

ELKROD FOREST

Written by

Todd Fabyanic

Film Short

INT. CASTLE - CAPTAIN'S ROUND TABLE ROOM - NIGHT

The medieval castle room is darkened by the shade of night. Only a few candle lanterns light the room. The carpenter's pinewood round table is centered in the castle room domain.

THE CAPTAIN, 46, Male, leader of the King's Men (King's personal guards and soldiers) sits at the head of the round table in his Captain uniform (no armor).

3 Soldiers, younger (various ages), in uniforms (no armor). The Captain's most trusted soldiers, sit around the table.

THE CAPTAIN

We cannot allow this to go any further.

The Captain slams his fist onto the roundtable hard.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

We must put a stop to this now.

The 3 Soldiers look at each other and nod their heads in agreement with the Captain.

SOLDIER #1

More and more, these petty peasants flee to the forest for sanctuary.

SOLDIER #2

How dare they refuse to comply with our laws. Who are they to disobey and defy us?

SOLDIER #3

Hooligan's... Vandals... Scum... That's who they are.

The Captain stands up and places his fists on the table. He leans forward towards the 3 Soldiers.

THE CAPTAIN

So, it's settled then. Tomorrow we gather the men and raid the forest.

The Captain Slams his gauntlet on the table. He picks up his chalice cup off the table and raises it above his head.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Let us toast then... To the sweet savory taste of victory.

Everyone stands up. They all raise their chalices, toast, and drink.

INT. ELKROD'S TENT - NIGHT

The tent interior is bedazzled in animal furs, rugs, and drapes woven in various colorful threads. A fancy decorated curtain hangs as the tent door. The curtain door opens.

A RIDER, 29M, dirty from riding hard, Steps into the tent.

ELKROD, 45, Alpha Male/Woodsman, dressed in animal furs' with an amulet around his neck, stands and greets the Rider.

ELKROD

What news have you to bring, Rider?

THE RIDER

The King's Men come tomorrow.

Elkrod quickly closes his tent curtain for privacy.

ELKROD

Of this... are you sure?

THE RIDER

As sure as the sun shall rise. I
spill no lie upon thy tongue.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS can be heard outside of the tent. The Rider looks.

ELKROD

Pay no mind. The truth you speak
shall be no secret amongst us.

Elkrod opens his curtain door.

ELKROD (CONT'D)

Go now... you must warn others. I
bid you good-will on your journey.

The Rider and Elkrod exchange hands and embrace each other as the Rider exits Elkrod's tent.

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - SETTLEMENT/ELKROD'S TENT - NIGHT

The Rider steps out of Elkrod's tent. He mounts his horse and rides off into the forest.

Four men walk up to Elkrod's tent. Elkrod steps out, and they all circle around him.

JOSEPH, 32, Male, Farmer (Property Forfeiture) lost everything, family man (father), stands next to Elkrod.

JOSEPH

What word do we have of the Rider?

ELKROD

The King's Men come tomorrow.

KENETH, 40, Male, Preacher who refused to serve iniquities, (fugitive/treason) loses his cool and begins to rant.

KENETH

Bloody hell beast. To whom does this devil seek to devour?

ELKROD

Calm yourself! We still have some time to inquire this matter.

SYTUS, 20, Young Male, runt, (fugitive/deserter) refused to serve as King's Men, steps into the circle of men.

SYTUS

Elkrod will think of something.

OLD JOE, 55, elder male, wiseman/blacksmith - (Fugitive) failure to pay taxes (he didn't have), grabs Sytus.

OLD JOE

Easy lad. Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Not yet!

KENETH

Tomorrow day will be our bloody death if we stand ground against the King's Men.

JOSEPH

And to where do you recommend we go? Not even here do we find peace.

Elkrod looks around, the camp is empty and quite. Most of the freemen/forest-folk sleep in their forest man-made tents.

ELKROD

Our presence here in these woods, troubles the very order of the King's Men. More and more people arrive daily. The Captain's hand is forced to act.

Elkrod looks to the forest trees troubled. He ponders with his amulet (around his neck) firm in his hand's grasp.

ELKROD (CONT'D)

We simply cannot match the King's
Men's force by might, and I'm
afraid we carry too many women,
children, and elders to run.

Elkrod steps toward his tent. He opens his tent curtain door and turns around to face the men.

ELKROD (CONT'D)

Let us rest a short while this
night. I shall wake early with a
plan. For now... we sleep.

Elkrod steps into his tent and closes the curtain door.

EXT. OUTSIDE CASTLE - ROLE CALL - SUNRISE

All of the King's Men gather together (like an army of soldiers). They mount their horses and gather into formation.

The Captain, accompanied by his 3 soldiers, Ride their horses to the helm (Front) of the entire group.

THE CAPTAIN

Gentlemen... Today we end this once
for all. Take captive those who
surrender, and cut-down all who
oppose. Now, let's move out.

The entire group of soldiers (King's Men) march out of the kingdom's domain and into the forest in formation.

INT. ELKROD'S TENT - SUNRISE

Elkrod awakens from his slumber. He takes a deep breath and throws his fur sheets off. He dashes out of his tent.

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - SETTLEMENT/CAMPFIRE - SUNRISE

The troubled forest-folk stand around the campfire, entertained by the sparks. Joseph, Keneth, Sytus, and Old Joe stand around the campfire as Elkrod approaches the group.

ELKROD

The most inquiring vision... I have
dreamt.

SYTUS

And to what has your vision blessed
us?

Elkrod gathers the forest-folk together around the midst of the campfire.

ELKROD

My vision has confirmed, we cannot defeat the King's Men in battle. Nor can we outrun them. But... nature itself has provided us with everything we need.

JOSEPH

What shall we do, Elkrod?

ELKROD

There is no time to waste. We must act fast if we are to be successful.

Keneth steps forward and shuffles nearer to Elkrod.

KENETH

What has this vision shown you?

ELKROD

Trust in me. Follow my every instruction... and you shall see.

The fire sparks FLARE into the air (popping and crackling).

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - WOODS - DAY

The King's Men split formation and scatter into woods of the dark forest. The tall treetops cover the entire skyline.

THE CAPTAIN

Spread out, men. They can't be far.

The King's Men search for outcast in the woods.

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - UPPER HILLSIDE BRUSH - DAY

Elkrod pokes his painted face out of the thistle green brush on the upper hillside terrace. Accompanied by Sytus and Joseph, they can see the King's Men approaching below.

ELKROD

Here they come. When they reach the pathway, we make our stand.

SYTUS

I shall tell the others.

Sytus scoots back from out of the thistle bushes.

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - NATURE'S ROAD ENTRANCE - DAY

The King's Men regroup at an entrance pathway in the forest. The captain's 3 Men ride-up (on horses) beside him.

SOLDIER #1
Nature's road, Sir.

THE CAPTAIN
I can see that.

SOLDIER #2
What's our order, Captain?

THE CAPTAIN
We proceed.

SOLDIER #3
As you wish, sir.

The Captain's 3 men ride toward the front of all the men.

SOLDIER #3 (CONT'D)
Forward on, Men. From here... we
take nature's road.

All of the King's Men line-up in formation and enter Nature's road (A term for path roads in the woods, not made by man, but by nature itself). They march forward taking the pathway.

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - NATURE'S ROAD - DAY

The King's Men march lined-up in a 2-man formation. They reach a very dense forest area and stop.

THE CAPTAIN
Why have we stopped?

SOLDIER #1
See for yourself, Captain.

The Captain looks ahead. He see chimes, dolls, spiritual stuff dangling in the forest, and signs posted roadside.

The first sign reads, "Warning! Now entering Elkrod Forest." Another sign warns, "Beware! Do not disturb the spirits of the forest." Followed by the last sign, "Do not enter."

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)

These men have superstitions,
Captain. I for one... am amongst
them, Sir.

SOLDIER #3

Perhaps we should turn. Maybe they
went--

Soldier #3 turns and looks west. He points his finger to the
western hemisphere.

SOLDIER #3 (CONT'D)

--That way.

THE CAPTAIN

Noted!

The Captain stares at the warning signs.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Let us see for ourselves, before we
commit to such drastic decisions.

The Captain turns to his men and shouts loudly.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Listen up! I for one understand
your cautions, and I too am amongst
you. Let us move forward, and try
best not to disturb this forest.

Soldier #1 on horseback inches forward next to the Captain
and shouts to the men.

SOLDIER #1

If for any reason... the unknown
shall come about... your orders are
to retreat back to the castle. Is
that understood?

THE KING'S MEN

Yes, Sir!

The King's Men March forward on Nature's road into Elkrod's
Forest.

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - WOODS - DAY

Elkrod and his men watch the Captain disobey the warning
sings and march forward. Elkrod utters to himself aloud.

ELKROD

The King's Men have neglected our warnings, and now great and terrible encounters shall come about them.

Elkrod turns to his men to give them order.

ELKROD (CONT'D)

Remain unseen... as ghost you shall be. Spirits of Elkrod's forest you are now.

Elkrod and his men dispatch and move-out.

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - NATURE'S ROAD - DAY

WIND CHIMES whisper through the air as the King's Men march on nature's road. Smoke rises through the forest like misty fog, making their visual more complicated.

The King's Men grow airy-some as they look around the forest with their bows ready and their swords close in hand.

The CHIMES get louder. FROGS begin to CROAK in the forest trees. WOODBLOCKS and BLOW HORNS begin to reign in the air.

The King's Men slowly shuffle their feet, watching every direction with each step forward. The Captain and his 3 Men traught close to each other.

SOLDIER #1

This is insanity, let's turn back.

THE CAPTAIN

Steady men... hold formation.

The King's Men march forward.

BRANCHES begin to SNAP and BUSHES SHUFFLE. The trees begin to shake and the BIRDS FLAP THEIR WINGS as they scatter and fly away from the commotion.

SOLDIER #2

Steady your arms, men.

The King's Men draw their swords expecting an ambush, but nothing - only noise. They hold stead-fast with their arms drawn as they march forward.

THE CAPTAIN

Hold your fire.

SOLDIER #3

Hold your fire. The Captain has spoken.

The ground begins to tremble lightly. The King's Men's horses begin to spook and act up.

SOLDIER #1

What is this madness?

SOLDIER #2

I've heard tales such as these. I do not like where this is going, Captain.

The Captain remains prideful and sits on his horse without even a tremble in his very face.

BRANCHES SNAP (LOUD-BIG BRANCHES) The trees begin to shake and a huge stump-like branch falls from the treetops through the branches above.

The branch lands at the front line of the King's Men, blocking nature's road. The march is forced to a halt (stop). The men bumping and falling out of formation.

THE CAPTAIN

What's going on?

Soldier #3 and #2 ride ahead. Soldier #2 shouts to the Captain from the front.

SOLDIER #2

Branch!

Soldier #1 looks to the Captain.

SOLDIER #1

It's a fallen branch, Captain. Nature's road is blocked. Shall I sound the retreat, sir?

Soldiers #2 and #3 race charging from the frontline.

SOLDIER #2

Stampede!

SOLDIER #3

Take cover!

The King's Men scatter for cover to evade the oncoming stampede, which is really Elkrod's livestock - Deer, Elk, and cows racing towards the King's Men.

The stampede charges diagonally from the north west. It passes through the King's Men (scattering them) and exits south east.

THE CAPTAIN

I've had enough of this. There's nothing here but a bloody curse. We shall regroup at the castle and save this search for another day. Sound the retreat.

The Soldiers ride toward the King's Men.

SOLDIER #1

Retreat! Retreat now!

SOLDIER #3

Run for thy very worthless lives, before you are supper for the forest.

All of the King's Men retreat, fleeing Elkrod forest forever.

EXT. ELKROD'S FOREST - SETTLEMENT CAMP - SUNSET

The people of Elkrod's Forest celebrate exceedingly in victory and triumph over the King's Men. The men gather around Elkrod and raise their wooden pints in toast.

JOSEPH

To Elkrod... A man of great vision.

The people toast to Elkrod, their savior. Elkrod holds his lucky amulet around his neck, in his hand.

ELKROD

Thank you all. It gives me great delight to see such promise. My gut tells me it will be long time before the King's Men return to Elkrod Forest... may we prosper.

The people toast in cheer. Elkrod and the people of Elkrod's forest reign victorious.

THE END