

EXT. PUSZTA DAY

The vast plain of central Hungary; the sun beats down on the late summer, arid landscape. All vegetation has been burned by the long summer sun. A shimmer of haze; and the insistent chirping of grass hoppers; the 'errp-errp' of corncrakes and the distant 'pret-pret' of a bustard.

TEXT;

1380 AD, Hungary. Under their King Louis 11 known as 'The Great' the Magyars have conquered all the lands to the North and West. The warriors have returned to their ancient homeland on the vast plains of the puszta. The danger now comes from the East, where invading Turks and marauding Tartars threaten their new found tranquility. Ballad, and legend tell of a mighty warrior known then and now as TOLDI.

AS THE HERDSMAN'S FIRE LIGHTS  
THE LATE SUMMER NIGHT  
OVER THE VAST SEA OF THE PUSZTA  
I SEE THE FIGURE OF MIKLOS TOLDI  
RISING LIKE THE FLAMES,  
OVER COUNTLESS GENERATIONS. I  
STILL TREMBLE IN AWE WHEN I  
CONTEMPLATE HIS MIGHTY PRESENCE  
(Janos Arany)

EXT. PUSZTA DAY

As the text fades we move in closer; to the land between the sky and the horizon. A vivid blend of colours shimmer through the haze. Browns, yellows and reds of all shades. As a grey silhouette we can pick out a travelling troop of actors at camp. Two wagons, one covered for props and costumes, the other open for a mobile stage. A Man on stilts, some animals and a bonfire, is just about all we can make out. An almost surreal image.

EXT PUSZTA DAY

We are now close enough to see the MINSTREL sitting on a wagon accompanied by a boy playing the lute- like KOBZOZ. A Dog dances on his back legs; A couple of young boys

dressed as girls loll about , the man on stilts practises juggling, a man in a beard prances declaiming a silent text; the activity of a Mediaeval actors troop at rest.

MINSTREL

There was a man the like of whom  
could not be found in all the  
wide world.

If TOLDI MIKLOS returned and  
walked amongst us here;  
His great deeds would the work  
of sorcery appear.....

EXT PUSZTA DAY

The sun beats down

EXT NAGYFALU DAY

The same sun distorts and dances; we are seeing it from the bottom of a water barrel. OLD TOLDI'S head drops into the water with a mighty splash. His Eyes bulge' his greying beard and long unkept hair float like strands of seaweed.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY

OLD TOLDI lifts his head from the barrel, which is situated by some sheds in the yard of the TOLDI ancestral home. It is a fortified farm ,at one corner a tower looks out over the puszta.. Mighty doors protect a a quadrangle of dwelling and farm buildings. The heat is intense. Skinny chickens scratch a living in the dust, a cockerel does not have the energy to crow, the air seems to vibrate over the dirt. The Place has seen better days. TOLDI shakes the water from his main like a wolf, picks up some digging implements and sets off.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY

A little way off. A Spade hits the hard ground; OLD TOLDI is digging a pit. Despite His age OLD TOLDI is still a huge, strong man with well defined muscles, and enormous strength. Why is he digging?

We can now see that the farm is a bit dilapidated; a manor farm that has been neglected while the owner has been off at war. On the tower flies the banner of the TOLDIS somewhat torn and faded ; this coat of arms will be very distinctive and readily recognizable.

The spade hits something; treasure? Slowly OLD TOLDI stoops to pick up a rusty horseshoe , he turns it in his hand to examine it as if it was a strange object. The horseshoe triggers memory.

EXT BATTLEFIELD DAY

Mud and dust are stirred by the hooves of battle horses; LOUIS THE GREAT, King of the MAGYARS is parading his troops before battle. The commander of the army, TOLDI rides alongside him, resplendent in armor bearing the coat of arms of the TOLDIS, we recognize him even though, now he is at the height of his powers, about 40 years old with a black well trimmed beard. The Knights in armour dip their lances as the KING and TOLDI pass. Their horses seem to smell the scent of battle; they strain and champ, while behind them the entire MAGYAR army rattles in armour.

EXT BATTLEFIELD DAY

A flame fill the screen. A HORSEMAN with a mighty torch gallops past a row of archers lighting a ball of oil-dipped rags on the end of each arrow. This is the VENETIAN army ready to do battle with the MAGYARS. The front row is a strong barricade of upturned carts. Behind them the VENETIANS wait with drawn swords. A huddled throng of LANCERS lift their shields and dip their lances. They wait.

EXT BATTLEFIELD DAY

KING LOUIS bangs down his visor; TOLDI does the same, then all the MAGYAR knights; the trumpets of war sound; KING LOUIS then TOLDI draw their swords; banners are raised; the MAGYAR army, all expert horsemen, surges to battle. Soon they are at the gallop. The speed and fury of the MAGYARS is awesome, the sound of their war cries blood chilling.

EXT BATTLEFIELD DAY

Behind the BARRICADE of CARTS the VENETIANS draw back their bows of fire.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY

OLD TOLDI throws down the rusty horseshoe, he picks up a huge spade and resumes digging. Earth flies from the pit , can one man dig so much so fast?

EXT NAGYFALU DAY

BENCE, TOLDI'S faithful servant and squire leaves the compound clutching a pathetic bunch of flowers. He walks towards the run-down graveyard. He is stopped in his tracks by a veritable volcano of flying earth. It is now evident the OLD TOLDI is digging a grave.

A RECTANGLE OF SKY; BENCE'S head appears; only to get an eyeful of dirt. HE retreats then reappears.

BENCE

Sire, may I be forgiven for my question, but what are you digging?

OLD TOLDI

Help me, old friend, bring me that shovel.

BENCE (TO HIMSELF)

'Old friend' in battle it was 'squire!' Or, 'Bence!'

BENCE mutters away; he goes to the grave of his father OLD BENCE, he is torn between obeying OLD TOLDI immediately and paying tribute at the grave of his father.

BENCE (CONT'D)

Dear father, God grant you rest, you understood my LORD TOLDI, you knew what made him a great man, the master of battles the hero of the MAGYARS,

OLD TOLDI (V.O.)

Bence the shovel

BENCE places the flowers on the moss covered grave, and picks up the shovel. He walks back to the grave that OLD TOLDI is digging, attacking a root.

BENCE

You know I haven't dug a grave since father's over there, here I'll give you a hand.

BENCE jumps down into the grave; OLD TOLDI roars and pulls at the root, which breaks shooting OLD TOLDI into BENCE'S arms. They collapse together. At first they laugh, then in quiet contemplation;

OLD TOLDI

Your father Bence, was my  
dearest friend.

BENCE

You have told me sir, many  
times. And I..

OLD TOLDI

And you, Bence, thirty years my  
squire in battles from Prague to  
Sulmona; you have tended my  
wounds, sharpened my sword.

BENCE

We certainly have seen many  
battles.

OLD TOLDI

The days we have seen, We  
Magyars we warriors of the  
puszta..

The two old men get to their feet, shake themselves down  
and start work.

EXT BATTLEFIELD DAY

A shower of flaming arrows, like meteors in the heavens.

Galloping hooves

KING LOUIS and TOLDI lead the charge; the flaming arrows  
terrify the horses, all around KNIGHTS tumble unable to  
raise again because of the weight of their armour.

The VENETIANS man the barricades with halberts at the  
ready

The MAGYAR KNIGHTS attack with lowered lances

Roars and screams as the two sides engage at the  
barricades. The Gisarmes, vouges and pikes of the  
VENETIANS clash with the swords and lances of the mounted  
MAGYARS.

KING LOUIS at the head of his army smashes through, TOLDI  
at his side protects him from all sides.

The MAGYARS break through; beyond the line of carts is a  
trench lined with sharpened wooden stakes. The KING looks

at TOLDI they smile and charge their horses at the trench leaping over it, clear of the stakes. Some of their followers are not so lucky, as one by one they are impaled.

The KING and TOLDI are now isolated in a throng of foot soldiers who attempt to un-horse them with lances. So mighty a warrior is TOLDI that the foot soldiers fall back as his huge sword cuts a swathe through them. Arms and legs heads and torsos litter the ground. As a footing becomes difficult, the KING and TOLDI back to back are being pushed towards the archers. In the jostling panic a barrel of oil is knocked over, spilling on the ground. The oil quickly spreads to form a lake.

An ARCHER draws back a flaming arrow just a few metres from the KING ,TOLDI gallops by and cuts down the ARCHER with one swipe. The ARCHER still with the flaming arrow ready to fire falls into the oil, in an instant the ground is transformed into a sea of flame.

The KING is now amongst the rear guard of poorly armed straggling soldiers, he cuts a swathe through them . TOLDI sees the KING is unprotected, on his way to join him he is un-horsed by a VENETIAN'S pike. The KING turns to help TOLDI and with his eyes off the immediate danger is also un-horsed.

The KING and TOLDI fight on foot like ten men, their swords flashing,reflecting the flames which are beginning to engulf the Battlefield. Their armor glows red.

TOLDI finds a worthy adversary; they engage in a cumbersome sword fight, two lumbering KNIGHTS in armour, off their horses. TOLDI Disarms the VENETIAN KNIGHT; he shows him no mercy slicing him from head to balls with a terrifying mighty cut.

TOLDI looks round for the KING who is in difficulty, he is now confronted by a VENETIAN in so much elaborate armor that he can hardly move. TOLDI with disdain just pushes the VENETIAN over with his fingers. The VENETIAN falls into the flames with a scream.

TOLDI and the KING are reunited. TOLDI'S mighty sword clashes with the KING'S a spark is thrown igniting TOLDI'S oil covered sword.

The flaming sword is held high in victory.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY

The shovel completes the action of the sword, the action is so strong that it impels OLD TOLDI forwards. He falls face down in the grave. It is now evident that it would not be big enough to accommodate TOLDI'S mighty frame. He turns on his back looking up at BENCE. BENCE looks down apparently unmoved.

BENCE

Sire forgive me,who's dead?

OLD TOLDI

Dead?... Me

OLD TOLDI (cont'd)

Good as. There's nothing now between me and the grave. Six feet under that's where I should be.

BENCE

No Sire

OLD TOLDI

You see my friend, my sword is now rusted, it's three years, three years of disuse, three years since it was washed with our enemies blood

OLD TOLDI gets back on his feet.

BENCE

But it was you Sire,I heard you, you said to King Louis that you wanted to end your days as a farmer, like your ancestors, here at NAGYFALU

OLD TOLDI looks around at the decaying farm

OLD TOLDI

Not much of a farmer am I?

BENCE

Sire you taught me not to lie.  
No.

OLD TOLDI

Yes you are right. So promise me,that when my days are done you will bury me here, next to your father.

BENCE

I will, but why don't you let me finish the grave at some other time? I will at least make it the right size. But it will never happen. You, TOLDI MIKLOS will live forever.

OLD TOLDI

Here before witnesses (He indicates the graves) I bequeath all the lands of NAGYFALU to the family BENCE for eternity. May they defend them with honour,

BENCE is speechless. His reverie is interrupted as a clod of earth hits him so hard it knocks him over.

EXT BATTLEFIELD DAY

The KING is surrounded he stumbles and falls, a fatal thing with the heavy armour.

A huge SOLDIER raises a mighty battle axe ready to bring it down on the helpless KING. As he lifts his head he sees TOLDI against the sky holding the flaming sword high. Like a vision of Saint Michael, on a mound of dead bodies.

The SOLDIER is transfixed. TOLDI turns the flaming sword in his hand and points it like a spear.

In slow motion the flaming sword flies through the air.

The SOLDIER has turned to dispatch the KING with his axe.

TOLDI'S flaming sword is extinguished as it passes through the SOLDIER'S body with a loud 'thunk'.

With a tug, so strong that it cuts the SOLDIER'S body in two, TOLDI recovers his sword. In the same movement he cuts down a charging pike-man.

The KING is still prone TOLDI hands him his mailed fist.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY

OLD TOLDI helps BENCE up

OLD TOLDI

So it is understood, bury me here; but do not mark the spot,

with anything other than the  
handle of my spade.

A distant clatter of hooves; across the puszta a horseman  
arrives. The two men shade their eyes. Who comes this  
way?

POSAFALAVI approaches the farm past the broken down  
buildings. He is hard to see against the sky.

OLD TOLDI (cont'd)  
Posafalavi, is that you? Why are  
you here so far from the Kings  
side?

POSAFALAVI  
Toldi Miklos I have a message  
from the King.

OLD TOLDI puts down his spade.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT NAGYFALU; A CORN FIELD DAY

Extreme cu. a grasshopper; a straw

prods the poor creature, it does not jump just scratches  
its legs lazily in the scorching sun.

A PEASANT LAD, his face red and sweaty, patiently prods  
away until the grasshopper climbs the straw and swings  
like an acrobat.

Heat-haze distorts the image of eternal rural life.

FARMHANDS lay exhausted in the mid-day sun; a haystack  
affords them some shade. Some sleep, young couples take  
the opportunity to cuddle close, old men snore. The  
implements of harvest time lay tumbled on the ground.

At the edge of the field is an area of marshland,  
tussocks of grass rise above the drying mud. A deer sips  
the last water from a puddle. A grass snake winds across  
the parched terrane.

MINSTREL (V.O.)  
The scorching sun beats down  
upon  
he shriveled ground,  
Swarms of hungry grasshoppers  
have not found

A blade of grass, nor anything  
green in all the fields of  
stubble.  
The lowing oxen mill around an  
empty trough  
Making war on an army of flies.  
But who's to fill it now the  
herdsman,  
under the sheltering haystack,  
lies?

EXT PUSZTA DAY

The MINSTREL is sitting on the tail of the wagon which  
lumbers along a country track, throwing up dust from the  
horses hooves.

MINSTREL

It is as if a giant insect had  
sucked the blood from the veins  
of this fat and fertile land,  
drinking it dry..

EXT NAGYFALU; A CORNFIELD DAY

The PEASANT LAD lazily drops the grasshopper between the  
breasts of a sleeping GIRL. He brushes her nose with the  
straw; she twitches in her sleep; then wakes and feels the  
grasshopper on her full breasts. The GIRL leaps up  
screaming, she chases the PEASANT LAD round the haystack,  
he is looking over his shoulder and runs, thwack, right  
into a wagon shaft which should not have been there. He  
falls, stunned, to the ground.

YOUNG TOLDI is carrying the mighty shaft over his  
shoulder as if it were a twig. He is about 18 years old  
but massively built. He looks down at the PEASANT LAD  
smiles, shakes his head and moves on down the dusty  
track. He whistles to his KUVSAZ, the dog rather  
reluctantly joins him.

The GIRL now laughing affectionately goes to the aid of  
the still stunned PEASANT BOY who grins stupidly.

YOUNG TOLDI strides along purposefully, the kuvasz  
alongside him ; behind him the seemingly endless puszta.  
He passes a characteristic lonely draw- well constructed  
with poles, which bends over the bone dry earth like a  
great gnat about to suck blood.

MINSTREL (v.o.)

Young Toldi, why do you walk in  
the midday sun  
While others snore as if their  
work is done?  
See you the distant whirlwind  
like a tower of dust approaches,  
And at breakneck speed towards  
this bucolic scene, encroaches?

In the distance a wall of dust like a sandstorm begins to  
blot out the sun.

By the draw-well a group of grey long horned cattle  
bellow for water swishing away the flies with their  
tails. They begin to paw the earth nervously.

YOUNG TOLDI reaches a hay wain which has tumbled over a  
broken wheel. With very little effort he levers the hay  
wain with the shaft he has been carrying. Very slowly  
with much muttering a couple of farm hands roll a wheel  
to the axel of the wain. YOUNG TOLDI hardly strains the  
effort of holding the weight of the wain. He sees the  
distant column of dust.

The PEASANT BOY shakes his head to clear it, he looks  
into the distance with disbelief, then tries to clear his  
vision with another shake.

He sees a company of horsemen hanging up side down from  
the sky riding towards him.

He screams with fright, rubbing his eyes; has he lost his  
reason? The others awaken and look too.

The gravity defying army with banners flying and armour  
gleaming is coming to NAGYFALU; it is a MIRAGE a  
phenomenon of the puszta. All who see it are awestruck.

YOUNG TOLDI now sees the horsemen from the heavens  
emerging from the dust. Before His eyes they fade and  
disappear; then reappear the right way up. A magnificent  
sight in their gleaming armour red tunics and golden  
helmets.

MINSTREL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

'Where to, brave Magyar Knights?  
How it pains me to see you,  
where are you bound?  
To where the fires of battle  
rage, and gather fame's flowers  
for a glory wreath?  
To Turk and Tartar, fight

To bid them for eternity, good  
night.'

YOUNG TOLDI walks to the crossroads still looking at the  
approaching knights.

EXT PUSZTA DAY

The actors wagons trundle on, the MINSTREL continues;

MINSTREL

'Ah if only I was with you too  
Fair Magyar knights, bold  
warriors rue'.  
This is what Young Toldi  
thought, knowing it would come to  
naught.

EXT NAGYFALU; A CORNFIELD DAY

YOUNG TOLDI stands at the crossroads as if he were a sign  
post. The COUNT PALATINE ENDRÉ LACZFI at the head of his  
escort, sits on a fine horse in cloth trimmed with gold  
in exquisite armour. His troopers are resplendent in  
helmets topped with white egret's plumes. LACZFI raises  
his hand to stop the company at the crossroads. He  
steadies his hot blooded mount.

LACZFI

Hey you.. peasant which is the  
road to Buda?

YOUNG TOLDI not used to being so addressed ignores him.

LACZFI (CONT'D)

Show some respect, peasant boy.

YOUNG TOLDI (aside)

I am no peasant, I have no  
master.

As he speaks to himself he twirls the huge wagon shaft,  
lifts it horizontally and sweeps it around. LACZFI And  
the troopers recoil. LACZFI Is almost thrown from his  
horse. The wagon shaft halts; completely steady it points  
to the road to BUDA.

The disdainful smile is wiped off LACZFI'S face as he,  
the Knights and the troopers look with amazement at the  
brute strength of the young man who is able to hold a  
wagon shaft so steady in his hand.

LACZFI slaps his thigh with appreciation at the feat.

LACZFI

Well, well, this in no boy, this  
is a man.

He turns to his troops.

LACZFI (cont'd)

Who challenges him? Anyone here  
dares to fight the peasant?

A KNIGHT laughs

KNIGHT

Sir ,fight a peasant? You know  
we can't do that.

LACZFI

Well then, who can hold a wagon  
shaft level to the road.. just  
like that lad? Come on..

Still no takers. The farm workers have gathered to watch  
the sport;they snigger showing pride in YOUNG TOLDI.

MINSTREL (V.O.)

Who would challenge a  
thunderstorm?  
Who would grab a bolt of  
lightning from the sky?  
Who is so tired of life that he  
would fight the mighty Toldi?  
That would be; to call down the  
wrath of heaven.  
Our Hero's strength is, without  
doubt God given.

The company led by LACZFI begin to move off. All the  
peasants doff their caps.

YOUNG TOLDI lets down the shaft, but stands his ground.  
The troopers nod and smile as they pass.

SOLDIER

Join us son, we need a few like  
you in our ranks...

KNIGHT

Strong he may be;but no peasant  
can ever ride with us.

The company of horse move on, YOUNG TOLDI stands, clearly  
upset by what he has heard. He watches the horsemen into

the distance, then turns with an angry howl and storms off, carrying the shaft over his shoulder, back to the fields, stirring the field hands into activity.

MINSTREL (V.O.)

The horsemen have gone; the trumpets cease to bray, hidden in the dust, the wind carries the sound away. And like a wounded boar he onward marched Carrying the shaft across his shoulders, arched.

EXT NAGYFALU - LATER

Now we see Nagyfalu in all its glory; all the activity of a wealthy fortified farm of the 14th century. The gate is open to allow in a cart laden with wine barrels through. The WAGONER pulls up the horses, SERVANTS rush out to unload the wine. The flag with the coat of arms of the TOLDIS is bright and new.

Despite the heat of late summer, the chimney belches thick black smoke; the fires are stoked for a great meal.

A row of tables on which SERVANTS prepare animals for the pot. Pigs, calves and sheep mill and jostle among the SERVANTS, awaiting their fate. The blood begins to flow.

BÖZSKE a young servant girl draws water from the well in the centre of the yard, she hurries to the kitchen laden with two pails.

SOLDIERS unsaddle and rub down their horses; they exchange banter with the maids and kitchen hands. The forthcoming feast holds the promise of wild excesses.

INT NAGYFALU; KITCHENS DAY

The meal is prepared; a smoke filled room; cooks and maids scurry hither and thither.

BÖSZKE empties her pails into a huge cauldron of boiling water set above an open fire. In goes a chicken in full feather; it is pulled out and skillfully plucked.

COOK A is drawing the entrails from a lamb. COOK B lays bacon onto rabbits ready for the oven. MAIDS knead bread in a flurry of flour.

The WAGONER supervises the stacking of the wine barrels; he steals a chicken leg and is scolded by BÖSZKE.

WAGONER

So, what's all this then? Has somebody died, I like a good wake.

SERVANT

Nobody's dead that I know of..

WAGONER

Don't tell me the old girls had enough of being a widow and is getting a new hubby. Who's the unlucky fellow?

BÖSZKE

Show some respect, Lady Lorincz has just bought ten hogsheads of your best Tokay wine from Mor. And for what?

WAGONER

For what?.. Is what I was asking

SERVANT

For Gyorgy

BÖSZKE

Lord Gyorgy is home from the wars

SERVANT

Only the best for the eldest son.

JUDIT is clearly not so sure that all this fuss is justified.

BÖSZKE

Him and all his men and horses, like a swarm of locusts they are, they'll eat us out of winter provisions, then where will milady be?.. Where will WE be?

The WAGONER gets on with his job, the kitchen activity intensifies.

The KUVASZ dog slips in and steals the chicken leg from the WAGONERS hand. He runs off skillfully avoiding a boot.

BÖSZKE(cont'd)

And,what they don't eat now  
they'll take with them, when  
they go..WHEN they go.....

INT NAGYFALU LIVING QUARTERS; A CORRIDOR DAY

GYORGY TOLDI, dressed finely in silks, paces along the corridor with a swagger. He is a few years older than his brother MIKLOS. A pace behind follows his shadow, the thug TORZO. The two men march to a doorway covered by a curtain which GYORGY pushes aside, he signals TORZO to wait then strides into the room.

INT NAGYFALU LIVING QUARTERS DAY

A typical medieval hall with tapestries on the walls, heavy furniture, and a prominent CLAN CHEST underneath the coat of arms of the TOLDIS. LADY TOLDI awaits her eldest son standing by the chest. The KUVASZ is crunching happily on the stolen bone, but on seeing GYORGY he slopes off.

An elegant middle aged woman with a radiant beauty,she lights up as she greets GYORGY with open arms. He returns her embrace with a cold nod. They do not speak,GYORGY puts his sword and scabbard onto the table, helping himself greedily to a goblet of wine.

GYORGY

So, where's the boy?

LADY TOLDI

The dear boy is with the others  
in the fields helping with the  
harvest,I'll have him called....

GYORGY

No leave him, that's where he  
belongs with the peasants and  
the animals on the puszta..  
'dear boy'

The KUVASZ senses something and gets up, wagging his tail.

YOUNG TOLDI pull back the curtain the great dog bounds over to him.

GYORGY stars unmoved at seeing his brother, YOUNG TOLDI is, still smarting from the insults at the hands of LACZFI'S men.

YOUNG TOLDI pulls himself together and smiles a greeting, which GYORGY does not return ,he approaches GYORGY with open arms, he is ignored while GYORGY pours himself more wine.

YOUNG TOLDI turns to play with the KUVASZ.

LADY TOLDI begs GYORGY with tearful eyes to be kind, but he brushes her aside and takes a swig of wine.

GYORGY (CONT'D)

Oh yes, pat him like a puppy,  
pamper him.

GYORGY slams down the goblet, and turns to his mother for the first time.

GYORGY (cont'd)

It's harvest time ,so why is he here in the house? He's like a dog sniffing around when he smells food. Hey you..back to the fields where you belong..

GYORGY strides, strutting round the room.

GYORGY (cont'd)

I told you mother.. did I not tell you? He's Like an overgrown ox all strength and stupidity.. Why don't you put him on show, your darling pet? At the circus; 'The monster of the puszta'..

YOUNG TOLDI can take it no more. He rises to his full height with an angry snort, his chest heaves like a blacksmith's bellows.

YOUNG TOLDI

Coward! Why are YOU here and not at the KING'S side in battle? You have stolen what is

rightfully mine? Our dear father  
divide this estate equally  
between us. Would I not make a  
noble knight? More loyal to the  
King than you!

GYORGY

Knight? You are not fit to be a  
peasant, knight!..Mother,do You  
hear? He thinks he is our  
fathers equal..ox!

YOUNG TOLDI paces the room, he strokes the dog which  
calms him.

YOUNG TOLDI

Gyorgy,all I want is my share of  
this estate,then I'll be off.  
Come on brother, the money,  
horses, arms; give me my  
share,the world is wide  
enough..God bless us both eh?.

LADY TOLDI seems unable to step between the brothers. The  
unsaid words hang on her lips like ripe fruit ready to  
fall.

GYORGY

Here is your share,dog,.. Toldi  
Gyorgy always pays his debts

GYORGY slaps YOUNG TOLDI in the face like a scolded  
child.

YOUNG TOLDI clenches his fist he is about to hit back.

GYORGY recoils, he tuns to grab his sword on the table,  
he swishes the blade from the scabbard.

LADY TOLDI stands between them. TORZO rushes in ready to  
protect his master. LADY TOLDI backs up against YOUNG  
TOLDI to protect him from attack.

YOUNG TOLDI storms off pushing aside TORZO with disdain;  
over his shoulder he shouts;

YOUNG TOLDI

I hope God treats you;  
as well as you treat me!

GYORGY shakes with anger,he slams down his sword .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT NAGYFALU LIVING QUARTERS EVENING

The same table is now older and distressed, the sword is not now there. POSAFALVI sits at the table. BENCE is holding a ladder while OLD TOLDI adjusts the family coat of arms high on the wall.

POSAFALVI

Please listen to me Toldi  
Miklos, the news from Buda is  
very bad, desperate. We need  
you, you are our champion.

OLD TOLDI carefully adjusts the coat of arms and slowly descends the ladder. He does not look at POSAFALVI.

POSAFALVI (cont'd)

Find him they said. Find him,  
where ever he might be, find him  
even if he is ailing fast, and  
find his grave if he is now  
dead.

BENCE is about to say something but OLD TOLDI shuts him up with a stern look. OLD TOLDI hits the bottom rung of the ladder, his gaze is still on the crest.

POSAFALVI (cont'd)

All of our greatest Magyar  
heroes have been slain, Toldi  
Miklos..killed

OLD TOLDI backs toward the table.

POSAFALVI (cont'd)

By a Genovese knight who  
challenges all comers

On hearing this OLD TOLDI crashes down his fist on the table.

OLD TOLDI

To hell with him

The crest of the TOLDI coat of arms falls from the wall with the impact of his fist. BENCE shakes his head.

OLD TOLDI (cont'd)

Tell my old friends this; today  
my old body did lay in a grave.

But my soul has risen with  
strength renewed.

OLD TOLDI turns and raises his eyes to meet those of  
POSAFALVI.

INT NAGYFALU LIVING QUARTERS NIGHT

OLD TOLDI lays in the bed. He looks towards the family  
crest laying against the wall.

EXT THE DANUBE MARGARET ISLAND DAWN

Flash back; Through the early morning mist across the  
river a funeral barge appears. Slowly rowed by silent  
oars, the bier is draped in white linen; on it a single  
red rose. TOLDI, with his back to us watches PIROSKA on  
her final journey, from horseback. He Throws a bunch of  
roses into the water, turns and rides off.

EXT PILIS HILLS DAY

Flash back; YOUNG TOLDI attacks CESARINI raining down  
blows with his mighty sword.

INT NAGYFALU LIVING QUARTERS NIGHT

OLD TOLDI leaps out of bed- and steps on a cat which runs  
off screaming.

He takes a flickering lamp from the table and goes to the  
CLAN CHEST. He takes out some chain mail an axe and then  
his sword. He makes a couple of passes with the sword,  
then goes back to the chest. He finds PIROSKA'S  
embroidered kerchief, he tries to press out the creases  
with his hand, tears come into his eyes.

EXT BUDA MARKET PLACE DAY

TOLDI leads the victorious army through the cheering  
crowds.

A proud figure in silver mounted armour astride a  
magnificent steed. TOLDI is in the prime of life, his  
battle-scarred face sports a neat black beard.

TOLDI is now the Commander in Chief of the mighty armies  
of King LOUIS the GREAT.

A pace behind ride General LACZFI now greying, and  
POSAFALVI with other Knights.

The KING salutes his troops on horseback as they parade, with prisoners in chains and treasure on pack horses.

Around the KING is the court; in attendance is PIROSKA, transfixed by the sight of TOLDI.

TOLDI salutes the cheering crowds on all sides. He catches sight of PIROSKA. LACZFI notices.

TOLDI  
Who is she Laczfi?

LACZFI  
Rozgoni's daughter Piroska,  
beautiful eh? And they say she  
is to inherit all his wealth.

They turn away to acknowledge the crowd. But TOLDI is lured back to PIROSKA'S gaze.

EXT BUDA MARKETPLACE DAY

LATER: The GENERALS; TOLDI, LACZFI and POSAFALVI are now dismounted, standing with the KING. TROOPS pass, throwing captured banners into a pile before the KING. TOLDI calls for a huge chest to be brought to the KING; it is opened revealing unimaginable treasure. The KING slaps TOLDI on the back with pleasure but TOLDI is still captivated by the almost provocative gaze of PIROSKA.

A cornet sounds; A small troop of horsemen dressed in extremes of gold, green and white silks are led towards the KING by CESARINI, who bows excessively to the KING before dismounting. TOLDI is not pleased with CESARINI somewhat stealing the show. CESARINI prostrates himself before the KING.

KING  
We thank you Cesarini, our ally.

The KING gestures for CESARINI to rise.

KING  
Now we have something for you  
with which to cement our  
friendship.

The KING turns and indicates to PIROSKA to come forward. She lowers her eyes, she lifts them again to TOLDI. CESARINI catches the look.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY; THE COURTYARD.

Dawn; the sun lifts over a millstone cracked and covered in moss and weeds. A stream of urine hits the stone, it seems that someone is aiming for the hole in the centre of the millstone.

OLD TOLDI stands peeing distractedly gazing into the distance. BENCE appears.

OLD TOLDI  
Bence go and rub down the bob  
tailed bay, and put together  
some food and drink. Better make  
it some of our very best wine;  
to perk up my tired old brain,

BENCE is confused.

OLD TOLDI (cont'd)  
Ha! The old eagle will fly  
again!

INT NAGYFALU BANQUETING HALL DAY

The great table groans with food; dogs lurk for discarded bones thrown over the revellers shoulders.

GYORGY with LADY TOLDI, sits at the head, the food arrives non stop from the kitchens, but LADY TOLDI does not eat.

The air is heavy with smoke from the hundreds of candles supported on giant cartwheels hung from the ceiling.

A band of hurdy-gurdy, bagpipes, serpents, and a variety of lutes; plays a rollicking country tune.

GYORGY'S followers are in riotous mood, eating with their fingers, grabbing food by the fistful from passing servants. Those who miss out on food grab a breast or bum instead.

OLD BENCE( the father of BENCE in the graveyard) the household major-domo looks on with disdain, he exchanges a glance with LADY TOLDI.

BÖSZKE has the misfortune to serve TORZO with wine. He grabs her, tearing her bodice and exposing her breast. She runs from the room.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY; THE COURTYARD.

YOUNG TOLDI is alone; he can hear the muffled sound of the wild carousing. BÖSZKE rushes out screaming, pursued by TORZO. She is caught and flung down onto some hay with

TORZO clawing at her clothes. YOUNG TOLDI rushes to her assistance.

INT NAGYFALU BANQUETING HALL DAY

OLD BENCE slips away from his position by the door.

LADY TOLDI gets up from the table, she has had enough of the spectacle.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY; THE COURTYARD.

TORZO is intent on rape; most of BÖSZKE'S clothes are ripped off, he is pulling off his own shirt and breeches. YOUNG TOLDI flies through the air to help BÖSZKE; he throws TORZO off her, as if he were a rag. He then jumps on him, and is about to break an arm.

GYORGY

Stop him!

GYORGY and a group of drunken soldiers have come out to see what all the noise is about. Two SOLDIERS rush at YOUNG TOLDI who swats them like flies. It takes ten men to hold him.

GYORGY (CONT'D)

You see, my stupid brother..TORZO here is a soldier He fights and kills men, he protects me. Now it is time for him to take his pleasure like a soldier..TORZO finish your business, you have my permission.

YOUNG TOLDI struggles but ten men are just about his match. OLD BENCE valiantly runs forward to try to prize TORZO off BÖSZKE but he is clubbed down.

INT NAGYFALU LIVING QUARTERS DAY

LADY TOLDI lays on her bed starrng at the ceiling, she can hear the sounds from the courtyard. She gets up to pray at the family shrine in the corner of the room.

EXT NAGYFALU DAY; THE COURTYARD.

YOUNG TOLDI squats on a millstone with his back to the wooden stockade which forms the courtyard; his eyes are closed in meditation. GYORGY sits opposite on his throne; he is half asleep and quite drunk. SOLDIERS sport by throwing their steel tipped spears at an old barrel. Much

laughter and merriment. TORZO makes a great deal of loutish noise. GYORGY stirs.

GYORGY

Look boys, look at my brother he thinks that if he hides his head like a bustard we can't see him.

TORZO takes a spear, adjusts his grip, and takes a couple of pace before letting fly. With a thump and a quiver it hits the wooden fence just above YOUNG TOLDI'S shoulder.

GYORGY (cont'd)

Come on lads lets make the overgrown fool jump.

TORZO draws a line in the dirt with his boot. The SOLDIERS line up behind it to throw. They are much the worse for wine; this is a dangerous business.

A spear hits a few inches above YOUNG TOLDI'S head; he does not flinch.

By now the whole household has come to see the sport. They Look on with horror YOUNG TOLDI is after all, one of them.

Another drunken soldier launches a spear which lands by YOUNG TOLDI'S ear. He lifts his head slowly his eyes flamed with rage. OLD BENCE Finds the humiliation hard to watch.

OLD BENCE

Young master take care.

He turns to another servant.

OLD BENCE (cont'd)

Toldi Miklos could ,like in the scriptures,like mighty Sampson, kill the heathens with the jaw bone of an ass.

YOUNG TOLDI just squats and stares. A YOUNG LAD,encouraged by the other soldiers makes his drunken way to the hockey. He licks his lips measures the distance, then makes up his mind and throws his spear.

The spear hits YOUNG TOLDI in the shoulder, blood spurts. A gasp from the crowd. GYORGY is on his feet, shocked faces; what will YOUNG TOLDI do now?

With one movement YOUNG TOLDI rises and grabs the millstone. He hurls it like a discus, a feat of almost unbelievable strength, towards the soldiers. The SOLDIERS leap for their lives.

EXT PUSZTA DAY

Close up; THE MINSTREL. A shock, we have not seen him for some time.

MINSTREL

It swept through the air, that  
mighty stone;  
But where will it fall so  
swiftly thrown?

EXT NAGYFALU DAY; THE COURTYARD.

TORZO has turned to drink more wine; the millstone hits him; lifting his head from his shoulders. For what seems like an eternity the headless body stands; before it collapses wriggling in the dirt. The head rolls across the yard before coming to rest at GYORGY'S feet. He runs to the body of his faithful cohort, cradling it in his arms as it spurts blood. GYORGY lets out a mighty howl; his face is covered in blood; an horrible sight.

SOLDIERS run to YOUNG TOLDI who vaults over the ten foot high fence avoiding the spears which rain upon him. Other SOLDIERS quickly mount, the great doors are pulled open, with a yell the SOLDIERS give chase.

EXT MARSHLAND AFTERNOON

YOUNG TOLDI light on his feet for a big man runs through the squelching bog.

The horsemen pursue but the bog holds the horses legs making mounted chase difficult, a horse falls with a muddy splash.

YOUNG TOLDI parts the reeds, jumping from tussock to tussock.

SOLDIERS dismount continuing on foot.

MINSTREL (V.O.)

Run TOLDI MIKLOS; the hangman  
waits, Thou art the worlds most  
forsaken thing.

RUN TOLDI MIKLOS; the hangman  
waits, Fly swiftly like a bird  
on the wing...

YOUNG TOLDI stops to listen, he hears voices, chooses  
a direction and glides, parting the reeds silently.