

The Swordbearer Saga
Part Four:

The Gods of Carnage

An
Original Screenplay
by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ASONGATA - DAY

It is winter in the fortress Capitol of a medieval city.

Deep drifts of snow mark Ravenwolf and Falcwren's passage down a street festooned with BANNERS and GARLANDS and crowded with people and VENDORS.

INT. LIVERY STABLE - DAY

An elderly LIVERYMAN removes Falcwren's tack as Ravenwolf warms himself by the FORGE'S FIRE.

Ravenwolf looks to be about 45, with streaks of grey in his shoulder length black hair. He is a powerfully built man who dresses all in black. There is a ROUND SHIELD slung over his back.

RAVENWOLF

He doesn't eat much but when he does he likes oats and apples.

LIVERYMAN

Well, the oats I can manage all right. Don't know about apples though. Winters are long around here. Have been for the past twenty years or so. Seems like we hardly ever see spring or summer anymore. I might be able to find some carrots, will that do?

RAVENWOLF

If that's all you have, he won't complain.

Ravenwolf comes over and strokes Falcwren's muzzle. The Liveryman removes the horse's blanket and sees that his back and flanks bear the scars of countless battles.

LIVERYMAN

It's a fine horse. Looks as if he's seen some hard times though. How long have you had him?

RAVENWOLF

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

LIVERYMAN

Oh, I don't know. I've lived long enough now that I might believe just about anything. Are you here for the pageant?

RAVENWOLF

What pageant?

LIVERYMAN

Why to celebrate the anniversary of the Coronation of course, and to mark a hundred years of peace under the rule of the Sylvan Throne.

RAVENWOLF

I thought it was the Red Throne that ruled Zalgarra.

LIVERYMAN

Well, not in my lifetime nor that of my father, beyond that I cannot say.

RAVENWOLF

Who is the king now?

LIVERYMAN

That would be Corwin, the fifth in his line to hold the crown. He can trace his ancestry straight back to Sylvander the First. Now there was a King.

RAVENWOLF

Perhaps I'll attend this pageant after all. Where is it to be held?

LIVERYMAN

In the Great Arena, by the Northern Wall. Just follow the crowd.

RAVENWOLF

I'll be back for the horse in
a few days.

LIVERYMAN

He'll be waiting.

EXT. ASONGATA/ THE GREAT ARENA - DAY

The crowd moves towards the entrance of a large coliseum
constructed of wood and stone.

EXT. INSIDE THE GREAT ARENA - DAY

Ravenwolf makes his way to a railing on the upper deck
overlooking the King's Box.

The floor of the arena is covered in dirt and a small, TREE
COVERED MOUND has been built next to a ROUND WOODEN STAGE.

MUSCIANS with HORNS and DRUMS are situated around the base of
the stage.

Ravenwolf notices four TOWERS spaced along the edge of
the arena. Each has a LARGE CROSSBOW mounted at the top
pointed towards a sky hung with low clouds.

As the crowd settles a young woman, GLENAURA stops at the
railing a few feet away. She has a pleasant, open face and
wears a LONG TRAVELING COAT that covers her clothes.

She looks to the sky, as if gauging the weather, and smiles.
She notices Ravenwolf watching and sends the smile in his
direction. He returns it.

IN THE KING'S BOX -

The TRUMPETS' FANFARE, announces the arrival of the King.
CORWIN enters to the cheers of the crowd.

He is in his early 30's with dark coloring and a neatly
trimmed beard. He is accompanied by a troop of bodyguards.

IN THE STANDS -

Ravenwolf looks towards the Glenaura but her gaze is now intently focused on the King.

IN THE ARENA -

The STAGE MASTER enters the arena and raises his arms to silence the crowd.

STAGE MASTER

Ours is a tale for the Ages.
 A tale of darkness and fury and
 of fear and courage. A tale of
 how the great king Sylvander
 brought down the dark reign of
 the sorcerer Mordeus and gave
 birth to a mighty dynasty.
 A dynasty which has ruled Zalgarra
 for one hundred years of peace,
 prosperity, and plenty. And so now
 let our tale begin, with the wrath
 of Mordeus!

The Musicians supply the SOUND EFFECTS while Stagehands, using the technology of the day, WHEELS, WINCHES, TRAPS, and ROPES, create a RAINSTORM with BLOWING WINDS on the hill by the stage.

An ACTOR portraying Mordeus appears from the trees in a PUFF of SMOKE.

MORDEUS ACTOR

Long have I waited in the dread
 and darkness of this accursed
 wasteland, but finally I am
 reborn and will bring my
 vengeance upon the world of
 men who did once imprison me.

(MORE)

The Musician's provide a spooky emphasis.

MORDEUS ACTOR (CONT'D)

But I will need a familiar to aid
 me in my cause.

(MORE)

MORDEUS ACTOR (CONT'D)

A beast so fierce and terrible
that all who see him will tremble
in fear and horror. I will summon
him from the deepest pit of Hell
and together we will cast the world
back into chaos. So, with this spell
I call forth a demon of wrath and
carnage and of endless fury, I call
forth, the Raven Wolf!!

He makes a broad gesture with his hands and the RAVEN WOLF ACTOR springs up from a trap beneath the stage.

The Actor wears the skin of a snarling WOLF atop his head which falls like a cloak down his back. Wings of BLACK FEATHERS are attached to his arms and his face is made up in horrific fashion.

He holds a FLAMING ROD that he wields like a sword. He lifts the rod to his mouth and spits out a jet of fire. The crowd draws in its breath as one.

IN THE STANDS -

A wry smile touches Ravenwolf's lips. He looks towards Glenaura. Her face is tight and focused. She turns in his direction but looks right past him.

He follows her gaze. A number of CLOAKED MEN stand along the railing. One acknowledges the woman with a slight nod.

She glances to the sky then turns her gaze back to the King's Box. Ravenwolf's suspicions are now fully engaged.

IN THE ARENA -

MORDEUS ACTOR

And now, thus allied, I call upon
the skies to open and bring forth
the dark rains of man's destruction.

The Musicians pound out the crescendo as the Mordeus Actor looks dramatically to the sky. His face suddenly changes to a look of real surprise and horror.

IN THE SKY -

A DRAGON, perhaps 20 feet long from tip to tail, breaks through the clouds and dives towards the King's Box.

It is ridden by a woman named TAMAR who wears a HELMET and LEATHER ARMOR. She unleashes an arrow from a compact HORSEBOW.

IN THE KING'S BOX -

The arrow hurtles towards the King. A Bodyguard leaps in front of it at the last moment.

Tamar slams the dragon into the box. With teeth and talons it tears into the SOLIDERS protecting Corwin who is trapped by the body of his dead guard and planks of shattered wood.

ON THE TOWER -

Soldiers swing the giant crossbow around and fire at the dragon. The bolt misses but is close enough to drive Tamar and the dragon back into the sky.

IN THE STANDS -

Glenaura, throws off her cloak. She is dressed for battle and armed to the teeth.

GLENAURA

Now!!

She draws TWO SHORT SWORDS and leaps over the railing. The rest of the cloaked men do the same.

IN THE KING'S BOX -

The assassins begin to hack their way towards Corwin with malicious intent.

IN THE STANDS -

Ravenwolf looks down and sees Corwin desperately trying to free himself from the wreckage. Their eyes meet and Ravenwolf's mind FLASHES BACK to another time.

INT. MOUNTAIN CASTLE - NIGHT

Ravenwolf stands in a castle hall surrounded by armed men. He holds up his bound hands to Sylvander who cuts the ties with his knife.

BACK IN THE STANDS OF THE ARENA -

Ravenwolf draws the Black Sword at his side and leaps into the fray.

IN THE KING'S BOX -

Ravenwolf fights his way to Corwin, frees him, then shoves him into the arena and jumps down after him.

IN THE ARENA -

Ravenwolf backs away as the Assassins leap down.

RAVENWOLF
(to Corwin)
Stay behind me!

He kills everyone that comes at him until only Glenaura is left.

Her flashing swords give Ravenwolf almost more than he can handle but he manages to keep her away from Corwin. They see Soldiers armed with bows rushing into the stands.

GLENAURA
Stand aside. My fight is not with you.

CLOAKED ASSASSIN (OS)
Glenaura!

She turns. The last of her brethren stands in the King's Box pointing up. She sees Tamar returning with the dragon. A long, KNOTTED ROPE dangles beneath it.

RAVENWOLF
Go now, while you can.

She sees the soldiers arming their bows. With desperate strength she knocks Ravenwolf's sword from his hands and darts past him.

Ravenwolf lunges after her but she eludes him and races towards Corwin.

RAVENWOLF

No! Get down!

He sees the soldiers raise their bows. He curls up beneath his shield as the arrows fly.

Glenaura is within a few feet of Corwin, who stumbles towards the stage, when she is struck down by a hail of arrows. The man in the stands receives the same.

IN THE SKY -

Tamar screams in horror as she watches Glenaura fall. She points the dragon down, loads her bow and fires.

IN THE ARENA -

The shaft pierces Corwin's leg knocking him down. The Raven Wolf Actor stands in the trap on the stage.

RAVEN WOLF ACTOR

Your Grace, hurry. Take my hand.

Corwin reaches for the actor's hand as the dragon dives towards them. The actor grabs Corwin and pulls him into the trap just ahead of the beast's talons.

Corwin tumbles to safety as Tamar's dragon tears apart the actor and the stage.

Arrows strike the dragon from all sides and force Tamar to flee with tears of rage and horror streaking her eyes.

Ravenwolf comes out from beneath his shield, which is feathered with arrows.

He picks up his sword and goes to Glenaura. She looks at him failing eyes.

GLENAURA

Why?

She dies as the soldiers arrive. They point their weapons at him.

His eyes narrow as he tightens his grip on the Black Sword.
A GUARD CAPTAIN appears and signals the men to stand down.

GUARD CAPTAIN
Come with me.

Ravenwolf follows the Captain. The soldiers fall in behind.

You've just read the opening scenes of
THE GODS OF CARNAGE,
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