

The Swordbearer Saga
Part One:

When Dark Reigns Fall

An
Original Screenplay
By

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE STORM CLOUDS - NIGHT

Mist and rain swirl in the darkness as bursts of LIGHTNING illuminate the clouds, followed by the SOUNDS of distant THUNDER.

It is a slow, slow descent through the clouds. Suddenly

A BOLT OF LIGHTNING -

shatters a TREE LIMB along a forest path with a THUNDEROUS CRACK

EXT. A FOREST PATH - NIGHT

A large black gelding rears anxiously as the lightning strikes above him, illuminating the concern on his rider's rain drenched face.

ELDRED

Easy, Falcwren

ELDRED'S an older man, sixty or more, whose stubbled beard is spattered with mud despite the high collar on his cloak.

His short, unruly hair is hidden beneath a sodden, wide-brimmed hat. He's able to calm Falcwren and rides on.

EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT

Eldred pulls up sharply in front of a STONE TOWER that's been reduced to smoldering ruin.

A LONG SWORD, with Runes inscribed on the blade, lies broken on the ground. Eldred sees the runes disappear, as if being washed away by the rain.

He scans the forest beyond. Sees a FLASH OF PALE BLUE LIGHT in the distance and spurs Falcwren forward.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

ORRIN throws himself behind a large rock as THREE BLUE SPHERES of light explode around him.

One of them strikes a tree and engulfs it in pale fire. The others strike the ground near the rock.

Orrin's face is burned red and his long grey hair is singed. As the explosions stop, he gets up and hurries on.

EXT. FOREST/A LOW HILL - NIGHT

MORDEUS stands on top of the hill. The rain and wind whip at his robe. A tall, Red-eyed warrior, KALOC, stands below him. They're backed by a pale, blue glow which emanates from behind the hill.

Mordeus raises his hands and three spheres separate from the light. He thrusts his arms forward and the spheres streak off into the darkness.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The spheres of light pass over Eldred's head. He chases after them.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

The spheres streak towards Orrin. He raises a gnarled WOODEN WAND. A BEAM OF LIGHT leaps from the tip and destroys the first sphere just as Eldred arrives.

The second sphere explodes on a nearby tree, knocking Orrin down. The wand falls from his grasp as the last sphere races towards him. Eldred draws his own wand.

ELDRED

Orrin!

Eldred destroys the sphere before it reaches Orrin but the blast rips into the man's body.

Eldred leaps from his horse and rushes to Orrin's side.
A burned and bloodied hand grasps Eldred's.

ORRIN

You, you are the last.

He dies.

ELDRED

And now it begins again

EXT. FOREST/A LOW HILL - NIGHT

Mordeus and Kaloc turn and walk down into the light. It
closes behind them like a door and vanishes.

EXT. FORTRESS - DAY

Bodies litter the muddy plain in front of the city as FIRES
burn within its walls. There is a siege tower by the gate.

EXT. INSIDE THE FORTRESS WALLS - DAY

RAVENWOLF gallops through the gate on a roan-colored
horse, followed by BALDWIN (42), BLEYS(40), and a troop of
bodyguards. The street shows signs of a recent battle.

Ravenwolf (35) is a dark, powerfully built man with black
hair. His battle leathers and helmet are splattered with
blood.

They come to a BARRICADE of WAGONS and BOXES. The scene is
littered with the dead on both sides.

BALDWIN

Some of you men, clear a path here.

The Troopers dismount to tackle the job. Beyond the semi-
circle of the barricade is twenty yards of open space
leading to the central keep. Ravenwolf's soldiers lay
scattered among the dead.

BLEYS

They made a good fight of it.

RAVENWOLF

(angrily)

They weren't supposed to fight
at all!

BLEYS

Of course not, My Lord. You're
right. treacherous bastards,
all of them.

The troopers move one of the wagons and Ravenwolf spurs his horse forward.

EXT. THE CENTRAL KEEP - DAY

The group rides up and dismounts. Men-at-arms step forward to secure their horses.

On the upper landing is the broken body of a five-year old BOY. Ravenwolf looks to the top of the tower. Baldwin follows his gaze.

BALDWIM

Maybe he fell.

RAVENWOLF

Or was thrown. (to a soldier)
Where is he?

SOLDIER

Inside, My Lord.

Ravenwolf strides up the steps into the keep followed by Baldwin, Bleys and the bodyguards.

INT. FORTESS/THRONE ROOM - DAY

The hall is small and dirty. The seat of power for a minor king.

CASSIO sits in the throne on a dais at the far end of the hall surrounded by his cronies.

He's a sinewy, hawk-faced man who wears his long black hair in a topknot which allows it to hang down his back.

Two prisoners are on their knees in front of him with their hands tied behind their backs. One is MIRKO (45) the deposed king; soft and spineless.

The other is SYLVANDER (30). He's made of sterner stuff. Both are bruised and bloody. Mirko wears an IRON CROWN.

CASSIO

I should kill you both for all
the trouble you've caused me
but the King wants you alive.

MIRKO

It wasn't my fault. It was him.
He's Captain of the Guard, he
gave the orders.

CASSIO

But you're his King, Mirko.

MIRKO

No, I'm not. He's a mercenary.
I only pay him.

Cassio slides from the throne and kneels in front of Mirko.

CASSIO

And what would you pay me
not to kill you?

MIRKO

Anything, anything you want.

CASSIO

We've already taken everything
you've got. You've nothing
left to bargain with. And what
about you mercenary, what would
you give me?

Sylvander spits in his face. Cassio draws his knife and yanks Sylvander's head back, exposing his neck. He's about to slit the man's throat when Ravenwolf enters.

RAVENWOLF

Is that how you need them,
Cassio, with their hands tied?

Cassio doesn't lower his knife.

CASSIO

He cost me half my command
getting in here.

RAVENWOLF

Maybe I'll give him the other
half and he can teach them how
to fight, and who.

The two men glare at each other. Bleys (bearded, brutish)
takes a step forward. Cassio shoves Sylvander to the floor
and motions to the men on the dais, who push their way out.

CASSIO

One day, My Lord, Ravenwolf,
You'll push me too far.

RAVENWOLF

And then what?

CASSIO

And then we'll see, My Lord.
And then we'll see.

He knocks Mirko over on his way out. A young man in his
Command, QUINN (20) hesitates. His loyalty is to the king,
but he follows the others out.

Ravenwolf helps Sylvander to his feet.

RAVENWOLF

What's your name?

SYLVANDER

Sylvander.

RAVENWOLF

If I let you live, will you fight
as well for me as you did for him?

SYLVANDER

Better.

Ravenwolf motions for Bleys to cut Sylvander's bonds then
steps onto the dais.

Guards drag Mirko to his knees and set him in front of his conqueror, his hopes buoyed by Sylvander's amnesty. Ravenwolf takes the crown from his head.

RAVENWOLF

You should have kept your word.
Hang him.

MIRKO

No, My Lord. Please. Please.

Mirko is dragged off begging and screaming as Ravenwolf lifts the crown above his head.

SOLDIERS

Ravenwolf! Ravenwolf! Ravenwolf!

You've just read the opening scenes of

WHEN DARK REIGNS FALL,
Part One of THE SWORDBEARER SAGA

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