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SCENES FROM 'THE MOST RIGHTEOUS CHEF'

FADE IN:

INT. THE KING'S COURTROOM - EVENING

It's a particularly righteous 13th Century evening in the King's courtroom. Sunlight beams through the massive stained glass windows, each a representation of a different Saint; above them all rests a massive mural of a fabulous feast. Down below on the King's oval table lies another fabulous feast.

Roasted pigs and fresh figs, the table is covered with gourmet dishes of all sorts. Elegant golden plates and silverware are spread, and goblets overflow with wine. A premium party.

A vast room with masterfully crafted marble statues surround the oval table. Silken draperies and golden chandeliers set the proper mood, formal but inviting.

KING PANOS (56), a plump and personable man, sits atop his marvelous throne looking down upon his loyal subjects, drinking his wine. LIAM (32), a slippery man way too decrepit for his age, worms his way up next to the King. He licks his crusted lips before speaking.

LIAM

My liege, I have some information
that requires your attention.

King Panos watches as Liam licks his lips again.

KING PANOS

My God, you're a weird one, Liam.

LIAM

Sssir, it's urgent.

He slobbers.

KING PANOS

Gross. It's a party, no time for
advising, nor slobber. You're off
the sun dial, kick back a bit, eh?

(CONTINUED)

LIAM

But sssir, it's regarding the meal.

KING PANOS

And stay away from the shrimp.

LIAM

King Panos, I implore you to heed
my warning.

KING PANOS

Away with you.

The King frightens Liam away and takes a big gulp from his chalice, smiling down upon everyone in attendance.

INT. THE OVAL TABLE - SAME

Around the beautifully crafted table sits a cast of medieval characters chatting it up with one another. Nobody touches the food set in front of them, although everyone looks anxious to eat.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE OVAL TABLE

A) A MEDIEVAL HIPSTER (22) takes a long drag from his hand carved pipe, blowing out a cloud of smoke that travels across the table.

B) A PROPER DANDY (27) waves the smoke out of his face and fixes his many ruffles on his collar. He grabs a napkin from the table and stuffs it into his shirt, adding another layer to the many poofs. A rogue nut flies and hits him in the face.

C) A JESTER (65) laughs behind the table, slouched in a chair in the corner, surrounded by walnut shells. He cracks another one with a nutcracker that looks just like him, and pops it in his mouth.

D) NOBLEMEN and NOBLEWOMEN all sit anxiously, silent, with their eyes on King Panos.

E) A JERK KID (10) reaches for a chicken leg on the platter in front of him and his MAMA (36) slaps his hand. He flails his arms and slumps back in his seat.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

MAMA

I will not have you ruining this
for me. That's the King up there,
show some respect.

(CONTINUED)

The Jerk Kid fidgets with his nice clothes.

JERK KID
I hate this shirt.

MAMA
You look lovely.

She tucks his shirt back in and he reaches for the food again. She slaps his hand away.

MAMA (CONT'D)
Enough. We wait for the King.

JERK KID
Well what's the King waiting for.

INT. THE KING'S COURTROOM - ENTRANCE

The large entrance doors swing open and crash with a bang. All eyes turn to watch and the room falls silent. In steps BARLEY WELLINGTON (38), with an informed air about him and a peculiarly proper walk, he saunters past the door GUARDS. He tips his massive feathered hat at the men.

All of the heads turn and watch as he walks alongside the grand oval table.

JESTER
Hah, nice hat.

The Jester lets out a nasty cough and spits on the floor, he cracks another walnut. Barley ignores him and carries on.

JERK KID
Who's that?

MAMA
Shh.

As Barley walks alongside the table he eyes down each dish, examining the platters carefully. Reaching the end of the table he looks up to the King, who stands before him. He takes off his hat and bows; the feathers tickle the face of a nearby Nobleman.

KING PANOS
Barley Wellington, you're late.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
My sincerest apologies, King Panos,
someone thought it was comedic to
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BARLEY WELLINGTON (cont'd)
remove all the wheels from my
carriage.

JESTER (O.S)
Hah!

KING PANOS
Very well, we wait on you.

Barley takes his time removing his overcoat, coat, and undercoat. He takes his seat next to the King and fixes a napkin as a bib. All eyes rest on him.

A SERVANT brings over a covered silver platter and places it in front of Barley. Behind him, Liam and the COOK worm their way in, standing way too close, looking very nervous. The Servant reveals the dish, a little bit of everything from the table. The cook chokes up but Barley retains his focus.

Grabbing his fork he moves the food on his plate around, flopping the beef over and squishing a squash hidden underneath.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Is this a squash?

KING PANOS
Is that a squash?

COOK
Um, yes, sir.

A very tense moment.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
I love squash.

He takes a bite, chews it slowly, and spits it out into a cup.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Over roasted. I'm tasting
unfiltered charcoal with...

He puts the bit he chewed back in his mouth and eats it again, this time swallowing it.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Too much parsley.

He moves on to the chicken, and then the ribs.

(CONTINUED)

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Under cooked. Over cooked. Rushed the marination. And where is this dry rub recipe originating from? My tongue is lost.

He looks back to speak to the COOK.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

You know, a spice cabinet is more of a luxury than a firing range.

He laughs at his awful joke to himself and picks up a lonely shrimp.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Shrimp? The rodents of the sea?

Barley rubs the oil off of the shrimp and plays with it between his fingers. Inspecting it closely he gives it a lick. He smirks and eyes down the Cook, who looks nervous.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

I've seen enough here. Sir, this demonstration of radical culinary ignorance disgraces both myself and our King. You should be ashamed of yourself.

BARLEY WELLINGTON (CONT'D)

(To King Panos)

My apologies to you, my liege, but I can not wholeheartedly advise you to continue with this feast.

The crowd all groans in disappointment and a walnut hits Barley in the back of the head.

JESTER (O.S)

Boo.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

I'm sorry, but it's simply not up to your standards.

King Panos leans forward in his chair to speak to Barley.

KING PANOS

That's it?

BARLEY WELLINGTON

I'm sorry?

(CONTINUED)

KING PANOS

You do know of your position here
in my service?

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Why, yes, I'm the royal culinary
adviser, sir.

The Jester comes up from behind the conversation.

JESTER

Nobody cares about your opinion. Do
your job, fool.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

I say, do your job. Serve the
King, make somebody laugh, for
once.

JESTER

Clowns don't have kings. We're a
free people.

He continues to crack nuts while the King takes back the
conversation.

KING PANOS

The rather rude jester is right,
you're here to check for poison. A
royal food taster, that is it.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Sir, my talents stretch far beyond
a mere recognition of poison.
There's a balance of tastes to take
into consideration, chemical
compositions...

KING PANOS

Just give us the go ahead, we're
all hungry.

The dinner attendees get excited.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Right, well, it's poisoned.

The crowd groans and the Cook jumps.

KING PANOS

What? All of it?

(CONTINUED)

BARLEY WELLINGTON
All of it.

KING
You must be joking.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
I assure you, I am not.

JESTER
(sarcastically)
No need to spoil such a lovely evening just because nobody cares what you think of the meal.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
I assure you, too, you sinister clown, this meal is poisoned.

KING PANOS
Hmm, even the shrimp?

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Especially the shrimp, that stuff is rotten.

King Panos angrily points to the Cook.

KING PANOS
Traitor! Seize him!

Guards rush the cook and restrain him. King Panos steps down from his throne. The ground shakes underneath his weight as he steps towards the Cook.

KING PANOS
How dare you soil a fine meal with betrayal and animosity.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
I couldn't agree more, my King. His choice in poison completely threw off the balance of the meal. I could think of at least three different chemical spices that would have pulled the meal together.

KING PANOS
I believe you're missing the point here Barley, my life has been threatened. A very serious predicament.

(CONTINUED)

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Ah yes, my lord, I'm just pointing out room for improvement. One fellow cook to another. I'd be more than glad to instruct our chef here on how to properly cook with poison, be it with deadly intention or not.

The room falls silent, everyone perplexed with Barley.

COOK

Listen to this guy, are we really to believe a word he says. My liege, I, I, I would never dare to question your authority. I assure you this meal isn't poisoned in the least bit.

A CLASH and a CLANK from the far end of the table. Jerk Kid faints down face first into his plate. Mama pokes him and lifts his face up, crumbs surround his mouth.

JERK KID

Wh-where am I?

MAMA

How many times did I have to tell you? You're not embarrassing me like this in front of the King.

She slaps his limp hand that rests on a plate of bread and holds his head up. She speaks to the King across the table.

MAMA

My apologies, my King, he's fine. Just a little tired is all... from this wonderful party.

Jerk Kid's head plops back down on the table and all eyes turn back to the Cook. The King rubs his eyes, stressed.

KING PANOS

Where's the medic? Somebody help that poor boy.

Jester approaches the boy wearing a medic's cap.

CUT TO:

INT. ALCHEMIST SHOP - AFTERNOON

Barley enters through the many curtained doorway into the alchemist's tent. SOUS CHEF GEORGE (24), enlisted to help clear Barley's name of the murder of the king, bumps into him from behind. The two check out the scene.

The tent is illuminated by a few purple torches, giving the room a mysterious tint. The flames sound as if they are laughing, giggling to themselves. George passes by and touches one of them, it laughs louder, scaring George off.

A bookshelf is lined with various spell books and alchemist knick-knacks: a voodoo doll that looks strikingly similar to George, a dagger/spoon combo, glowing vials, and strange dust. Distracted, George bumps into Barley again.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

I swear, am I going to have to put you outside?

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

No, no, I'll be good.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Mmm, well, keep your head on a rotisserie, these shady alchemists are a shady bunch. Never know what kind of shade they'll throw your way. Got it?

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

Got it.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Weren't you in here the other day picking up the items from my list? You should know your shady dealer manners.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

Um, different alchemist.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Come, you should know by now which of the dealers to trust. Never buy your poisons from an unlicensed vendor... nor a licensed one.

(CONTINUED)

A green goo drips from the ceiling onto George's lips, it starts crawling away. George flings it off.

BARLEY WELLINGTON (CONT'D)
Right, shut up now, time for
business.

Barley gathers himself and approaches a thrift shop styled glass counter loaded with wild mushrooms, knives, and various glowing slugs.

INT. ALCHEMIST SHOP - SAME

Behind the counter stands ALCHEMIST JIMMY (33), a dark man born of a dark mother. He stands shining a large toad in his arms. A teacup pig, TEACUP JIMMY (3), rests on a bed of rice beside him.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Jimmy, my good fellow, how be ye?

Jimmy doesn't respond but stares intently at George.

BARLEY WELLINGTON (CONT'D)
Ah, and you, Teacup Jimmy, all is
well I presume?

TEACUP JIMMY
Squeekel.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Glad to hear it. Now, Jimmy, I hate
to bring such sour dough into your
business bakery. But I'm not here
for my usual purchases. I'm here...
sleuthing.

Jimmy continues to examine George as he speaks.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
Mmmm, sleuthing, you say?

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Indeed. You may have heard of the
recent death of our King, no?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
I don't trouble myself with the
workings of the outside world.
Nobody cares for Jimmy, so why
should Jimmy care for them. And if
nobody cares for Jimmy, who is to
care for Jimmy here?

(CONTINUED)

TEACUP JIMMY
Squeekel.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
Precisely.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Good, no need to -

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
Ahh, but I have heard of your
tyrannical escapades in that
kitchen of yours. Or, should I say,
former kitchen of yours, heheheh.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Don't test me, now. You are well
aware that I could never ruin a
dinner like that.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
This is true. I've seen very a many
much of multiple crooked faces and
backward intentions, but you,
you've always had a clean spirit.
This is why Jimmy here likes you.

Alchemist Jimmy rubs the tiny pig's belly. Barley joins in
but the pig gets up on walks over to George, oinking angrily
in his face.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY (CONT'D)
You're friend here is a different
story, there is something about his
air.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Ah, yes, he was a vegetarian once,
but I'd like to think we've fixed
him.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
Disgusting.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE
Sorry.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
(to George)
You are to tell me that you
wouldn't eat Jimmy here?

(CONTINUED)

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

I would never do that to you or -

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

How rude.

Alchemist Jimmy and Teacup Jimmy are both offended.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

So tell me, have you been visited by any strange fellows recently? Whoever did the dirty deed, must've purchased some dirty drugs, and you, my friend, have got the dirtiest drugs of them all.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

You flatter me, but surely you must have something more to go off of than "strange fellow." All of my clientele is strange fellows. In fact, I'd be suspicious if one wasn't strange. I'm not in the business of doing trade with a not strange fellow.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Well, in that case, who have you done business with in the past few days?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

Besides you?

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Yes, besides me.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

There was but one man who came in here.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Yes? So you can help me?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

No.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

No?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

No. Well, maybe.

(CONTINUED)

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

What?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

No.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Who was it?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

I do not know.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

You don't know?

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

He doesn't know.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

How could you not know the one customer you had?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

He was wearing... a hood. So I suppose this could be your fellow, eh?

Alchemist Jimmy checks with Teacup Jimmy.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Well that is in fact a start. What kind of hood?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

You know how many people come in here wearing hoods? My, you're wearing that silly quilted hood right now. It's a poison shop for Fortuna's sake, hoods are my best selling item.

A stack of hoods rest in a basket on the counter.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY (CONT'D)

Want one? Two for the price of two.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

No, thank you. Well what did this hooded man purchase.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

Ahh, so now we enter the realm of customer/trader confidentiality.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALCHEMIST JIMMY (cont'd)
Where is the line drawn with you
renegade cooks?

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Jimmy, 'tis me, please, I'm in need
of your assistance.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
That would appear to be the case,
wouldn't it?

Sous Chef George gets impatient.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE
I'm sure we can find a different
lead, Chef. We don't need -

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
Shhh.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE
He doesn't -

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Shhh.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
I will help you in your journey,
but first you must do something for
me.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
But, of course.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
Go out into those dire woods due
East, scavenge the area and fetch
me ten of -

BARLEY WELLINGTON
A fetch quest?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY
Well, yes, I suppose.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
I see. Well, I will not be doing
any of that. I am far too above it.
But, I tell you this, when all is
settled, I'll send George here to
be your sous alchemist for some
time, eh? Say two years?

(CONTINUED)

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

What?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

Agreed.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

No?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

Now then, this man of yours, ohh,
he purchased the most sinister of
goods. Yes, risinious soltitudium;
extremely deadly and
indistinguishable on the tongue.

He flicks his tongue around, unprecedented.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

That fool. Right, well, what more
can you tell us?

Jimmy snaps his fingers and Teacup Jimmy brings over a small
wooden coaster in his tiny jaw, it reads "Coaster's pub.
Home of the Coaster!".

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

He dropped this on his way out.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

"Coaster's Pub. Home of the
coaster." Now what is a coaster?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

That is.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

This?

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

Aye.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Woah. What does it do?

Alchemist Jimmy demonstrates, he puts his cold glass on it.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Remarkable.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

Yes, I do believe that to be the
little family pubbery across the
way.

(CONTINUED)

Barley stuffs the coaster into his quilt and embraces Alchemist Jimmy.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

You've been of great service to me,
my friend. When my position is
restored I'll see it fit that you
find your way onto that oval table
for a meal or two.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

Yes, don't forget our deal now. I
need the help, business is tight.
Believe it or not, not too many
people find needs for glowing slugs
nowadays.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Truly a shame. Indeed, you shall
have George, and George shall have
you.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

No ink has been drawn yet.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Hush, come now.

With a flap of his quilt, Barley heads off. Teacup Jimmy
oinks at George his whole way out.

ALCHEMIST JIMMY

Ah, remember to finalize, remember
to finalize. I must write that
down. Damn it, I can't write.
Jimmy, can you write?

TEACUP JIMMY

Squeekel.

The cute pig picks up a tiny feather pen in his jaw.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINGDOM STREETS - AFTERNOON

Barley continues on through the busy dirt road. He puts his quilt hood back on to hide his face and bumps through the massive crowd of people.

SERIES OF SHOTS - KINGDOM STREETS

A) Citizens bustle around the town center doing business with one another, talking and shouting at everyone.

B) A pair of CHESS PLAYERS play a game of chess at the fringe of the pack, moving the pieces as if they were playing checkers.

C) A SALESMAN hangs fish from the the frame of his shack. They drip fish juice on to the fruit he sells below. A GRUBBY MAN comes and purchases one of the fruits.

D) Barley's quilted hood clashes as he walks through a sea of brown hoods and bland garb.

END SERIES OF SHOTS - KINGDOM STREETS

Barley emerges next to George as the pack of Citizens bustles behind them. Many people eye down Barley as they pass, he urges them onwards.

In front of them stands a CHICKEN BOY (15) at work, a teenager with chickens strapped to his chest and back, peddling them to whomever comes near.

CHICKEN BOY

Chicken boy here! Chicken boy
-buck- buck-buckahhh.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

You there, chicken boy.

Chicken Boy hurries over to Barley with a skilled chicken strut.

CHICKEN BOY

Yes, yes, how many chickens can I
do ya for?

BARLEY WELLINGTON

No chickens for us today, my good
chicken boy.

CHICKEN BOY

What? No Chickens? Then perhaps I
could interest you in some baby
chickens?

(CONTINUED)

He pulls down his pants to reveal a basket of chicken eggs.

BALEY WELLINGTON
Those are just eggs.

CHICKEN BOY
The freshest.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
I'd rather not.

CHICKEN BOY
Don't waste my time, I'm
-buck-buck- busy.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Hold on there, we are still in the
need of a loyal chicken boy's
service. What can you tell me of
this.

Barley hands the Chicken Boy the coaster.

CHICKEN BOY
I ain't no pub boy. I'm a chicken
boy, dangit, soon to be a chicken
man. Now, either -buck-buck- buy a
chicken or get lost.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Alright, George, pay the chicken
boy.

George pays up and keeps the purchased chicken underneath
his arm. Chicken Boy bows and walks away but Barley grabs
his shoulder.

BARLEY WELLINGTON
Easy now, give me a little chicken
love in return. What can you tell
me about the pub this is from?
What's the crowd like?

CHICKEN BOY
That place isn't chicken boy
friendly, not so much. It's a
higher up place, no room for the
majority of people out here, not
that many would want to go; real
nice, for those that -buck- buy and
eat well -buckah-. Good?

The Chicken Boy clucks off.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

See, my young sous chef. Precisely the type of place we'd find our man, no?

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

No?

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Yes.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

Right.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Be thankful your chicken boy days are behind you.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

Thankful every day, Chef. Are we to just assume that this chicken boy knows what he is talking about, though?

BARLEY WELLINGTON

But, of course we are. Always be trusting, it's the most trustworthy trait there is. Keep working and you'll understand. Your time will come.

SOUS CHEF GEORGE

That's the plan.

BARLEY WELLINGTON

Now, onwards, before these people put in the effort to look beyond a simple hood.

They head on down the alley.

FADE OUT: