With two thousand men?

ARTHUR

Mostly London foot but many knights
of the South, also a contingent of
scholars, and men of...

EDWARD

Who commands the London foot?

ARTHUR

Baron Nicholas Seagrave.

EDWARD

And what are his arms?

ARTHUR

Sable, lion rampant argent crowned
or.

Correct. Edward thinks on, impressed.

ARTHUR

Seagrave is in the castle with
Henry of Hastings. But Montfort
remains in the town.

MORTIMER

He must know we are one march away.
He would not be that stupid?

ARTHUR

I left him in drink with Baldwin
Wake and two minstrel girls.

EDWARD

He's that stupid.

Arthur giggles. A reflex response.

She stops in a moment. A moment too late.

EDWARD

Do I amuse you, girl?

ARTHUR

No, my prince.

Arthur drops her head. Blushes with shame.

Edward warms in her glow. Another reflex.

MORTIMER

You have no more to report?

ARTHUR

No more, my lord.

EDWARD

Then leave us.

Arthur turns from her prince and her lord.

EDWARD

And don't forget to...

Cover her hair? Edward looks up.

Arthur has her bonnet on again.

EDWARD

(with fondness)

Go now.

She turns at once. Leaves Edward behind.

EDWARD

And thank you.

Arthur thrills in the pleasure of her prince.