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TITLE

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EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - DAY

PIERS PLOWMAN rides slowly down the well trodden path of Sherwood Forest, his horse mirrors the defeated look he bears. Piers picks at his lute but the resulting sound bears little resemblance to that of a melody

Sigh, Piers positions the instrument onto his back and rides on.

Twig snaps. Piers' head snaps to the source of the noise but is met only by a wall of branch and bush. Tentatively, he rides on.

More rustlings. Piers slows his horse, darting his gaze around apprehensively.

PIERS
Who goes there?

Silence.

Piers' steady paces uneasily.

PIERS (cont'd)
(Under breath)
Easy girl.

Piers does a final check of the area then cautiously continues along the path, checking around him all the while.

Crash

Three figures burst out of the forest, surrounding Piers. They are dressed in dirtied rags, their faces masked by dark cloth.

The horse rears, throwing the hapless minstrel from her back.

WILL SCARLET, the youngest of the three outlaws, acrobatically launches onto the horses back as she tries to escape and steers her into the forest.

The remaining two outlaws close in on Piers, who writhes in the dirt helplessly. LITTLE JOHN, a giant of a man, brandishes a long wooden staff. ROBIN HOOD, a smaller man with athletic features, points a drawn bow equipped with a poorly crafted arrow into his victim's face.

ROBIN
Money?

PIERS

Nothing worth your while.

Robin nods towards John who grabs the minstrel with his bear hands and rips a leather pouch from his belt. Piers makes no attempt to fight back.

JOHN

(Inspecting the
contents of the
pouch)

He weren't kidding.

The pouch is tossed to Robin who immediately pockets it.

ROBIN

What's he got on his back?

John grabs Piers again off of the floor and yanks the lute from his back, it is broken. Piers lets out a groan.

JOHN

You some kind of Jester?

Piers scowls at the insult and shakes his arm free from John's grasp.

PIERS

Minstrel.

Will Scarlet suddenly bursts out of the forest behind Robin, still riding Piers' horse expect she is now rid of her saddle and luggage.

WILL

Robin!

The three men suddenly turn towards Will, he is panicked.

WILL

Soldiers.

Right on cue, a dozen men on horseback appear in the distance, they wear dark armor and are armed to the teeth with swords, crossbows and battleaxes.

ROBIN

Lead them away from the Oak.

Will nods and swiftly rides off down the path.

Robin turns to John, they nod and run into the forest in opposite directions - they have been in this situation before.

Piers watches the men disappear, takes a final terrified look at the oncoming soldiers before barreling into the forest after Robin.

The only thing that remains of the men is Piers' broken lute.

Piers clumsily runs through the forest. He catches glimpses of Robin but it is clear he is falling behind.

Snagged by branches, Piers' cap and cloak are torn from him, allowing him to run faster.

Three soldiers, now on foot, appear behind Piers, like a pack of lions chasing their prey. Piers glances to see them and desperately tries to accelerate but his legs are not accustomed to the wild terrain and within an instance he is falling, tumbling head over heels down a slope. His writhing body crashes through the undergrowth before slamming into a tree.

Gasping breaths. Disorientated, Piers gingerly attempts to get to his feet but is unable.

Heavy Footsteps. Piers faces up the slope in fear, he is helpless.

A hand suddenly appears and drags Piers into a small ditch underneath a tree just as a soldier's head appears over the lip of a slope.

Robin's hand clasps around Piers' mouth who is a picture of terror, a stark contrast to the cool, collected demeanor of Robin.

The soldiers make their way down towards where the two men are hidden, inspecting the area.

One of the soldier's reaches the tree and peers out into the forest below. He is stood directly above Robin and Piers. Robin's hand is still wrapped tightly around the minstrel's mouth.

The soldier grunts and his men move down the slope, passing by Robin and Piers only needing to turn around to be able to see them. But they do not and soon disappear deeper into the forest.

Robin and Piers remain frozen until Robin's hand eventually lets go of Piers' mouth. The minstrel gasps for air

Robin checks the area for soldiers before getting to his feet.

PIERS
(Catching his breath)
You saved my life

ROBIN
They weren't after you.

Robin starts off into the forest, away from where the soldiers walked.

Piers scrambles to his feet

PIERS
Where are you going?

ROBIN
That doesn't concern you.

Piers is now alongside Robin who doesn't break his stride.

PIERS
But what of me?

ROBIN
The soldiers never stay long, you can get back on your way soon.

Piers is now in front of Robin, trying desperately to reason with him.

PIERS
Back on my way? You have robbed me of my stead and of every penny I had to my name, even the clothes I bore have been robbed by the forest. I have nothing left save what you see before you. How do you expect me to continue on my way?

Robin stops and tosses Piers his pouch of money.

ROBIN
I will have Will return your horse.

Robin continues walking, Piers awkwardly continues behind, battling with the forest which seems no obstacle for Robin.

PIERS
And what of my lute?

ROBIN
The instrument?

PIERS
A minstrel is nothing without his
instrument. If I cannot play then I
cannot entertain. If I cannot
entertain then I cannot eat.

Robin pauses and turns to face Piers - the prospect of poverty has struck a chord with him. Piers continues, he is no longer speaking to Robin but to himself, coming to terms with the severity of his situation.

PIERS (cont'd)
Sir Bandit, I came to your forest
thinking I had nothing. But that
seems like riches compared to what I
carry now. I fear I will not survive
long in your forest Sir Bandit but I
cannot say where else I can go.

Silence.

Robin looks the minstrel up and down - he recognizes the sight of a helpless man all to well.

Sigh.

ROBIN
Follow me.