

The Endless Watch  
Part 1 of 3  
A miniseries

by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON A LEATHER-BOUND BOOK

Gold lettering titles the massive book: "THE FIVE HEROES OF ALMINDOR, A HISTORY."

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Peasant-dressed ALEXA, an adventure-loving 30s, has ensconced herself on a fat tree branch. She reads the book, fully engrossed in the story.

A VERY SMALL MAN creeps around the base of the tree. Dressed in green with a bowler hat he'd be a leprechaun. This one's dressed in crimson livery embroidered with what look like angel wings. His hair is slicked back in a ponytail, and he's collecting mushrooms in a wicker basket.

Alexa shifts slightly, startling the Man. He disappears in a heartbeat, vanishing into thin air. She remains oblivious, reading the book.

DISSOLVE TO:

*EXT. REMOTE MOUNTAIN - DAY (NOIR)*

*NOTE: Filmed in a rich, black-and-white NOIR style.*

*Remote, craggy, a hard environment that breeds tough people.*

*EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE HOME (NOIR)*

*A small, well-tended house built into the side of the mountain, with a barn adjacent. Lovingly crafted, immaculately tended.*

*THE LONE HERO, 30s lumberjack build, works his garden with nothing but a few indifferent llamas for company. The Lone Hero's been through the wringer once or twice and it shows. Chances are he ruined the wringers in the process.*

*GALLOPING HOOVES punctuate The Lone Hero's peace. He continues to work, trying to ignore the sound that will shatter his life like it shatters the silence.*

*The intruder stops. The sound of fabric SNAPPING in the wind. The shadow of a windblown banner falls on the dirt next to The Lone Hero.*

*He's not going to look up.*

A leather satchel falls on the dirt in front of him, embroidered with a purple and gold coat of arms, with a flaming sword bisecting the colors.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MOUNTAINSIDE HOME - NIGHT (NOIR)

The satchel lies on the middle of a wooden table, still unopened. The Lone Hero eats, can't keep his eyes off it.

INT. MOUNTAINSIDE HOME - LATER (NOIR)

A moderate fire crackles. The Lone Hero sits in front of it, nursing a drink, now holding the satchel.

He tosses the unopened satchel in the fire, downs his drink and heads to bed.

CLOSE ON

The crest, burning in the flames.

MATCH CUT TO:

The same crest, on a standard, burning.

EXT. DRAWBRIDGE - NIGHT (NOIR)

The standard burns, victim of a barrage of flaming arrows. Warriors, muddy, bloody and dented, wage a fierce battle against a dark army. A VALIANT FEMALE WARRIOR, 30s, leads a charge. She and the others push the invaders back across the bridge.

It's a desperate battle, the odds overwhelming. The Valiant Female Warrior assesses the situation in a glance.

VALIANT FEMALE WARRIOR  
Raise the drawbridge!

The Warrior and her knights push forward, keeping the enemy at bay while the desperate denizens of the castle heave at the ancient bridge, slowly raising it, sealing in their safety.

And sealing the knights' fates.

The Valiant Warrior faces her foe, her brave companions by her side. Raises her sword.

VALIANT FEMALE WARRIOR  
For Almindor!

*KNIGHTS  
For the Endless Watch!*

*BOTH  
For the Royals!*

*And they lay into the fray.*

*AERIAL VIEW*

*The enemy quickly surrounds the doomed heroes... CLANG,  
CLANG, CLANG!*

DISSOLVE TO:

*NOTE: Transition from NOIR to FULL COLOR.*

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Alexa, reading. The noise of wood striking wood -- sounding much like swordplay -- finally breaks through Alexa's absorption. It takes her a moment to reorient to reality and realize what the sound means.

Crap!

Regardless, she takes a moment to hug the book with longing. She clearly longs for the adventure and heroism. She breaks off an arm-length stick.

With the agility of a squirrel, Alexa uses the intertwining branches as both ladder and highway. She fights imaginary foes with her pretend sword as she races toward the noise.

EXT. FARMSTEAD - DAY

Peasant living at its most successful. A thatched, whitewashed cottage, small barn with attached corral, crops, chickens, sheep and two sturdy horses.

In front of the house, DUNSTAN (30s, with a bit of the Lone Hero in him) spars with LEVA, a gangly teenager. They use only wooden practice swords, but wield them with such ferocity it's astonishing the swords don't shatter.

JEFFREY, Leva's twin brother, sits on a fence rail, totally focused on carving a palm-sized piece of wood.

Dunstan's attack drives Leva back to the fence. Leva vaults on top of the fence, runs along the top rail with Dunstan in hot pursuit -- also on the rail.

She leaps Jeffrey, catches his head with her foot, but manages to keep her balance. Dunstan clears Jeffrey with plenty to spare.

Leva leaps for the barn roof. Through sheer force of will she hauls herself up.

She nearly loses her sword -- only a desperate lunge keeps her hand on the hilt. Dunstan grabs the other end of her sword and tries to pull her down.

She plunges her hand through the thatch, grabs a rafter beam and holds on for all she's worth. She gives one, desperate, twisting yank and pulls the practice sword out of Dunstan's hand. She scrambles up the roof and down the other side.

Dunstan joins Jeffrey. Dunstan looks at his hand; sliced from the wooden practice sword.

DUNSTAN

What did you learn?

JEFFREY

Duck.

(a look)

Leva's boots are hard.

(another look)

Don't rely on Mom.

DUNSTAN

Watch your mouth.

Jeffrey clears wood shavings from his work and lap. A candle holder, but the base is intricately carved in the style of a wooden cage cup.

JEFFREY

Tell me it's not true.

Leva walks around the barn and joins them.

LEVA

What's not true?

JEFFREY

Mom.

LEVA

Oh.

(re: carving)

Nice. Can I have it?

JEFFREY

No. You almost destroyed it. I'm selling this one.

LEVA

Duck next time.

JEFFREY & DUNSTAN

Jump higher.

LEVA

Seriously, let me have it.

JEFFREY

Seriously, I'm selling it.

LEVA

Okay, sell it to me then.

JEFFREY

With what money?

LEVA

Trade you chores.

JEFFREY

For life?

LEVA

It's not that good.

JEFFREY

Yes it is.

Alexa appears. The three look at her, then at the book still in her hand. She can take the disappointment from the kids; it's the pity from Dunstan that cuts her. The moment she remembers the pretend sword in her other hand, she drops it.

DUNSTAN

(pointed)

Leva's done with her lesson.

ALEXA

(to Jeffrey)

Ready?

JEFFREY

No.

ALEXA

(to Dunstan)

We'll be back for dinner.

(MORE)

ALEXA (CONT'D)  
 (to Jeffrey)  
 Catch me.

She hurls the book at Dunstan, who reflexively catches it. Then Alexa runs into the woods.

JEFFREY  
 Crap.

Jeffrey hands his carving to Leva who takes it with appropriate care. He races after Alexa.

LEVA  
 Why do I get the feeling you're the one in trouble?

DUNSTAN  
 Because you are a woman.

LEVA  
 (not understanding)  
 I'll fix the barn.

Dunstan heads to the house, leaving Leva to clean up the practice yard.

EXT. WOODS - VARIOUS

Think Hoh River Rainforest in Washington: thick ferns, moss on everything, trees forming a canopied network of boughs, the frequent bubbling brooks. Beautifully verdant.

Jeffrey comes to a halt. No Alexa in sight. He crouches down. Listens. Only his eyes move.

The ferns waft in a non-existent breeze.

A woodland rodent CHATTERS to the left.

Something draws his attention to the right.

His hand reaches down, gropes, finds a rock. He hurls it into the trees. It makes a soft THWACK, not a hard THUNK. Alexa hisses; he's connected rather well. Jeffrey gives chase.

ANOTHER VIEW

Alexa uses the intertwining branches as her own personal highway. Firmly on the ground, Jeffrey follows her. A gap in the trees. Big gap. Over a small river. Alexa doesn't hesitate - she leaps.

## RIVERSIDE VIEW

Alexa sails over the river and plunges rather noisily into the thicket on the other side. A family of waterfowl dive for cover.

Jeffrey runs out of the woods. Raises a hand. Keeps running, right onto the river. It's like he's walking across wet blacktop (*splish, splish, splish*).

## IN THE TREES

Alexa runs for the thrill of freerunning as much as for the lesson. She uses the flimsiest of branches, takes the most daring of leaps, peppers her moves with completely unnecessary (and breathtaking) flourishes.

## ON THE GROUND

Jeffrey can barely keep up, and he's getting winded. And pissed. He hates this game, and he hates the risks his mother takes.

## IN THE TREES

Alexa leaps a gap -- throwing in a trademark somersault -- and comes to an abrupt halt. Stock-still she takes in her environment. Something...

She shimmies up the tree.

## LOOKOUT SPOT

Alexa scans the horizon. What twigged her subconscious?

JEFFREY

What is it?

Alexa starts -- Jeffrey's right below her in the tree. He reaches up and taps her foot, but he looks concerned, not triumphant. He joins her, hanging on for dear life, forcing himself to endure his acrophobia.

JEFFREY

What do you see?

ALEXA

Nothing. That's what bothers me.

JEFFREY

How can nothing bother you?



ALEXA

Something should be there, but it's not.

JEFFREY

It's all normal. Peaceful.

The tree wobbles slightly under their weight.

JEFFREY

Windy.

She glances at him, tries not to smile, fails.

ALEXA

Let's get dinner.

She does her flying acrobatic leap to a lower, sturdy branch.

ALEXA

Coming?

Jeffrey follows on a more levelheaded trajectory.

FAST FORWARD TO:

EXT. LOOKOUT SPOT

Same peaceful view, with fast-forward motion as the sun sets and darkness falls.

EXT. LOOKOUT SPOT - NIGHT

Partly cloudy, with a full moon. The cacophony of night sounds rises - owls call, insects clatter, coyotes chatter.

The moon appears from behind the clouds and as it does the moonlight bathes the forest in reflected sunlight. A gaping hole, filled with a glowing bilious cloud, appears in the tree canopy as moonbeams strip away a magical illusion and reveal a wounded forest.

A primal HOWL rises from the unnatural gash. More join it. Something like coyotes on the hunt only deeper, more vicious. The moon disappears again, and the false cover of trees reappears. The howls die down.

The forest falls utterly silent.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Leva and Jeffrey reading by candlelight, fall asleep over their lessons.

Alexa leans against the open door frame, staring into the darkness. Dunstan smokes a pipe, watching Alexa. Neither adult looks the least bit fatigued.

Dunstan checks out his palm -- it's completely healed. He nudges the kids awake.

DUNSTAN

Bed.

Jeffrey and Leva stumble to their beds in the opposite corner. Dunstan joins Alexa.

ALEXA

This is my Endless Watch. I chose it freely.

DUNSTAN

I know.

ALEXA

Then keep your pity to yourself!

DUNSTAN

I'm sorry, Alexa. We have been in exile for so long together that it's impossible for me to hide my feelings from you.

Alexa looks at him. Dunstan displays nothing but sincere contrition. She clearly remains skeptical but wisely accepts his apology at face value.

ALEXA

Leva did well?

DUNSTAN

As well as Jeffrey.

This earns a frown.

DUNSTAN

What?

She looks back, sees the kids sleeping, but moves out to the paddock anyway. Dunstan follows.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The horses come looking for a treat. For a moment, they look like magnificent war chargers instead of mundane plow horses. (NOTE: If possible, CGI round pupils in the horse's eyes to add a strong hint of intelligence.) A trick of the shimmering moonlight, certainly.

ALEXA

We have to go.

DUNSTAN

When?

ALEXA

Soon.

Dunstan looks around at the farm, at a life so carefully built and fruitfully lived.

DUNSTAN

You're certain?

ALEXA

I saw nothing, but... it drew me enough to miss Jeffrey's approach.

DUNSTAN

Perhaps he's improving.

ALEXA

Jeffrey is about as quiet as the Suicide Cascades after a snowmelt. No, something in the woods makes my skin crawl.

(beat)

Dunstan, I haven't been this anxious since we lost the Royals.

DUNSTAN

We didn't lose the Royals.

She looks at him. He looks away.

DUNSTAN

Forest Point minds its own business, and we have a good place to live.

ALEXA

We need to get rid of the livestock. We need new coin. All we have left is old money.

DUNSTAN

The kids won't understand.

ALEXA

It's time they see the world. Their world.

DUNSTAN

You're absolutely certain?

ALEXA

Of course not. I'm suggesting we risk the heirs' safety and our kingdom's future by uprooting twelve years of an established alibi, fleeing to parts unknown and living with people of questionable loyalties just because I'm bored, terrible at being a dutiful mother and frankly sick and tired of playing peasant.

She leaps the fence and storms off. Dunstan. Oh-for-two.

DUNSTAN

(to the horses)

We'll leave for town at first light.

Even they look disgusted.

EXT. FOREST - AERIAL VIEW - DAY

Establishing: thin ribbons of roads slice through the woods, leading to the large, medieval-styled town of Forest Point.

EXT. FOREST POINT MARKET - DAY

A large market square. In the BG, Dunstan haggles with a ONE-LEGGED BUTCHER. Alexa walks away from a table and tucks a small sack securely in her vest.

Jeffrey and a DISTINGUISHED PENNYPINCHING MAN (50s) haggle over Jeffrey's candle holder. Alexa puts herself in a position to eavesdrop without being noticed.

PENNYPINCHER

Five crowns? Absurd. It's beautiful, that I will agree, but son, this is Forest Point.

JEFFREY

(re: carving)

Do you know what you would pay for this in the capital?

PENNYPINCHER

Hrm. Need I repeat that we do not live in Brinlemer, we live in Forest Point?

JEFFREY

True. True. Forest Point is remote.  
Isolated from the luxuries and  
frivolities of Brinlemer.

He leans in conspiratorially.

JEFFREY

I'm trying to do you a favor.

PENNYPINCHER

By fleecing me?

JEFFREY

Your wife saw this earlier.

The Pennypincher glances anxiously over to a jewelry stall where an ELEGANT WOMAN (50s) examines some baubles. Lots and lots of baubles. With not a care for cost.

JEFFREY

She thought it worth twenty crowns.  
I swear, I hadn't set a price --  
that's simply what she said.

PENNYPINCHER

Outrageous!

JEFFREY

I couldn't, in all honesty, sell it to her for that much, so I told her someone else had already purchased it. She made me swear that if my buyer fell through, I should come directly to her and she would buy it. You buy it for five. You spend less, and just think of how happy this gift will make your wife.

The Pennypincher hands Jeffrey the money and takes the carving. He claps Jeffrey on the shoulder.

PENNYPINCHER

You're a good man, son.

The Pennypincher walks off with his carving and Jeffrey pockets the money. He walks over to Alexa.

ALEXA

She would have spent twenty crown.

JEFFREY

She's an aristocrat in isolation.  
She'll have me making dozens of  
pieces to match, then she'll send  
them to her peers in Brinlemer as  
bragging gifts. Her peers will find  
excuses to visit, she will hold her  
court, and I will get a patron.  
Worth far more than twenty crowns,  
I think.

ALEXA

And he will be her hero.

JEFFREY

And I, his.

ALEXA

Well done, Jeffrey.

He seems startled by the genuine praise but before he can  
comment Leva runs up to them, barely able to contain her  
excitement.

ALEXA

Don't tell me you've spent what I  
gave you already.

LEVA

A bard! A bard! There's a bard! At  
the Wild Oats. Right now!

ALEXA

A bard. Here in Forest Point.  
Practically the end of the kingdom.

LEVA

Kella told me. She saw him herself.

ALEXA

Uh-huh. How pretty is he?

JEFFREY

What?

ALEXA

The only bard worth hearing is a  
well-dressed, ugly bard. No one  
with money would patronize an  
untalented bard, and no noble with  
children would risk a pretty bard  
seducing their heirs.

(MORE)

ALEXA (CONT'D)

A well-dressed ugly bard has money, talent and connections. Now that's worth getting excited over.

LEVA

Kella didn't say.

JEFFREY

He must be ugly, then. Kella will swoon over almost anything that winks at her.

LEVA

That's not true. She's got standards, that's all.

JEFFREY

Sure, low ones.

ALEXA

All right, all right. I'll come.

LEVA

I'll get dad!

ALEXA

No!

(off her look)

He's busy. If your hypothetical bard's any good, then you can fetch your father.

LEVA

Come on!

EXT. PUB STREET - DAY

Throngs of people. All trying to get at the Wild Oats. Alexa stares. Barely enough room to breathe and that's here in the street. From across the square, KELLA (pretty blonde with a secure future as a trophy wife) waves at Leva.

KELLA

Leva! Leva!

Leva waves back. Kella tries to join her, but it's no use -- it's too crowded.

LEVA

See? I told you!

JEFFREY

This will be impossible. There's no room.

ALEXA

Hands.

She takes their hands, focuses, and walks to the pub. The crowd parts as though an invisible hand nudges bystanders aside at just the right moment. No one seems to care.

Leva and Jeffrey look at each other. What the hell??? Way cool, but... what the hell???

In the BG Kella watches them enter the pub. What the hell?

INT. WILD OATS - DAY

The three enter amidst the chorus of a raucous drinking tune. A party "conveniently" leaves a table just as Alexa approaches. She and the twins sit before the spot is scooped.

Jeffrey looks around, but again no one seems to care that they just jumped the line and scored a primo spot.

JEFFREY

How did you do that?

ALEXA

It's a thing.

(to herself)

By the seven holy heroes of Almindor.

Near the great hearth BARD TALIESIN leads the singing, using a melodic, stringed instrument. He's in his mid thirties, and one of the homeliest entertainers ever.

LEVA

Mom?

JEFFREY

Do you know him?

ALEXA

Pay attention, and remember your lessons.

The song ends to thunderous applause.

BARD TALIESIN

Now, my friends, perhaps something a bit more melodic?

(he drinks, deeply)

Or at least a song I can drink through?



Suggestions barrage Taliesin as he drinks. When Alexa speaks, her voice carries just a bit clearer, a bit stronger, than the crowd. Like she's the only one with something important to say.

ALEXA  
(a challenge)  
The Crofter's Lullaby.

Leva straightens in her seat, looks between Alexa and Taliesin. Exchanges a serious look with Jeffrey. Taliesin strums a few slow chords.

BARD TALIESIN  
(the challenge response)  
An old tune?

ALEXA  
My mother sang it to me often.

ALEXA (SUBTITLE)  
What news?

A few more chords. These two are speaking to the room but talking to each other in a language all their own.

BARD TALIESIN  
Alas, I know it not. It has fallen out of favor these past...  
(eyes Alexa)  
...decades.

BARD TALIESIN (SUBTITLE)  
The Usurper will tithe here.

Laughter from the room. Alexa bears it with good humor.

ALEXA  
Perhaps you know it by a different name? The Northman's Lament?

ALEXA (SUBTITLE)  
Is he coming from the north?

BARD TALIESIN  
An equal failure, I'm afraid my lady.  
(drinks)

BARD TALIESIN (SUBTITLE)  
Yes, and very soon.

Try me again shortly after I've loosened my memories a bit!

ALEXA  
A drinking song, then. Farewell to Whisky!

ALEXA (SUBTITLE)  
Where do your allegiances lie?

The crowd applauds her selection. Taliesin masks a quick moment of shock.

BARD TALIESIN  
As a lament?

BARD TALIESIN (SUBTITLE)  
Where do yours?

ALEXA  
As a celebration!

ALEXA (SUBTITLE)  
With the Royals!



JEFFREY

Because we hear real bards so often  
in Forest Point.

LEVA

We did today.

ALEXA

(quiet)

He did well enough. The only thing  
he missed was "usurper."

Both adults look around them at the peaceful, unsuspecting  
life of Forest Point. Then they look at their charges and  
make a difficult choice.

DUNSTAN

I'm done here. Time to go.

LEVA

But--

JEFFREY

I haven't--

LEVA

You've got to hear him--

JEFFREY

He's fantastic--

Dunstan has The Look. It's just as potent as the Voice of  
Mom. The kids shut up. Resentfully, but they do. They trot to  
keep up with their parents' quick strides.

EXT. FOREST POINT - DAY

Everyday people conduct everyday business for their everyday  
lives. Dunstan drives his cart a tad too fast and they yell  
everyday insults in his direction.

EXT. FOREST POINT - EDGE OF TOWN

A wooden palisade surrounds Forest Point, meant to stave off  
wildlife. As soon as they clear the gates, Alexa reaches  
under the seat, pulls out a sword from its hiding spot and  
rests it on her lap.

The kids, sulking in the back, don't notice.

EXT. FOREST - AERIAL VIEW

To the north, a small division plows through the woods, carving an impossible swath of burning destruction in its path. From this height, the mass of bodies swarms. A nightmare on the move, and no longer worried about concealment.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The cart arrives unmolested. The place seems eerily quiet without the livestock. The sullen kids leap out barely before the cart stops.

Alexa notices and vaults from her seat. As she leaps, she draws her sword. She lands right in front of the twins.

DUNSTAN

Alexa?

Leva and Jeffrey stare. Bare steel. Real steel. In Alexa's hands and on Alexa's face.

ALEXA

The Usurper uses conscripts to fill the ranks of his armies. When the numbers of his soldiers run low, he sends press gangs out into the kingdom to enforce the "voluntary" tithe. They take any man or woman young enough to fight. They are coming today, from the north. That's what the bard said.

JEFFREY

How do you know he was telling the truth?

ALEXA

The fabric of his tunic was felted in the crest of the old Royals of Almindor. It was very well done. You only see it when the light catches it at the right angle, and only if you know what to look for. The Bard has no love for the Usurper.

Dunstan joins Alexa.

DUNSTAN

The Usurper's sorcerers turn the malleable into soldiers, and the stubborn into lessons.

ALEXA

You are stubborn. Wonderfully,  
brilliantly, willfully, stubborn.  
Do you understand?

The siblings unconsciously reach out and grasp hands.

JEFFREY

You sold all of the livestock.

ALEXA

Yes.

JEFFREY

But not the horses.

DUNSTAN

No.

LEVA

(sharp)

What aren't you telling us?

This catches both adults off guard.

DUNSTAN

What?

LEVA

You're sliding around a truth. I  
hear it in your voices.

ALEXA

How?

LEVA

Jeffrey walks on water, I hear the  
truth.

ALEXA

(to Jeffrey)

You walk on water?

JEFFREY

(deliberate)

It's a thing.

LEVA

What are you hiding!?

Dunstan and Alexa look at each other. The Moment. Not the  
moment they would have chosen...

DUNSTAN  
You are the true heirs to twin  
thrones of Almindor.

JEFFREY  
Right.

LEVA  
Jeffrey.

He looks at her -- her expression says it all.

JEFFREY  
When--  
His voice breaks.

LEVA  
What do we do?

DUNSTAN  
Pack for travel. One saddlebag. If  
you can't wear it, eat it, or spend  
it, leave it here.

LEVA  
What about our friends? Forest  
Point? You saw them -- no one else  
understood the Bardic Code.

DUNSTAN  
Little bird, right now, for this  
very moment, no one else matters.

LEVA  
But--

JEFFREY  
Leva. He's right.

ALEXA  
If you hear anyone other than us,  
hide in the root cellar. Don't come  
out no matter what, do you  
understand?

The kids nod solemnly. Dunstan grips Leva's shoulders.

DUNSTAN  
Leva. No matter what.

LEVA  
I'm no child.

ALEXA  
 (her waiting over)  
 And we are no farmers!

DUNSTAN  
 Almindor is not ready for you yet.  
 The Usurper would gut you through  
 and through without a second  
 thought and only we would weep.

With a push he sends them toward the house.

ALEXA  
 That will raise some questions.

DUNSTAN  
 If it doesn't then Almindor's in  
 trouble.

ALEXA  
 Dunstan, we've taught them to run  
 better than we have to rule.

DUNSTAN  
 Get the gear. I'll ready the  
 horses.

Alexa heads to the barn.

INT. BARN - DAY

Alexa sweeps away some straw from the floor, stomps on a knotty floorboard and reveals a hidden cache. Two swords gleam from their dark hidey-hole.

IN A STALL

Another cleverly hidden catch hides a cavity in the wall. In it is secreted a leather military saddle.

THE FLOOR

The swords, saddle, pre-packed saddle bags. A second saddle joins the first.

UP IN THE HAYLOFT

Alexa holds a lantern in her hand. A FIRE MOTE sways from a swing within. About six inches high, it's a fairy made completely of fire.

ALEXA  
 (whispering)  
 You can come with us, or I can  
 leave you to ruin the press gang.

The Fire Mote quickly turns into a whirlwind of flame.

ALEXA  
 My friend, you are the best hope  
 that Forest Point has.

She sets the lantern down in the hay and opens the glass door. The Fire Mote sparks a little. Alexa hands it a bit of straw.

ALEXA  
 Good hunting, and good luck. Find  
 us if you can.

Alexa leaps from the loft. The Fire Mote incinerates the straw and gets just a little bit bigger.

INT. HOUSE

Leva and Jeffrey roll clothes tightly and cram them into a large pack. Jeffrey tries to cram his woodworking tools in. He takes out a shirt to make room.

JEFFREY  
 Whisky was King Jervis' favorite  
 drink.

LEVA  
 Aaand the sky is blue.

JEFFREY  
 Mom... She asked the bard for  
 "Farewell to Whisky." A lament  
 would have meant she was for the  
 Usurper. She picked a celebration.  
 So did he. The bard may be an ally.

LEVA  
 King Jervis' favorite drink.  
 (beat)  
 Our father's favorite drink. King  
 Jervis... the Royals... were killed  
 in the Uprising. So who does that  
 make...  
 (gestures outside)  
 ...them?



JEFFREY

My guess: the last two soldiers of the Endless Watch.

LEVA

The Royals' personal guardsmen. They never sleep. They never rest. Sworn to protect the Royals to the death.

JEFFREY

The Defenders of Almindor.

LEVA

In a desperate bid to save the heirs the Royals ordered them to flee the battle and hide in the wilderness, saving our lives from the Usurper until the day that we could... that we can...

They look at each other.

LEVA (CONT'D)

Is one of your books "How to Start an Uprising and Reclaim Your Throne"?

JEFFREY

Do we want to?

LEVA

I'll get the food.

She does the foot-trick on a floorboard and reveals a door that descends into a root cellar. Jeffrey picks up his wooden cage cup. Somehow, it's going in.

EXT. FARMSTEAD

Cuts of Alexa and Dunstan gearing up the horses. Leva and Jeffrey joining them. Saddlebags going on. Glowing swords buckled on.

Alexa tossing one of Jeffrey's books to the ground. Dunstan handing Leva an ordinary sword. Alexa and Dunstan mounting. Jeffrey and Leva riding double behind them.

One last look at the farm, bidding their old lives farewell in silence, sadness and relief.

The horses leaving.

The farmstead quiet.

Until the marching nightmare descends.

END OF ACT ONE