

KEY: / - Dialogue line break
Italics - In-game character movement
[TEXT] - Placeholder/contextual text

SCOUT: AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHH!/
FUUUUCK! MY FUCKING LEGS!/

Yosef and Brother Cudwell approach the scene./

The scout writhes in pain, pinned beneath the weight of his horse. Its legs are a broken mess, tangled up in the wire you set./

It struggles to breathe./

SCOUT: Urgh!.../
...Damn you fucking both.../
...You'll fucking hang for this./

The horse's body spasms and shudders. A gross, visceral movement that etches itself into your mind./

You notice the sharp bend in its neck, where you see vertebrae have separated from vertebrae./

SCOUT: EEEEEOOOORGH!/
GET HER FUCKING OFF ME!/

HORSE: Hruuuuufff...../

A dying sound, you know./

It ignites an image from your memory, a flash of an old horse you once knew as a child. Palomino. Strong. Beautiful./

1. *Show mercy.*
2. *Let them both suffer.*

<i>1. Show mercy.</i> You plunge your [EQUIPPED MELEE] into the horse's neck./	<i>2. Let them both suffer.</i> The horse shudders again./ You see a fine froth form at her mouth./
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<p>HORSE: Guurgh....//</p> <p>Her blood spurts limply from the wound, dark and thick, staining your [EQUIPPED GLOVE SLOT].//</p> <p>Cudwell turns to face you.//</p> <p>He stares at you, wordlessly, his eyes betraying nothing.//</p> <p>Then he nods. Approval.//</p>	<p>She begins to convulse, writhing on top of the scout.//</p> <p>SCOUT: YAAAAAARGHHH!// UUUUUUURGGGH!// FUU-//</p> <p>A flash of movement to your right, and a moving blur embeds itself into the neck of the horse.//</p> <p>HORSE: Guurgh...//</p> <p>A bolt.//</p> <p>You turn to face Cudwell, slinging his crossbow over his shoulder.//</p> <p>He stares back at you.//</p> <p>A twitch of the eye.//</p> <p>You can see he is trying not to judge your actions.//</p> <p>He is failing.//</p>
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You watch the priest close his eyes and mutter something you assume to be divine under his breath.//

SCOUT: ...a brother from the Church...?//
 ...?//
 ...Christ, it's Cudwell, isn't it?...//

CUDWELL: ...//

SCOUT: *sighs*//

You see the scout wince behind his shawl, the flesh around his eyes tightening.//

SCOUT: What ever happened to obedience and servitude, eh?//
 Heheh-//
 URGFF!... my bastard legs are broke.//

You feel something shift in Cudwell beside you.//

The question was a jape, for sure, but something stirs in the brother.//

Grief?... Regret...? Indignation...?/

SCOUT: And you?.../

The scout's finger is trained on you. Weak and quivering./

1. Yosef.

2. ...

1. Yosef	2. ...
SCOUT: .../ Of course!/ I really should have guessed that./ Well, it truly is an honour to meet the man on everyone's lips./ The talk of the town./ A man of honour, come to save the poor folk of Milkfold, eh? He hacks up phlegm from deep in his throat, spitting a mound of bloody mucus onto the torso of his horse./ SCOUT: There's something so... masturbatory about mercenaries like you./ Self-imposed duty. Gah, makes me sick./ Tsk. tsk./ How little you understand./ I hope the noose offers you that sense of valiance you crave, Yosef./ I truly do./	SCOUT: .../ ...One of those silent types, eh?/ Heh./ ... The anonymous hero of the downtrodden./ How humble./ Poetic./ Valiant./ Heh./ A faceless saviour. How apt./ Another forgotten face on the end of a noose./

CUDWELL: You don't speak much like a bandit./

SCOUT: Are you flirting with me, brother?/
.../
Gwahaha-/
URGH! Fucking idiots!/
You'll be damned if my legs don't heal right-/

You see the priest plant a foot on the horse's ribs, reaching over and stripping the bandit of his disguise./

SCOUT: ARGH! GET OFF OF IT! URGHHH...!/
Wait./

You know this face./

You have seen this man before./

CUDWELL: Sir Horvitz...!?!/
Lukaz Horvitz. A Milkfoldian Knight./

And the Lord's cousin, you remember./

LUKAZ: Ha./
You should see the look on your face Cudwell./
Priceless./

You see him stifle a laugh, clenching his jaw at the pain./

CUDWELL: .../
...Tell me I am wrong, Sir Horvitz, you-/
LUKAZ: Please, brother, drop the 'sir' when I am dressed like this. It's insulting./

But yes, Cudwell, I know what you're assuming, and it is correct./
I do, indeed, belong to the *bandits* raiding Milkford.
The *bandits* solely responsible for keeping the town from being razed to rubble./

A grin flashes across Lukaz's face. Feline and predatory. A cat, playing with his food.

CUDWELL: ...to rubble?...?/
You have torched-/
LUKAZ: Spare me the details, Cudwell./

I know exactly what I've done, and I know exactly why I have done it./
That's the difference between you two and I./
Each man has their own place in this world, and it would have spared you your lives if you had only stayed in yours./
...Why, I swear there's one of your Bible stories that says exactly that?/

You feel Cudwell tense next to you. Lukaz knows how to twist a knife.

CUDWELL: Then enlighten us.

LUKAZ: .../
...I suppose it makes no difference to us./
The dead don't speak, after all./

Lukaz is full of a knight's arrogance. The reinforced confidence of certainty that has never not materialised.

LUKAZ: I'll keep it short, shall I?/
I'm sure it would be of no surprise to either of you to hear that our beloved lord of Milkfold is, to put it lightly, an aristocratic embarrassment amongst the gentry of West Lipor./

[COURT ROOM DRUNK SCENE FLASH BACK]

Ah, yes. You were there, weren't you Yosef? What a dignified liege the Milkfoldians have to look up to, eh?/

Thankfully, my uncle has at least the mental capacity to see the other West Liporian lords circling Milkfold like vultures./

Our earth is the richest in all of Lipor. Our crops are bountiful, our fruit rich. The other lords see my uncle's incompetence as an opportunity. His death, with no direct heir, would open Milkfold up for the taking./

I'll tell you now that the other lords make no secrets in attempting to bring that time forward. Poisoned soup has claimed five of the King's servingwomen this summer alone./

Even our simple-minded Lord has come to realise action must be taken./

CUDWELL: .../
...I see. So you had Lord Horvitz involved in this ploy of yours?/

LUKAZ: Not just involved, brother! My uncle, for once in his life, has birthed an idea worth something!/
You think you can hear the priest's teeth grind against one another, his fists clenching./

CUDWELL: .../
...I see./
This *idea* being pillaging his own lands to depreciate its worth in the eyes of the other lords?/

LUKAZ: Well done, Cudwell!
And when finally, the vultures finally stop circling, my uncle and a small and *particular* host of knights will march off and squash these horrific bandit attacks, where no one else could.

CUDWELL: A display of might for the Liporian lords to see./

LUKAZ: Exactly. All the while, we clamp the shackles of dependency around our subjects, who are now so terribly desperate and faithless./

Oh, to think the trust in our liege so naturally restored./

Suddenly, the cruelty behind the mocking grin plastered across the knight's face becomes all too apparent./

What was that?/

A movement to your right./

Cudwell's boot planted back on the horse's torso./

You see him shift his weight forward, pressing down. Hard./

LUKAZ: What are you-/
AAAAAARRRGGGGGGGHHHHH!/
BASTARD PRIEST!/
You see him shift his weight forward, pressing down. Hard./

You hear the croaking of a crossbow, its stirrup underneathe
Cudwell's forward foot, notching a bolt in front of the bandit's
face./

LUKAZ: GET THE FU-!/
 Wait, what are y-!/
 Cudwell, please, I can-!/
 Nononono sto-!/

.../

Through the right eye./

.../

Full of a still rage, he steps back beside you./

.../

Another muttered prayer./

Even despots deserve a word, you suppose.