

FADE IN

EXT. GLEN. COUNTRYSIDE - EVENING

A vast, green glen, one half in shadow, the sinking sun almost at the tip of the highest west peak. Golden leaves lie at the roots of trees, blown about.

Shadows are long. A beautiful yet forboding place.

The lonely SILHOUETTE of a CATTLE BOY, leaning against his staff, watching the herd. Shoulders rise in a DEEP SIGH.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - EVENING

A battle worn old man, ALASDAIR (60s), with a great white waxed moustache, kneels on the floor of the small room, cradling a musket.

Breathes deeply. His head snaps up. Tenses. Sharp eyes in an old face.

He checks his surroundings.

Tables and chairs have been flung to the back of the room to make space for SIX OTHER MEN cramped into the room, all carrying muskets and swords, some by each of the small windows.

All HIGHLANDERS, they are a mish mash of stations, but all bear the mark of war. They are all JACOBITE SOLDIERS.

A younger man, JOHN (late 20s), turns to Alasdair.

JOHN  
You alright, Da?

Alasdair nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(to the others)  
Ready yourselves, lads.

They quietly begin to reload and/or check their weapons.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A small window slowly creeps open. John's eyes appear at the sill. Scans an area we cannot see. Raises his musket.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Quietly and carefully, John takes aim through the window. The others do likewise. All of the men begin to assume positions by the windows.

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Fire!

Musket fire ILLUMINATES the tiny room.

Shots ZIP through the windows in reply. One man LOSES THE BACK OF HIS SKULL. Slumps. Alasdair takes his place at the window. Strains as he crouches.

A lull in the firing. The old warrior looks outside as --

EXT. STREET. BY CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

-- RECOAT SOLDIERS take aim behind the barricades of a CATHEDRAL, exchanging fire with more Jacobite soldiers on the streets and in the houses. Bodies from both sides litter the streets.

SUPER:

**DUNKELD, SCOTLAND, 1691**

A stern JACOBITE COMMANDER leads CAVALRY SOLDIERS towards the cathedral, muskets raised. A volley of SHOTS and then they CHARGE towards the cathedral.

JACOBITE COMMANDER

For King James!

They are met at the barricade with long PIKES and HALBERTS. A close quarters struggle as men are CUT and STABBED.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - NIGHT

JOHN

Right we are again, lads!

They all fire again, ILLUMINATING the room for a flash.

EXT. STREET. BY CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

A Jacobite staggers back, chest RIPPED AND BLOODIED. His comrades trying to force the barricade are being beaten back.

Horses SNORT and WHINNY in pain as the pikes push through to their shoulders. Several rear up, THROWING their riders.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE. STREET - CONTINUOUS

More flashes of musket fire from each of the front windows.

EXT. STREET. BY CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

Several of the pikes fall as their bearers slump dead. The Jacobites continue to try and break through. One climbs through a gap, over a dead redcoat.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A cheer goes up from the men.

JOHN

Again!

The men quickly reload. Aim. FIRE.

Alasdair looks out of the window at the fighting outside. Big as he is, he sinks a little. Tired.

John looks out of the window. Grins.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Aye, we'll have them -

His face falls.

EXT. STREET - BY CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

The Jacobites at the barricade TUMBLE BACKWARDS. The redcoats are pushing through their own barricades, bearing long LIT TORCHES. Setting FIRE to the thatched roof of the closest house. Burning in an instant.

SCREAMS of men inside.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

JOHN

Get out! They're razing us! Get out!

They swarm to the door.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The door bursts open and the Jacobite soldiers spew out.

The whole street is ABLAZE now, lighting up the redcoats charging towards them; all weapons in hand.

The Jacobite Commander leads his men in a retreat.

Men from both sides stagger from the blazing homes. A flaming soldier CRASHES out of one house, SCREAMING IN AGONY. Redcoats try to put him out - one of their own.

All of the Jacobite soldiers flee through the town square as the place burns. Most retreat up a rocky hillside.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

The Jacobites scramble up the hill, panting for breath and slipping on the stones.

Alasdair stops and looks back at the burning town. Some of the other men pause for breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALASDAIR

They'll burn their own to flush us out.  
What kind of man issues such orders?

JACOBITE SOLDIER

Aye. I'll fight against men. But am not  
fit to fight any more against devils.

Alasdair observes the fiery mayhem for another moment before he trudges up the hill into the darkness.

DALRYMPLE (O.S.)

Necessity, gentlemen.

INT. DALRYMPLE'S OFFICE - MORNING

SIR JOHN DALRYMPLE (40) stares out a large window at the streets of Edinburgh below, towered over by tall, dark tenement blocks. A softly spoken man with a piercing gaze. Dressed in a dark tunic and simple wig of the age.

Behind him stand the aging EARL OF ARGYLL (60's) and the ruddy faced EARL OF BREADALBANE (50's). Breadalbane sports a more ornate and larger wig than the others, puffed and proud of himself.

DALRYMPLE

Our allegiance is to the crown and the  
public good. And consequently we must do  
whatever is necessary to serve that good.

He turns to the other two.

DALRYMPLE (CONT'D)

Is that not correct, Your Grace?

Breadalbane's eyes dart around, uncomfortable. Argyll casts a sideways glance at him.

BREADALBANE

Sir John, if only --

Dalrymple turns to face him. Intense.

DALRYMPLE

And so any failure in that task reflects  
poorly on this office. My office would  
you have that, Your Grace?

Breadalbane puffs up.

BREADALBANE

Sir, I must protest at this. I have  
received word from several clans that  
they will refrain from further hostility  
towards the Crown and --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DALRYMPLE

(interrupting)

And yet word comes to me that several of these clans, considered particular flies in His Majesty's ointment, left the negotiation with a Government purse but retaining loyalty to the old king and enmity to the new king. Word spreads of lies and accusations of bribery, with my own agent's hand in the pot.

(beat)

Is this not true?

Breadalbane cannot answer. Looks to Argyll.

BREADALBANE

Archibald --

ARGYLL

Get out.

The disgraced Earl musters his dignity and quietly exits.

ARGYLL (CONT'D)

His behaviour has been unfortunate.

DALRYMPLE

A failure to predict your cousin's actions is also unfortunate. In this respect, Your Grace, I must at least share some of the blame with you.

Argyll stiffens for a moment.

DALRYMPLE (CONT'D)

And so, we must consider another course of action that might not be so apparent to others.

ARGYLL

Sir John, I beg of you not to consider that course.

DALRYMPLE

And what would you have me do? As Secretary of these lands to His Majesty, what is left to bring these rebellious and barbaric curs to heel? By God, I will quieten to these lands. I will control Scotland. And this Highland Honour of theirs has forced my hand in the face of your cousin's actions.

ARGYLL

Well, that may be it precisely. Their Highland Honour. There are certain things a Highlander will never sway from. Will die before breaking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Dalrymple sits, waiting.

DALRYMPLE

Go on.

EXT. MEGGERNIE CASTLE. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Not the most regal of castles, Meggernie Castle is craggy and damaged. Men repair aging castle from wooden scaffolds. It seems a large task.

A horse trots slowly up the beaten path. Almost asleep at the reins is JAMIE CAMPBELL (16), skinny and all unkempt hair, carrying a long wooden staff; the same cattle boy seen in the glen. He winces at the HAMMERING from the castle repairs.

Two CAMPBELL MEN are standing closeby.

CAMPBELL MAN #1

Well, here he is. Looking after important affairs again, Jamie?

CAMPBELL MAN #2

Sorting through the cow shite, eh?

They laugh and walk away.

JAMIE

(sotto)

Not for long, you daft big bastard.

He leads his horse back into the castle.

INT. ROBERT'S OFFICE. MEGGERNIE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

The office paints a picture of faded grandeur and the mildest opulence. Dust hangs in the air, visible in the sunlight poking through the tall windows.

ROBERT CAMPBELL (50s), holds a glass of whiskey up to his ruddy cheeks. Sips. A grand looking FAMILY TAPESTRY is being hung by two SERVANTS. He oversees them.

ROBERT

No, no, no. Up at the left. Give it the dignity it deserves, you pair of gowks!

Robert's eyes dart to an ACCOUNTANT, who looks over a ledger.

ACCOUNTANT

This state of affairs could do with much improvement, Your Lairdship.

ROBERT

Aye, but it could stand to be worse?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACCOUNTANT

And it could stand to be better. Your holdings are, at present, precarious, sir.

ROBERT

They are watched day and night. My household is a loyal one.

ACCOUNTANT

That is just as well, sir. Given your numerous creditors, I'd recommend prudence as well as watchfulness.

ROBERT

Aye, well. I'll do what I must.

ACCOUNTANT

Very well. Then I'll take my leave of you now, sir.

ROBERT

Aye, and a good journey to you.  
(to servants)  
Will you watch what you're doing!

The tapestry slips to one side and partly falls. Robert almost spills his drink.

INT. PASSAGEWAY. MEGGERNIE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

The accountant opens the door and steps into Jamie.

ACCOUNTANT

Out the way, boy.

He swats Jamie away with his documents. Jamie watches him walk away. More SHOUTING from Robert in the next room. He almost enters and has second thoughts.

INT. WORK QUARTERS. MEGGERNIE CASTLE - NIGHT

A wooden CUP slams onto a table, upside down.

CALLUM (O.S.)

Right, we'll try it this way.

A pair of hands places several more objects next to the cup - a larger wooden cup, a bottle and a smooth stone.

It's Callum placing the objects, sitting across the table from a confused looking Jamie.

Callum lifts the small cup.

CALLUM (CONT'D)

Now, this is the old king, James, who was ousted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He lifts the big cup.

CALLUM (CONT'D)  
This is the new king, William, who was invited.

The big cup moves the small cup out of the way on the table. The bottle is raised.

CALLUM (CONT'D)  
These are the Jacobites, who want James back on the throne, by any means.

He places the bottle next to the small cup.

JAMIE  
I don't understand. Why?

Callum lifts the smooth stone.

CALLUM  
And this is the government, who serve the new king and want to...?

JAMIE  
Stop the Jacobites. But why?

CALLUM  
Why?

JAMIE  
Well, why is it important who's king?

Callum knocks the bottle over with the smooth stone.

CALLUM  
Religion. Land. Money. Honestly? I've no idea. But the MacDonalds are Jacobites. And that makes them --

JAMIE  
Our enemies. More so.

Callum smiles and knocks back his drink.

CALLUM  
Aye, you'll make a fine Campbell man, yet.

Callum's eyes move to the doorway where a GOOD LOOKING GIRL is standing. She smiles at him and he stands up.

JAMIE  
Where are you going?

CALLUM  
Duty calls. I'll speak to you again.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

Jamie watches him leave with the girl.

He sits alone amongst the other rambunctious castle workers at different tables, all ignoring him.

JAMIE

(sotto)

Aye. A fine Campbell man.

INT. DALRYMPLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dalrymple looks up from a letter to Argyll, sitting across the desk from him. Dalrymple tosses the letter onto the desk.

DALRYMPLE

And you would have them all sign this?

ARGYLL

Yes. Given the King's -- given James' position, he has little choice but to relieve them of their obligation, allowing them to sign this oath of allegiance in exchange for pardon. Once signed, their loyalty would be assured. Permanently.

DALRYMPLE

Bringing quiet to the Highlands?

Dalrymple ponders for a second.

DALRYMPLE (CONT'D)

And what of those who do not sign?

ARGYLL

Why would they not? They have been soundly beaten at Dunkeld. Winter is will be upon them. Rebels they may be, but they still have families to feed.

DALRYMPLE

Suppose there are still those who would place their loyalty to a dethroned King first. Over their own kin. Such as those rogues of Glencoe or Glengarry?

ARGYLL

What do you mean?

DALRYMPLE

Incentive, Your Grace. Any absent parties, say by the first of the New Year, would be made an example of. Considering your more than fair terms, I'd say there must be a balance. Would you not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARGYLL

Of course.

DALRYMPLE

Very well. Have your man Duncanson draw it up and send word out to those sheep buggerers. And then we'll see who decides to go his own way.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE GLEN - NIGHT

Jamie rests his chin on his hand, struggling to stay awake. His fire is dwindling, becoming the tiniest beacon at the bottom of the dark glen.

TOP OF THE GLEN

A SHADOWY FIGURE observes the lonely cattle boy. Moves off.

BY JAMIE

Jamie loses his battle to stay awake. His head drops.

Peace.

The cattle start to moo, quietly. One or two get up. Jamie's eyes open.

JAMIE

Aw, what now?

Something RUSTLES in the night.

Jamie snaps to his feet, staff in hand.

Scans the darkness.

Nothing.

More RUSTLING behind him. He SPINS. Sees nothing. Hears nothing. The cattle are still bothered. He tries to relax.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Aw, wheesht. Jumping at your own shadows.

A CLOTH BAG is violently rushed over Jamie's head and he is PINNED TO THE GROUND, someone's knee between his shoulder blades. The attackers are unseen.

The cattle MOO as VOICES start to shoo them onwards.

Jamie struggles furiously.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

You bastards! Get your hands off -- get off me -- you'll not see the week out when we find you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ATTACKER (O.S.)  
Shut yer mouth!

A FIST to Jamie's head. Blood appears on the bag.

ALASDAIR (O.S.)  
Enough! He's just a boy! Tie him and let  
him be.

We can't see the old man but we hear him and his Jacobite  
men.

Jamie coughs inside the bag. His hands are pulled behind his  
back. Roughly tied with rope.

The knee pulls up from his back and he start to wriggle about  
on the ground.

JAMIE  
I swear! I'll find you bastards!

Another PUNCH. Out cold.

The sounds of the cattle and the thieves start to fade away  
to --

BLACK.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE GLEN - DAY

Sunlight creeps across the wet grass. Jamie lies motionless  
on the ground. Bag still on his head.

The sound of a HORSE DRAWING UP. Jamie lifts his head.

The rider dismounts. Boots TRUDGE across to Jamie. The bag is  
removed. Jamie's eyes squint at the daylight, dried blood  
across his face. He looks up and makes out --

CALLUM  
You alright?

JAMIE  
Never mind me, what about the --

Jamie looks past Callum.

THE CATTLE ARE ALL GONE.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Aw no!

INT. ROBERT'S STUDY. MEGGERNIE CASTLE - MORNING

Robert Campbell's hand hovers near his chin. Shocked  
sobriety. 2 AIDES hover at his side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERT

All of them? You -- You're certain?

Callum stands before him. Jamie behind him, all bruises and a black eye.

CALLUM

Yes, Your Lairdship. There were tracks heading north west, but we --

ROBERT

The one thing keeping this estate in the Campbell name. And you didn't go after them?

He sinks again, eyes drifting to the window.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Ruin.

Campbell stares into space for a moment. He reaches for a bottle and pours himself some whisky.

Jamie hesitates and then stands up straight, full of righteous anger.

JAMIE

Uncle Robert, I'm sorry. I'll make it my duty to find --

ROBERT

Is it not enough that your entry into this world took my beloved sister from me, that now you lead the entire estate into ruin?

(beat)

I shouldn't have put the boy in charge. The responsibility was obviously beyond him.

Jamie sinks.

Robert downs his drink. Pours another.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

But I know. We all know, don't we?

Everyone stands silent.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Aye. MacIain of Glencoe!

Jamie reacts to the name. Glares at the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Not content to stand against the king,  
that Old Fox still tries to ruin me, to  
steal what is mine. Thieves and tinkers.  
They serve only themselves and steal from  
their neighbours, like the rest of that  
highland rabble!

Robert's anger is rising. No one is arguing.

JAMIE

Uncle Robert, what can I do?

Robert turns away from Jamie. Ignores him.

ROBERT

Argyll must hear of this. The Earl is our  
family's only hope now. Leave me.  
(indicates Jamie to Callum)  
Take him with you.

Callum grabs Jamie by the shoulder and ushers him to the  
door.

INT. PASSAGEWAY. MEGGERNIE CASTLE - DAY

Jamie follows as Callum strides up the passageway.

JAMIE

Callum, he didn't answer me.  
(tries to catch up)  
Callum. Callum, what can we do?

CALLUM

I don't know, Jamie.

JAMIE

What? What do you mean?

CALLUM

Stop -- stop asking me!

Jamie is shocked by this.

CALLUM (CONT'D)

Look, I know he's never been fair on you  
about mother, but --

JAMIE

That's not my fault!

CALLUM

Jamie.  
(beat - he calms)  
Jamie, if you really want him to treat  
you as a man, then you need to stop  
depending on me so much. Stand up to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIE  
Callum --

Callum spins away up the hallway.

CALLUM  
Find your own way, Jamie.

Jamie. Pretty much devastated.

EXT. MEGGERNIE CASTLE - DAWN

Four horses trot away from the dilapidated castle - Robert takes the lead, head held high, followed by Callum and his two aides.

From his own horse, Jamie watches them leave.

JAMIE  
Alright, MacIain. I'm coming for you.

He swings his horse around and heads off in the opposite direction, into the countryside.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Jamie gallops into the countryside. Grim intent seared across his young face.

ARGYLL (O.S.)  
Glenlyon, this is indeed a most regrettable turn of events.

INT. ARGYLL'S OFFICE. INVERARAY CASTLE - DAY

Robert Campbell is tense as he and his aides face a seated Argyll.

ARGYLL  
Perhaps a return to your commission in my regiment would be of assistance?

ROBERT  
With all due respect, your Grace, the uniform alone would not settle a matter of stolen property.

ARGYLL  
Of course.  
(beat)  
It would merely serve to keep your creditors at bay. I hear your luck with the cards has been poor of late.

Robert stiffens at this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARGYLL (CONT'D)

Well, I would not presume to say that the entire clan Campbell has been wronged. But perchance that you yourself have been slighted once more in an old feud? And there are those who would say that the livestock in question might have come into your hands through less than honourable means?

ROBERT

Lies, Your Grace. Lies spread by those who seek to ruin me and besmirch the Campbell name.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Your Grace, are we not kin? I beg of you. Take action against those devils of Glencoe.

Argyll ponders. Robert is expectant.

EXT. ENTRANCE. INVERARAY CASTLE - DAY

Robert storms from the grand entrance to the castle, fuming. His aides struggle to keep up.

CALLUM

Uncle Robert, then we'll all enlist. If it'll save the estate.

Robert mounts up.

ROBERT

Aye, we will. But it'll take more than just soldiering to save us, boy.

INT. DALRYMPLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Amidst walls full of caged books, Dalrymple sits behind his magnificent desk, scribbling signatures on several papers.

A KNOCK at the door.

DALRYMPLE

(sharp)

Enter.

An assistant, MCGOVERN, enters. Dalrymple does not look up from his task.

DALRYMPLE (CONT'D)

Yes?

MCGOVERN

Sir John, there is a Captain Drummond here to see you.

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CONTINUED:

Dalrymple looks up. Impatience flooding from his face. Almost a smile.

DALRYMPLE  
See him in, McGovern.

MCGOVERN  
Yes, Sir John.

McGovern exits and Dalrymple finishes his scribbling. The clerk exits with the papers. The door opens and McGovern shows in CAPTAIN DRUMMOND (40), an army officer with hollow, cruel eyes.

DALRYMPLE  
Captain Drummond, I have been told that you are a man of considerable talent.

DRUMMOND  
Thank you, sir.

DALRYMPLE  
Yes, indeed. And I hear that one of these talents has been cause of some -- notoriety in certain circles.

DRUMMOND  
I serve the King as best I can, sir.

DALRYMPLE  
I expect you do, Captain. Tell me, how far does your loyalty to your King extend?

DRUMMOND  
Sir?

Dalrymple turns away and feigns interest over a book on his desk, keeping his eyes from the Captain.

DALRYMPLE  
A task, Captain. To be carried out in secrecy and with the expediency which I have come to hear associated with your name. Persons whose business it is to eliminate unruly elements. And now an example must be made.

DRUMMOND  
I see, sir.

DALRYMPLE  
You do?

DRUMMOND  
I have no love of the highlanders, sir.

A thin smile from Dalrymple.

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CONTINUED: (2)

DALRYMPLE

Then it appears we have something in common, do we not, Captain Drummond?

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Jamie's horse trots on through the increasingly bleak countryside. He looks around with confidence.

JAMIE

Aye, we'll find those thieving buggers soon enough, won't we?

Funnily enough, his horse does not reply.

Jamie scans his surroundings again. Miles and miles of hills and scrubland. Stops his horse. Looks behind him. More hills. Sighs.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

The trouble is, they could be anywhere. And so could we.

The horse just kicks the ground. It's not happy.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Easy.

He urges the animal on again.

EXT. EDGE OF WOODLAND. COUNTRYSIDE - EVENING

The wind is kicking up. Jamie has stopped and is peering into the edge of a dark wood - all bare limbs and leaveless branches. Unpleasant.

He looks down and watches as the path leads into the wood. Looks into the wood. He's not happy about this.

Deep breath. Pulls his hood up. Starts his horse onwards.

Swallowed up by the black trees.

EXT. WOODLAND - EVENING

Tiny bits of the remains of daylight stab through the trees. Jamie is on alert, shooting quick glances all around himself at any given moment whilst trying not to shiver too much.

EXT. THORNBUSH. WOODLAND - NIGHT

Many HORSE HOOVES stamp the ground, surrounded by thorny bushes. The feet of the unseen riders shift in their stirrups.

Swords are drawn.

One horse snorts impatiently. STAMPS again.

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CONTINUED:

RIDER (O.S.)

Heeya!

The hooves all take off, churning up the sludgy ground.

EXT. WOODLAND - NIGHT.

Jamie, almost asleep, snaps his head up and some unheard sound. Eyes wide. Nervous.

Looks around.

Nothing but sprawling branches in the dark.

He rides on into --

EXT. WOODLAND CLEARING - NIGHT.

Jamie follows the path into a small clearing. He breathes a little easier. Looks up.

The sky is clear and starry. Moon almost full, illuminating the clearing.

Jamie smiles a little and relaxes. So much for the dark and scary forest.

Six RIDERS emerge from the other side of the clearing. Highlanders. All armed with swords and muskets. They halt.

Eyes on Jamie.

He freezes. Any sense of relief drains in an instant.

Jamie and the Highlanders just look at each other. A stand off. One of the Highlanders is old Alasdair, along with his son, John.

An eternity until --

ALASDAIR

You alright there, son?

Jamie swallows. Trembles.

JAMIE

Aye. Aye, sir.

Some of the Highlanders laugh at the "sir".

JOHN

You look like you're lost. Where are you headed?

Jamie has to summon up the courage to reply.

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CONTINUED:

JAMIE  
That's my business.  
(beat)  
I'm not lost.

A far less friendlier looking big Highlander (20s) gives Jamie a once over.

MEAN HIGHLANDER  
He asked you a question, boy. Who are you?

ALASDAIR  
Keep your tongue, Hamish. He's just a lad.

HAMISH  
You'll be a Campbell, then?

ALASDAIR  
Don't worry yourself, lad. There's no quarrel here and no harm --

He stops. Immediately turns to the surrounding trees. Senses something.

HAMISH  
What is --

SEVEN MASKED RIDERS BURST THROUGH THE TREES. Swords raised. CHARGING into the Highlanders.

One of the MacDonalds falls, head SPLIT OPEN.

A masked rider goes for Jamie, seemingly indiscriminate.

Jamie heads into the forest. His attacker breaks off and takes on another Highlander.

The old man is hacking away with his claymore. A warrior of skill. But he is in danger of being bested by his younger attacker.

John, Hamish and the others are also fighting for their lives as their comrade lies dead.

SWINGING at each other with their swords. The horses KICK at the ground and WHINNEY in protest at the CLANGING steel.

Alasdair THRASHES his sword down on one opponent but another storms his horse and the beast rears up, THROWING him to the ground.

He hits hard. A WHEEZE of complaint.

He swipes upwards at his two attackers, cutting at the low neck of one of them.

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CONTINUED: (2)

Blood SPURTS.

The masked man collapses.

John tries to rush to his father's aid but still must contend with his own attacker.

Alasdair rolls low on the ground, avoiding the stamping hooves and stabbing swords. He picks himself up and finds himself backed up against a tree.

One of the attackers approaches, his kerchief mask is falling away.

Alasdair looks around. Cannot reach his sword. Stares his executioner right in the eyes.

Captain Drummond.

His blade, inches from Alasdair's face. The old warrior faces death with a smile.

Drummond falls forward, struck from behind, his blade narrowly missing a confused Alasdair.

JAMIE SWINGS HIS STAFF AROUND once more and it CRACKS Drummond's shoulder. He crawls in the mud.

Alasdair smiles.

Jamie looks down. Can't believe what he's done. Doesn't know whether to laugh or panic. He doesn't get the chance as he turns to see --

A horse rears up at him. The masked rider brings the beast's hooves down towards the boy. Jamie and Alasdair duck just as the hooves strike the tree, SPLITTING bark and splinters.

Jamie rolls away, hands covering his head. Looks up. Sees the skirmish continue as Hamish makes short work of another masked assassin - he's a frightening sight in battle.

John is dragged from his horse, clutching his wounded arm. One of the other Highlanders intercepts John's attacker, skewering him.

One of the masked men has set his eyes on Jamie. He rushes him and Jamie brings his staff between them barely in time. The sword catches in the staff and Jamie twists his weapon, wrenching it from the attacker's hands.

Jamie twists his staff towards the man and catches him in the side of the head. The sword falls at Jamie's feet, as does the masked man. He's not getting up.

Jamie grabs the sword and flees into the trees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He stops, turns and, hidden from view again, watches as Hamish drives a blade into the throat of another enemy with a WARCRY from hell itself.

Drummond hears Hamish. Sees the odds are stacked against him and breaks away, disappearing into the woods. Hamish is about to go after him when Alasdair stops him.

ALASDAIR

Enough, Hamish. Let his masters know he failed. We're safe enough for now.

Alasdair scans the trees.

ALASDAIR (CONT'D)

(shouts into the trees)

And to our young protector. You have my thanks, Mr Campbell. Wherever you are!

Still unseen, Jamie sinks quietly back into the darkness.

EXT. WOODLAND - NIGHT

Jamie staggers back to his horse, tethered to a tree. Snow is starting to fall. He examines the stolen sword.

He holds it out, looking down the blade. He pulls it close.

Watching the trees.

LATER

Jamie warms his hands by a small campfire. Shivering.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Snow is falling more heavily now. Jamie emerges on horseback from the forest, the sword strapped to Jamie's back. Pleased as punch with his new acquisition.

The glen rolls out as Jamie plods on.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The snowfall is strengthening into a blizzard. Jamie's completely covered by his hood as his horse struggles through the snow past a rocky hillside.

A muffled RUMBLE can be heard. Jamie turns his head.

ROCKS are starting to tumble down the hillside.

He tries to hurry his horse. One small rock BOUNCES into the air and catches the horse on its hind quarters. It REARS UP, throwing Jamie off.

He lands in the snow, unhurt. He looks up - his horse bolts into the night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

More rocks tumble down. He picks himself up and staggers away from the hillside into the blizzard.

Alone in the snow.

EXT. TREES. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Jamie forces his way through the freezing weather. He spots a group of dead trees a few yards away. Their intertwining branches provide shelter and there is no snow directly beneath them.

Jamie staggers towards them and collapses, exhausted and freezing but sheltered.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TREES. COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING

Jamie lies unconscious beneath the dead trees.

A SHADOW crosses him. A stick prods him, its wielder unseen. No response. Prods again. Nothing.

We can hear someone SIGH heavily.

Whoever it is, they start to drag Jamie away.

CUT TO:

BLACK

The sound of a fire CRACKLING. The distant HOWL of the wind. A loose door banging repeatedly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHONA'S COTTAGE - DAY

Jamie's groggy face. Eyes not quite open. Face ruddy.

Water SPLASHES him squarely in the face.

OK, now he's awake.

Laid out on the floor, his feet in front of him. He's under several blankets.

He shakes the water off but can't move his arms. He twists his head and sees his hands are bound above his head to a spinning wheel. The yarn from the wheel forms his bonds.

Tries to shake free. No good. Hears LAUGHTER.

Shuffling away from him is a wizened OLD CRONE, laughing to herself, empty pail in hand.

JAMIE

Hey. Hey! What do you think you're doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She shuffles into the corner, places the pail on the floor and sits on a small stool, facing Jamie, as though keeping watch.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Untie me. Untie me, you mad hag, or so help me, I'll --

YOUNG FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Or you'll what?

Jamie looks around for the source of the other, much younger voice.

From behind him, someone moves. He can't see who it is.

YOUNG FEMALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You'd harm an old, defenceless widow?

Jamie looks to the old woman again. There's something not quite right in her eyes. A detached sadness.

From behind Jamie walks a GIRL, (18), slightly tough looking but very pretty with it. She walks with her head held high. But not too high.

She stops in front of Jamie. Stares down at him. Their eyes lock.

GIRL

Well, would you?

JAMIE

No. Of course not.

GIRL

I see. A lot of talk. Just like the rest of them, eh?

JAMIE

Who?

She turns away. Takes a seat next to the old woman. Gives Jamie a once-over.

GIRL

Shona here lost her man to the fight for whatever king it is they want.

(beat)

Is that why you're here? Are you another one of these Jacobite fools?

JAMIE

What? No. I was tracking cattle thieves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GIRL  
Tracking?  
(laughs)  
And how is that going for you?

He looks away.

JAMIE  
How long have I been here?

GIRL  
Two days. You were almost frozen solid.

He tries to conceal his surprise.

GIRL (CONT'D)  
Fed you. Kept you warm.

JAMIE  
Why am I tied?

GIRL  
You were havoring and struggling.  
Shouting about being sorry for something.

She eyes him, expecting an answer. He looks away.

GIRL (CONT'D)  
None of my business, I suppose. But you  
were all over the place. So we tied you  
before you hurt yourself.

JAMIE  
Why?

She produces a KNIFE. Approaches him. He tenses.

GIRL  
Because we're not animals.

She cuts his bonds. He draws his arms down. Winces at the  
stiffness.

JAMIE  
Thank you.

The girl kicks a plate of food over to him.

GIRL  
A good New Year to you.

She exits the hut.

He scoffs the food down.

The old woman looks him over.



EXT. SHONA'S COTTAGE - DAY

Jamie emerges from the hut, hobbling slightly and still wincing at his own movements.

The girl is gathering firewood from a pile at the back of the hut.

JAMIE

Thank you.

(beat)

I'd have perished out there if not for you.

She doesn't look up from her work.

GIRL

I know. I already told you that.

JAMIE

What's your name?

GIRL

Mhairi.

JAMIE

Jamie.

(beat)

Jamie Campbell. At the risk of sounding more of a fool than you likely think, where am I?

MHAIRI

Likely?

She stands up, firewood gathered, starts to march back to the entrance to the hut. He follows.

MHAIRI (CONT'D)

You're in Glencoe.

He stops in his tracks.

JAMIE

Glencoe?

Steps out past the hut to see --

A beautiful vast and rolling glen, stretching out for miles on either side with a crystal clear sea loch in the distance. Surrounded by massive snow peaked hills.

Several SMALL VILLAGES are scattered through the glen. Tiny dots of activity can be made out at the water's edge in the distance - washing, fishing, children playing.

The sounds of CATTLE somewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Oh.

INT. DALRYMPLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dalrymple examines some papers. Argyll waits nearby, pensive.

DALRYMPLE

It would appear that there are several names missing from this list, Your Grace.

ARGYLL

We are aware of several outstanding submissions but are waiting on their confirmation.

DALRYMPLE

Cameron of Lochiel. MacDonald of Keppoch. Oh, and that thieving relative of his your man Campbell has been complaining about. What is the wretch's name? MacIain? Of Glencoe?

ARGYLL

I am told we have not received all of the oaths yet, Sir John, due to bad weather delaying the return of several papers from Fort William. But we have not heard who, if anyone, has failed to submit to them. And there has been word of -- incidents.

DALRYMPLE

Incidents, Your Grace. Whatever do you mean?

Something passes between the two men. Unspoken, but guards are now up.

ARGYLL

No more than that, Sir John. The weather delays news as well as oaths.

DALRYMPLE

Surely the date has passed? They have had ample time to carry this out long before now. This is the New Year and their loyalty is left wanting.

ARGYLL

These are papers signed by the magistrates that we wait for. As I said, we do not know who is actually left outstanding.

Dalrymple goes back to the paper. Unmoved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARGYLL (CONT'D)

I say we give the fort several days grace, Sir John. The weather is not the fault of a man. The work of government and crown and must be seen to be executed correctly and precisely.

Dalrymple. A raised eyebrow.

DALRYMPLE

But of course.  
(beat)  
Your Grace.

The sarcasm is more than evident to Argyll.

EXT. INNVERCOE - DAY

A large basket is DUMPED in Jamie's arms by Mhairi.

MHAIRI

Thought you'd be on your way by now.  
Tracking those thieves of yours?

She starts away from him. He struggles with the basket as he catches up.

Invercoe village, on the banks of the sea loch, is quietly busy. Mostly women and children going about their daily chores.

JAMIE

That wouldn't be very gentlemanly of me, now would it? I'd be dead now if not for you.

MHAIRI

Is that right now? Which is it to be, then? A gentleman or just some cattle boy trying to prove himself.

He stops.

JAMIE

I just want to do the right thing.

But Mhairi doesn't stop. He catches up.

EXT. LOCHSIDE. INVERCOE - DAY

Shona and other women of various ages work laundry against rocks. Mhairi approaches. Jamie is still trying to keep up. Mhairi reaches down to the pile by Shona and dumps some of it into Jamie's basket.

MHAIRI

Well, I suppose we all have different ideas about what the right thing is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She takes off again. He almost topples over with the basket.

JAMIE

I said I'd stay to help. Not be lectured  
at by a girl.

She's ahead of him again.

MHAIRI

A girl?  
(to herself)  
We'll see about that, Mr Campbell.

EXT. SHONA'S COTTAGE - NIGHT.

Jamie collapses in a heap by the entrance to the hut, the basket by his side. His cold breath steams and a warm light emanates from the hut.

Mhairi exits the cottage, clutching some blankets and a pair of lamps. Tosses the blankets to Jamie.

MHAIRI

Follow me.

She marches away from the hut. Jamie can barely muster the energy to raise his head.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT.

Mhairi places the lamps carefully on a wooden beam. A few HORSES grunt in their pens.

Jamie enters and surveys the premises. Jaw drops.

JAMIE

You're jesting, surely?

MHAIRI

Horses have no sense of humour that I'm  
aware of. But they do manage keep warm in  
here.

She goes to one of the horses. Affectionately pets its snout. It sniffs her.

MHAIRI (CONT'D)

This is Tavish. He'll be keeping an eye  
on you, won't you, Tavish?

Jamie is unamused. The horse snorts gently.

MHAIRI (CONT'D)

So, if anything out of the ordinary  
occurs, he'll be the first to tell me.

She looks right at him. Right into him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIE

You've nothing to fear from me. I'll not be that kind of man.

MHAIRI

Oh, I know that.

She ruffles the horse's mane and picks up her lamp, heading for the door.

MHAIRI (CONT'D)

That was a good day's work from you. Most of the men here only think about fighting. Goodnight, Mr Campbell.

For a second, they share a look. She almost blushes before she closes the door, locking it from the outside with a wooden beam.

He stares at the door a moment, a bit taken aback by the moment. Smiles as well. Beat.

He tosses the blankets into a corner and goes to the door. Gently pulls on it. Definitely locked.

JAMIE

Bugger.

He settles down in the dark. Tavish's long head leans out from his pen, breath misting in the cold. Jamie rolls over, pulling the blankets tight up. But another smile.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Mr Campbell?

EXT. GLENCOE - NIGHT.

A perfect semi circle of the moon shines down on the glen. The wind kicks up.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT.

Hay blows along the floor. It makes its way to a sleeping Jamie. He stirs a little and pulls the blanket higher. A sudden GUST blows more hay at him.

He wakes. Sees a small, ragged hole in the planks on the far side of the stable wall, like a large mousehole.

He gets up and bundles some hay. He tries to pack it into the hole. Stops. Pulls the hay back. A closer look.

The hole is about big enough for him to crawl through.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT.

Jamie's halfway through the hole. One of the wooden planks catches on his rear end. He tries to pull himself through. The plank gives way, SNAPPING back into place.

Jamie freezes. Hugs the ground. No one has heard. He clammers to his feet and heads along the moonlit path.

EXT. INVERCOE - NIGHT.

Jamie trudges through the light snow. He stops. The sounds of cattle somewhere. He follows the sound.

EXT. CATTLE PEN - NIGHT.

Jamie stops at the gate.

JAMIE

Alright, MacIain. Let's see what you did with them.

He silently lifts the latch to the pen and enters. The cattle remain quiet, lying on the ground.

He treads carefully through the herd. Approaches one. Looks for a branding mark but the beast's fur is too thick. He tries to part the hair.

The animal shifts. Snorts.

Jamie stops. Looks about. His position amongst the herd looks obvious.

He tries again and the animal gets to its feet. He follows it, still trying to find the branding. The rest of the herd becomes agitated, getting to their feet. Annoyed sounds.

Jamie corners the cow against the fence. The lumbering steer stops and Jamie looks again. Finds something.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Right.

He examines the brand mark. It's indistinct.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Bugger.

The cow MOOS and Jamie withdraws. The animal moves away but the rest of the herd is now on its feet, becoming more and more agitated.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

No. No, ssshhh!

(CONTINUED)