

FEUDAL
An animated series

written by

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ACT I

EXT. CASTLE - DAY

SIMON sits on the grass. Four other serfs, including EDWIN, are gathered around him.

SIMON
All right who's next, who's next.

Simon looks around.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Luke! Oy, Luke!

LUKE, who has been tilling, sighs and comes over.

LUKE
What.

SIMON
Game of dice. Two shillings to the winner.

LUKE
No.

SIMON
Ahh come on, Lukey, live a little.
One sheckle.

LUKE
Fine.

He sits down.

SIMON
All right, we each roll one. If the numbers are the same, you win. If they're different, I win.

LUKE
Is that fair?

SIMON
Fair? Of course it's fair! They'll either be the same or different, so it's the same odds each way.

Luke thinks it over.

LUKE

Okay.

SIMON

Alright Lucky Luke, let's do it.

They each roll a die.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Ooh, that's a tough break, my friend, a very tough break. Who's next?

OSBERT

I am.

OSBERT, a knight, has arrived on horseback.

The serfs all grumble and return to the field.

OSBERT (CONT'D)

That's right, back to work. Play time is over.

He turns to Simon.

OSBERT (CONT'D)

And once again, look who's in the middle of it all.

SIMON

Ah, we were just having some fun, Ozzy.

OSBERT

That's Sir Osbert to you. As in "Sir Osbert of the Royal Guard, who would be well within his right to lop your head off."

SIMON

You know if I didn't know better, I'd think you didn't like me.

OSBERT

And I'd think you're not worth the trouble you cause. And unlike you, my opinion matters. Apparently you still can't grasp the concept of *status*. There's a very rigid hierarchy in place. Need a reminder?

SIMON
I don't think that's—

OSBERT
It goes king, lord, knight—

He points to himself.

OSBERT (CONT'D)
Then merchant, commoner, horse,
pig, and finally serf. Understood?

SIMON
Got it.

OSBERT
Are you sure? Because if you have
trouble remembering, I can give you
a reminder.

EDWIN
Nope, not necessary, we got it.
Right, Simon?

He gives Simon a warning look.

Simon opens his mouth, clearly struggling to hold back a
cheeky retort.

He sighs.

SIMON
Right.

OSBERT
Smart move. Get back to work, this
field's not going to till itself.

They start to leave.

Osbert clears his throat and holds out his hand.

Simon reluctantly hands over the dice.

Osbert rides off.

Simon and Edwin pick up their scythes.

SIMON
Edwin, there's something I've been
wondering for a long time, but I
don't really know how to ask.

EDWIN

What is it?

SIMON

What exactly is tilling?

Edwin sighs and rolls his eyes.

He takes up his scythe and starts chopping into the ground.
Simon follows suit.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Seriously, I've just been copying
you all these years. It's just
loosening dirt, right?

FADE TO:

EXT. MARKETPLACE - DUSK

Simon and Edwin stand in the busy marketplace at a potato
stand. Edwin is carrying a basket of groceries.

Simon tries to stand the potato up on its side. It falls
over.

SIMON

See these are no good. A potato
should be able to stand on it's
head. That's how you know you have
a good one.

POTATO FARMER

But I just dug 'em up fresh this
morning?

SIMON

Well it could be disease, or
something in the soil. But the
balance test never lies.

The farmer tries to balance some of the potatoes, growing
more and more concerned.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Look, if you'll do three for a
sheckle, I'll take some off your
hands.

POTATO FARMER

Three for a sheckle?

SIMON
Hey, I'm doing you a huge favor
here!

The farmer thinks it over...

Cut to Simon and Edwin continuing on their way through the market place. Simon is now juggling three potatoes as they walk.

EDWIN
There was no need to trick him, we
only needed two potatoes.

SIMON
It's not about what we *need* Edwin.
You need to see the big picture.

EDWIN
Which is what? Stealing just for
fun?

Simon rolls his eyes.

SIMON
Fine, if it's that important to
you, I'll give one away.

EDWIN
Oh you're a regular angel.

Simon puts two of the potatoes back in the basket and scans the crowd.

He sees SOFIA sitting alone on the roadside going through her basket.

SIMON
Speaking of angels...

Simon approaches her.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Excuse me, I thought maybe you
could use this.

He offers her the potato.

SIMON (CONT'D)
They're good luck, you know.

SOFIA
Are they? I haven't hear that,
um...

SIMON

Simon.

SOFIA

Sofia. Nice to meet you, but I think I'm all set on luck for the moment.

SIMON

Are you sure? I know even in the upper class, people are struggling.

Sofia gives him a questioning look.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Nice clothes, jewelry, turning down free food - I'm guessing your father is somebody important?

SOFIA

(coyly)

He might be. And what's your story?

SIMON

Well actually I work for the king.

SOFIA

Really! As an advisor? Or guard?

SIMON

I'm actually more of a "land manager"... in a very "hands-on" capacity.

SOFIA

So you're a serf.

(coyly)

Father told me not to associate with serfs.

SIMON

Oh but I'm so much more. Trust me, you ain't seen nothing yet.

He tosses her the potato, and walks back to Edwin.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Does it ever bother you, Edwin?

EDWIN

What?

SIMON

There is a shocking lack of upward mobility in our society.

EDWIN

Upward mobility?

SIMON

Yeah, upward mobility. Like ol' Ozzy said, there's a hierarchy. But I'm looking to move up.

EDWIN

To what? A horse?

SIMON

I was thinking more along the lines of duke.

EDWIN

You're delusional.

SIMON

Oh, don't worry Edwin. When I move up, I'm taking you with me.

EDWIN

(sarcastically)

You're too kind.

SIMON

It could happen. Ooh- there's Fred, let's see what he thinks.

Simon and Edwin approach FRED, an older serf who is milling around the fruit stands.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Fred! How's it going?

FRED

Oh hey guys.

EDWIN

Here's a question for you: can a serf move up in status?

FRED

No.

EDWIN

Ha. See?

SIMON

But Fred, my man! Isn't it all kind of arbitrary?

FRED

Well yes and no. It all comes down to land. We don't have any - not even our own homes, but that's what makes you worth a damn. You want to open a store? Meet with the king? You'd better own some land, or else-

The words seem to catch in Fred's throat. He turns and coughs violently.

Everyone in the market turns to look at him, terrified. A few drop their baskets.

EDWIN

Oh boy.

EXT. FRED'S HUT - LATER

Simon and Edwin are digging a grave for Fred. Moans can be heard coming from inside the hut.

SIMON

I just think Fred should really be helping us. It's *his* grave after all.

EDWIN

Let him rest.

SIMON

It's just common courtesy - you get the plague, you help dig. That's plague etiquette 101.

They stop digging, and take a moment to admire their handiwork.

EDWIN

That seems about right. Should we check on him?

SIMON

Sounds good.

They approach the door.

SIMON (CONT'D)
One quick thing - Fred actually
owes me seven Shillings, so let's
try to steer the conversation in
that direction before he bites it.

EDWIN
Wait, what?

Too late, Simon has already entered.

Edwin follows.

INSIDE THE HUT

A humble, one room dwelling.

Fred lies in bed. He doesn't look good: he's pale, sweaty
etc.

SIMON
(gently)
Hey, how you feeling bud?

FRED
Not great. Thanks for coming guys.

SIMON
No problem, Freddy. We're here for
you.

Fred starts violently coughing.

Simon and Edwin take several steps back.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Right over *here* for you.

FRED
Good thinking. I don't think I'm
gonna make it out of this one,
guys.

EDWIN
(unconvincingly)
No... you'll be okay.

Fred starts hacking again.

Simon and Edward take another step back.

SIMON
But just in case, have you got your
affairs in order?

Edwin give Simon a warning look.

FRED
I guess so.

SIMON
No outstanding issues to be
resolved? *Settled*, if you will?

Edwin elbows Simon in the ribs.

FRED
Oh wait, that reminds me. Simon—

He is interrupted by DR. TRUNKLEMAN bursting through the door.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN
Someone in need of a doctor?

FRED
No!

SIMON
Crap.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN
Fear not, Dr. Trunkleman always has
a cure!

He opens his large black bag and starts pulling out strange looking concoctions and archaic metal instruments.

SIMON
(to Edwin)
Did you send for the doctor?

EDWIN
Of course not, you know I wouldn't
do that to him.

FRED
(nervously)
What are you going to do?

DR. TRUNKLEMAN
Don't worry, you have nothing to be
afraid of.

He puts on his **plague mask**: a creepy black mask with a long beak.

He picks up a long scepter and starts jabbing Fred in the ribs.

FRED

Ow. Hey!

DR. TRUNKLEMAN

Hmm yes, it's exactly what I suspected. You've got evil spirits in your blood. There's really only one cure.

SIMON

(quietly to Edwin)
Leeches and prayer.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN

Leeches and prayer.

FRED

Do we have to?

Trunkleman jabs Fred again with the scepter.

FRED (CONT'D)

Ow!

DR. TRUNKLEMAN

Yes that blood is far too tainted with evil spirits. It's got to come out.

FRED

All of it?

DR. TRUNKLEMAN

Every drop!

He takes out a jar of leeches and pours them liberally over Fred, who moans in pain.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN (CONT'D)

All right, now let's all join hands.

They oblige. Trunkleman closes his eyes.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN (CONT'D)

Oh ye merciful yet vengeful God in heaven, we must ask: why, in your wisdom have you afflicted dear Frank?

EDWIN

Fred.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN

Perhaps he forsook you, oh Lord.
Perhaps he cursed thine name, and
committed terrible transgressions
of thought and deed. But anywho, if
you could heal his maladies—

EDWIN

Uhh, he's dead.

Trunkleman opens his eyes.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN

Really?

He sighs.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN (CONT'D)

Well, we did everything we could.

He puts a comforting hand on Edwin's shoulder.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN (CONT'D)

He's in hell now.

Dr. Trunkleman pauses somberly for a moment.

Suddenly, he snaps back into his bubbly demeanor.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN (CONT'D)

Well, must be off. Plenty of
patients to see!

He quickly packs up his suitcase and skips out the door.

EDWIN

Poor Fred. Should we say something?

SIMON

(clears his throat)

Life is like a candle. Beautiful by
it's very purpose. Fleeting by it's
very nature. Casting ever so
briefly it's light into the
darkness.

A pause.

EDWIN

(taken aback)

That was beautiful.

SIMON
Great, now help me look through
this stuff.

Simon starts opening all the cabinets and drawers in the house.

EDWIN
What are you doing?

SIMON
Trying to find something worth
seven Shillings. I told you he owed
me money.

EDWIN
Forget it, I'm not helping you rob
a dead man.

SIMON
It's not robbery, it's— why,
hello...

Simon pulls a leather-bound book out of a drawer.

EDWIN
Is that a book?

SIMON
Looks like one.

EDWIN
Could Fred read?

Simon shrugs and flips through the pages.

SIMON
I'll take it.

EDWIN
Hold on, that's definitely worth
more than seven Shillings.

SIMON
I'm a good haggler.

They exit Fred's house and start walking home.

EDWIN
I don't know why you even want it.
You can't read.

SIMON
Edwin once again you fail to see
the bigger picture.

EDWIN
Well if it's another one of your
grand plans—

Simon stops.

SIMON
Are we forgetting something?

Edwin stops to think a moment.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Nevermind, I'm sure it's fine.

INSIDE FRED'S HOUSE.

Fred is still lying on the bed, covered in leeches. We hear
Simon and Edwin continuing their conversation outside, their
voices growing fainter and fainter.

SIMON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You say "grand plan" like it's a
bad thing.

EDWIN (O.S.)
Well usually they turn out that
way. Can you at least promise we
won't get beheaded?

SIMON (O.S.)
Now what fun would that be?

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

INT. "THE WRETCHED STENCH" PUB - EVENING

Simon and Edwin pool their money on a small table in the corner.

SIMON

Not a bad haul today. Want to grab us a couple beers?

EDWIN

Sure. Um...

He looks at the pool of different coins, confused.

SIMON

You've got to learn the system, Edwin.

EDWIN

It's so complicated!

SIMON

No it's not. A pound is ten florins or eight half-crowns; a half crown is two shillings and a sixpence. Four farthings make a penny; two pennies make a tuppence, three make a thruppence, and four thruppence make a shilling. It's that simple.

EDWIN

(defensively)

Hey, you didn't know what tilling was.

SIMON

True, but this is *money*. It's important!

Out of the corner of his eye, Simon spots SOFIA, sitting alone at a nearby table.

He hands a few coins to Edwin.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Here, give this to Rosa and ask for three beers.

EDWIN

Three?

Edwin looks around and sees Sofia as well.

EDWIN (CONT'D)

Ahh.

Edwin nods and makes his way to the bar.

Simon approaches Sofia.

SIMON

Sofia Norwood.

SOFIA

Simon the Serf.

SIMON

So what's a girl like you doing in
a place like this?

SOFIA

I guess it's obvious I've never
been here before. Have you?

SIMON

Seriously? It's only the fourth
best pub in town.

SOFIA

I didn't even realize there were
four pubs in this town.

SIMON

There are exactly four.

AT THE BAR

Edwin hands the money to ROSA the bar maiden.

EDWIN

Three beers please?

ROSA

You got it, Eddy dear.

She pours the drinks.

Dr. Trunkleman approaches, his shirt covered in blood.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN

Your hardest whisky please madam.
Surgery is stressful as hell.

ROSA
(serving him)
I can imagine. How did it go?

Trunkleman chugs his drink.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN
(slightly slurred)
Haven't started yet. Wish me luck.

He turns to Edwin.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN (CONT'D)
Hey didn't I save your friend's
life the other day?

EDWIN
Nope, he died in agony.

DR. TRUNKLEMAN
Oh well, can't win 'em all. I guess
that's why they call it medicine.

He stumbles out.

EDWIN
(calling after him half-
heartedly)
That's not why... whatever.

AT THE TABLE

SIMON
So you've never played 'Right-
Screw-It?'

SOFIA
No, what is it?

SIMON
It's only the best drinking game
ever.

Edwin comes over.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Edwin, she's never played "Right-
Screw-It!"

EDWIN
Great game. Super easy, we just go
around saying things we hate, and
after each one we all say "screw
it" and take a drink

SOFIA
That's it?

EDWIN
That's it. Here, I'll start - The
doctor has no idea how to heal
people, right?

ALL
Screw it!

They all drink.

SIMON
See? Your a natural. We have floods
and droughts with nothing in
between, right?

ALL
Screw it!

They drink.

SOFIA
So how long does this go on for?

FADE TO:

INT. "THE WRETCHED STENCH" PUB - LATER

The same scene, but the three are considerably drunker, as
shown by the numerous empty glasses on the table.

SOFIA
(slurred)
Here's one. When your father is all
like "oh you can't" or whatever,
but it's like... come on, you know?
Right?

ALL
(not quite in unison)
Screw it!

EDWIN
(slurred, to Simon)
You know what man? You're gonna be
a duke. For real, you... I believe
in you man.

SIMON
(slurred)
Thanks bud.
(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)
(to the bar at large)
No more tilling for me!

The whole bar cheers.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE - NEXT MORNING

Simon and Edwin are tilling the field.

SIMON
(each word punctuated by a
chop into the ground)
I. Hate. This. Job.

EDWIN
I hear you. My arms have been sore
for... well forever really.

SIMON
It's not even the soreness that
bothers me so much, it's the
monotony.

EDWIN
Well, that's life.

SIMON
Not for everyone.
(calls to Osbert)
Ozzy! Oy, Ozzy!

EDWIN
What are you doing?

SIMON
It's time to move up. Like we were
talking about last night.

EDWIN
We were hammered last night.
Please, please don't say anything
stupid.

Osbert rides over, visibly annoyed.

OSBERT
What.

SIMON
I've been doing some thinking, and
I want to talk to the king.
(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

I think my skills could be put to better use.

OSBERT

Is that so?

SIMON

Sure! I'm smart. I've got great people skills. I think I would make a great diplomat. Or maybe an advisor. If I could just meet King Tiberius, I know he'd agree.

OSBERT

Huh.

(turns to Edwin)

And how about you? Are you also looking for a career change?

SIMON

Yes he is.

EDWIN

No I'm not.

SIMON

He's just humble. But he can cook like nothing you've ever seen. That's his true calling I tell you!

OSBERT

A diplomat and a cook. Hmm, I'll tell you what. Those positions are actually filled at the moment, but here's a counter offer: You work as serfs until you die. And then your children work as serfs as well. How does that sound?

EDWIN

Sounds fine to me.

SIMON

Seems a little arbitrary.

OSBERT

That's because once again you forget your place in the hierarchy. It goes-

SIMON
 (rapidly)
 King lord knight merchant commoner
 horse pig serf, I know. But if I
 could just talk to him-

OSBERT
 Let me put it more simply:
 "nobody's" don't meet with the
 king. And you're the king of
 "nobody's."

SIMON
 (confused)
 Wait, so... nobody's don't meet me?

EDWIN
 The king.

SIMON
 But I'm *their* king. Which I guess
 makes me my own king-

EDWIN
 So you can't meet yourself-

SIMON
 Well that seems problematic-

OSBERT
 Enough! One of these days, you two
 are going to go a little too far.
 And I can't wait to see it.

LORD CORNELIUS comes striding across the field towards them,
 looking livid.

CORNELIUS
 (pointing at Simon and
 Edwin)
 You two! Just who do you think you
 are?

SIMON
 (quietly to Edwin)
 Jesus, what did we do to this guy?

Edwin shrugs frantically?

CORNELIUS
 (to Osbert)
 Sir, these serfs are devious
 miscreants and I demand they be
 punished.

OSBERT

Gladly.

SIMON

On what grounds!

CORNELIUS

On the grounds that you were out
canoodling with my daughter last
night!

SIMON AND EDWIN

Whoa, hey, whoa there...

SIMON (CONT'D)

No one "canoodled" anyone.

EDWIN

I'm a married man. And she's way
out of Simon's league.

SIMON

Yeah. Wait-

CORNELIUS

I don't care. You're bad
influences.

SIMON

So what - you'd rather she just sit
in church all day? Never see the
real world?

EDWIN

Careful...

CORNELIUS

Actually, yes. But I suppose you
consider yourself above church,
don't you?

Cornelius, Osbert and Edwin all look to Simon, who seems to
be holding back a reply.

OSBERT

(hoping to himself)

Come on, say it...

SIMON

Yes I do.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Osbert pushes Simon into a cell and slams the door closed.

OSBERT

Your blasphemy hearing at the royal
court is tomorrow morning.

(with relish))

I've been dreaming of this for so
long...

Osbert struts off, victorious.

SIMON

(calling after him)

You need more ambitious dreams!

END OF ACT II

ACT III

INT. JAIL - AFTERNOON

Edwin and Sofia are visiting Simon outside his cell.

SIMON

So now we know: insulting the
church is in fact against the law.

EDWIN

Against the law? It's like the only
law!

SIMON

Well that can't be true.
(calling over to a drunk
man at the other side of
the cell)
Hey you, buddy! What's your name?

CELLMATE

Barty.

SIMON

What are you in for Barty?

CELLMATE

Copulating with a horse.

SIMON

(to Edwin)
See?

SOFIA

Simon, this is bad. Blasphemy
charges are no joke - they'll
behead you if they think you're an
enemy of the Church.

SIMON

There's no "they", just "he." I'm
pleading my case directly to the
king.

EDWIN

But you don't even *have* a case. The
king is going to take one look at
you, and-

Edwin stops, as realization dawns on him.

SOFIA
(to Edwin)
What is it?

EDWIN
This was his plan. His stupid,
stupid plan to meet the king.

SOFIA
Seriously? Simon, you might die!

SIMON
Don't be ridiculous. Life's too
much fun to stop now.

FADE OUT.

INT. KING'S COURT - MORNING

King Tiberius sits on his throne, deep in thought.

KING TIBERIUS
I've made my decision. After
hearing your case, I have chosen to
take pity, and grant you a full
pardon.

A broad view of the courtroom reveals that it is actually
Barty who's case has just been ruled on.

The courtroom setup: King Tiberius is on his throne, flanked
by two guards, and a herald with a trumpet. Several lords and
knights sit in posh seats to his right - Osbert and Cornelius
in front. To his left is a gallery for commoner spectators,
with Edwin sitting in the front row. All bear down at a lone
defendant's chair

KING TIBERIUS (CONT'D)
But understand that this
transgression is never to be
repeated.

HERALD
The king hath spoken!

The herald blows the trumpet loudly, causing everyone to
wince.

Barty jumps up in delight.

BARTY

Thank you, your highness. I swear,
no more giving in to that equine
seductress - I mean it this time!

Barty skips out of the courtroom.

KING TIBERIUS

Next!

Simon is brought in by a guard led to the defendant's chair.

KING TIBERIUS (CONT'D)

All right, who is he and what did
he do?

OSBERT

This is Simon the lowly serf, who
has been formally accused of
heresy.

KING TIBERIUS

Heresy, eh? Good to get a nice easy
one before lunch. Okay Simon the
Heretic, feel free to throw
yourself at the mercy of the court
- but things aren't looking too
good for you I'm afraid.

SIMON

Your majesty, I am many things: an
honest man, a best friend, a lover
of fine ales and meads... but I am
NOT a heretic. May God strike me
down if I'm lying.

Edwin looks around nervously.

Osbert stands up.

OSBERT

Enough of this, can I chop his head
off already?

SIMON

Oh I'm sorry, I was under the
impression that this was the king's
court - I had no idea that you were
the one in charge here.

OSBERT

(turning red)

I just... that's not what I meant.

Osbert sits down.

SIMON

Where was I? Right, the word of God
is very important to me. That's why
I read it every day.

Simon takes the bible from his coat pocket.

Everyone in the courtroom gasps, and start murmuring
excitedly.

KING TIBERIUS

Order. Order!

The herald blows his trumpet again, and everyone winces and
goes quiet.

KING TIBERIUS (CONT'D)

Do you honestly expect us to
believe that you can read?

SIMON

Well I don't carry this around just
to look cool.

KING TIBERIUS

Okay then, show us. Read something.

Osbert smirks; Edwin buries his head in his hands.

SIMON

Gladly.

Simon flips to a random page.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Ah, yes, a classic. This is the
story of Tim.

IN THE STORY

As Simon reads, we see the story being acted out. All
characters have Simon's voice.

SIMON (V.O.)

There once was a wise king who
ruled over all the land. But the
land was in trouble - a great
plague was afflicting his people.
And crops weren't growing. So the
king, being a pious man, turned to
God for guidance.

KING (SIMON'S VOICE)
 Hey God! How about some guidance
 here! People are sick and hungry -
 I mean I'm fine cuz I'm king, but
 you get the idea.

SIMON (V.O.)
 God heard the king's plea, and
 decided to help.

GOD (SIMON'S VOICE)
 All right buddy, here's the deal-

KING'S COURT

OSBERT
 Hang on, God calls the king
 "buddy"? Seems a little informal if
 you ask me.

SIMON
 But I *didn't* ask you, Ozzy.
 (to King)
 May I?

The king nods for him to continue.

IN THE STORY

GOD (SIMON'S VOICE)
 All right buddy, here's the deal.
 All the knowledge you seek: your
 ancestors knew about all that
 stuff, and they wrote it down. If
 you study their works, you can save
 your kingdom.

SIMON (V.O.)
 The king went back to his chambers,
 and gathered his collection of
 scrolls and tomes. But he had never
 learned to read them - they were
 just for display. He summoned all
 the noblemen, but none of them
 could read. So he asked all the
 knights, then all the merchants -
 no luck. The king was about to give
 up, when in walked a poor peasant.
 The king was skeptical, but decided
 to give him a chance. To his great
 surprise, the peasant could read
 every manuscript perfectly!

(MORE)

SIMON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And thus, a deal was struck: the king would call upon the peasant whenever he wanted to consult the ancient texts. An in exchange-

IN THE COURTROOM

SIMON
Well you get the idea. That's basically the end.

KING TIBERIUS
Finish the story.

Simon pauses in mock hesitation.

KING TIBERIUS (CONT'D)
That's an order.

The herald blows his trumpet loudly, causing everyone to jump.

HERALD
I'm sorry your highness.

KING TIBERIUS
No, it's not your fault.
(to the room)
He's been trained to sound the horn whenever I say 'order'.

The herald blows his trumpet loudly once more.

SIMON
Wow, okay then.

He clears his throat again.

SIMON (CONT'D)
("reading")
In exchange - because you can't have a deal without some kind of exchange - the king gave the peasant a small parcel of land.

Edwin shoots Simon a warning look.

SIMON (CONT'D)
("reading" hastily)
Like, really small. Seriously, the king wouldn't even miss it, he had so much. And thus, the kingdom was saved.

Simon puts the book down.

Everyone turns to look at the king, who seems to be deep in thought.

The king stands abruptly, and points to Simon.

KING TIBERIUS
Come with me.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE - MOMENTS LATER

The king walks down a long corridor leading Simon, who for the first time seems nervous.

KING TIBERIUS
You know, when you were reading that bible story, I realized something.

SIMON
Yes, your Majesty?

KING TIBERIUS
This is something you probably didn't notice, but that story sounds a lot like our situation today.

SIMON
Oh?

KING TIBERIUS
Think about it: famine and plague, a wise, benevolent king, a reading peasant... and to think, you just picked a random page! Marvelous, isn't it?

SIMON
Well it slipped by me, but I don't have your keen wisdom, Your Highness.

KING TIBERIUS
(sighing)
Very few do, I'm afraid.

They arrive at a door at the end of the corridor.

KING TIBERIUS (CONT'D)
Very few people have seen what
you're about to see.

Tiberius opens the door and leads Simon in.

CLASSICS ROOM

The room is adorned with ancient artifacts - swords,
sculptures, etc. - but mostly scrolls and books.

SIMON
(in awe)
I knew it.

KING TIBERIUS
What was that?

SIMON
Um, I said "I view it." Like I'm
viewing this impressive collection
of yours.

KING TIBERIUS
(nodding thoughtfully)
Ah, yes... I view it too. Look
here.

Tiberius gestures at a shelf of old scrolls and journals.

KING TIBERIUS (CONT'D)
Some of these manuscripts are from
the old empires of Greece and Rome.
Some are from the Far East. Who
knows what wisdom they hold? But
now they're just relics gathering
dust. I think you could be the key
to using their knowledge to save
this kingdom.

SIMON
I'd be happy to help.

KING TIBERIUS
I'm afraid some of them are in
Greek.

SIMON
(carelessly flipping
through an old book)
Oh that won't be a problem. So
wait, I'll be like a royal advisor?

KING TIBERIUS
More like a consultant.

SIMON
Still - not a serf!

KING TIBERIUS
And also a serf.

SIMON
T'will be my honor, sir. Except-

KING TIBERIUS
Yes?

SIMON
Well as we both know, only land-
owning men are permitted to meet
with the king.

KING TIBERIUS
Well, I can make an exception.
That's one of the great things
about being king.

SIMON
Of course. But why should you even
have to stoop so low? Any
consultant worthy of your time
should have some land. Even just a
teeny tiny amount?

Simon holds his thumb and finger an inch apart. The king
frowns in thought.

Simon pinches his fingers even closer together questioningly.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE - MOMENTS LATER

Simon stands proudly in the field.

Osbert pitches his sword in the ground a few feet away.

OSBERT
(grudgingly)
As per the king's orders-

Osbert drags the sword through the ground creating a circle
around Simon.

OSBERT (CONT'D)
Your very own sprawling estate.
Congratulations, sir.

Osbert bows sarcastically.

OSBERT (CONT'D)
Now get back to work.

Osbert mounts his horse and rides off.

Edwin approaches.

EDWIN
Well I've gotta say I'm surprised.

SIMON
Didn't I tell you everything would
be fine? Now look at me - land
below my feet and my head firmly on
my shoulders. And that's where it's
staying.

EDWIN
Sure. Unless the king finds out you
can't read of course-

SIMON
Right.

EDWIN
Or you fail on your promise to save
the kingdom-

SIMON
Naturally.

EDWIN
Which involves both ending a
drought and curing the plague-

SIMON
Of course-

EDWIN
But apart from that, you're right.
This is big for you.

SIMON
Big for us, Edwin. As I move up,
I'm taking you with me. Don't think
I've forgotten.

EDWIN
I wish you had.

Simon lies down and stretches out within his circle.