

Red Apple Tree

(What is religious faith?)

(And what good is it?)

by

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DARKNESS surrounds us

What SOUNDS like SAILS FLAPPING in the breeze.

A single, bright speck appears in the middle of the screen... faint at first, but then growing until it fills the entire screen with a WHITE, BLINDING LIGHT.

We continue to hear the FLAPPING.

TWO FIGURES emerge in hard backlit as the blinding light changes into a warm orang-ish hue.

EXT. ISLAND OF LEMNOS - EVENING

The man is in his late 40's, and the woman is in her 30's. They're resting on a grassy hill with their backs up against a MASSIVE TREE - its green leaves softly blowing.

The woman - CATERINA - is wrapped in heavy blankets; her hair is braided with elaborate beads that fall over jeweled earrings. She is striking: her dark features are rich and elegant. Her beautifully staged head rests on CONSTANTINE'S chest, and while it's clear that she's very sick, she seems at peace in his arms.

CONSTANTINE

Look at them, my love. Those Turkish ships sailing back and forth like they're lost.

She smiles, and the SOURCE OF THE SOUND is revealed to be the SAILS OF TURKISH SHIPS far off in the distance.

CONSTANTINE

Keeping us here so they can make us laugh. How selfish of them.

Caterina laughs but quickly grimaces in pain. Her breathing becomes forced - a beat, and she recovers.

We continue to hear the sound of those SUPERNATURALLY LOUD SAILS flapping in the distance; they're growing louder now.

She looks into his eyes as the diffuse red sunlight bathes everything.

HER HAND ON HIS FACE: tracing his nose's profile with her delicate finger - we see her WEDDING RING - moving down and curving around to his lips, stopping there, she says to him in a soft voice:

CATERINA

Soon.

CONSTANTINE

Why?

The sound of the sails is overpowering now: BOOM. BOOM.
BOOM!

EXT. CONSTANTINOPLE. LAND WALLS, MESOTEICHION SECTION,
LYCUS VALLEY - NIGHT

BOOM!!

WHAM!!!

CONSTANTINE

Why?

He wakes up to HELL: Stone cannon ball IMPACTS and SPRAYS SHRAPNEL. A YOUNG SOLDIER cries out with blood streaming down his face and a piece of JAGGED-STONE LODGED IN HIS FOREHEAD... he looks lost, like he knows he's no more. As the dust settles we see MORE SOLDIERS, their chain mail and armor covered in blood and their eyes past pain, their bodies reacting without thinking.

YOUNG OFFICER

What do we do?!

CONSTANTINE

(grabbing him by the shoulders)

I shouldn't be dreaming.

A section of the OUTER WALL collapses - we see a GIANT HOLE.
The SOUND OF TRUMPETS.

CONSTANTINE

Rally the men!

THE WOUNDED are evacuated behind the INNER WALL while SOLDIERS work to fill the giant hole in the OUTER WALL.

CLOSE ON Constantine's LONG SWORD - we see the Palaiologi family symbol: A DOUBLE HEADED EAGLE glowing red from fires.

SOLDIER'S VOICE

My God... Look!... up at the Moon.

We look up with Constantine to see: A LUNAR ECLIPSE.

The Turkish war cries and martial music go silent.

The sound of masonry crumbling.

SOLDIER'S VOICE
(from high up on the Inner Wall)
They're retreating!

Constantine cautiously climbs the OUTER WALL to see:
THOUSANDS OF CAMP FIRES in the near distance, like stars in
the night sky, and a LONG BLACK LINE - hundreds of feet
across - that's retreating.

GIOVANNI'S VOICE
My Lord, be careful!

GIOVANNI GUSTINIANI enters the picture. In the torchlight we
see he's wearing a SILVER BREAST PLATE depicting A BLACK
EAGLE WEARING A GOLDEN CROWN. He's covered in blood and
gore, just like everybody else. His LEFT HAND wields a
double-sided BATTLE AX and his other hand carries a shield.
His middle-aged face shows a life spent fighting: there's a
HUGE SCAR on his left cheek and another scar on his upper
neck that just missed his jugular.

Giovanni reaches the top of the OUTER WALL and extinguishes
his torch.

CONSTANTINE
(sighing)
Why'd it have to be an eclipse?

GIOVANNI
It can mean a lot of things.

CONSTANTINE
You've heard the prophecy about the Moon
and the City?

GIOVANNI
Yeah, but they must not have! Look at
them... Falling back just when they had
us.
(pointing to the ECLIPSE)
You see that up there? That's God
smiling down on us! That's what that is.

CONSTANTINE
The prophecy says the City will fall when
the Moon is on the wane. Not only is it
waning but it got swallowed whole
tonight.

GIOVANNI
(laughing)
Maybe God is swallowing the Moon so that
damned prophecy won't happen.

CONSTANTINE
Is that what you think?

GIOVANNI
I trust in God, I let him do the
thinking.

CONSTANTINE
(under his breath)
I can't.

INT. PALACE.

We see a FOUNTAIN surrounded by a series of STONE LIONS facing outwards, positioned along its circumference like they're guarding the bubbling water.

The water sounds incredibly loud with some of the DROPLETS landing with BOOMS.

SHADOW FIGURE emerges from behind the fountain and approaches.

HIGH VAULTED ROOM with lots of reds and purples but no distinct shapes.

The DROPLETS continue to BOOM as they land.

Sunlight streams in through a myriad of openings in the complicated ceiling creating WHITE STARS on the BLACK MARBLE floor.

BOOM!

Camera snaps back to the booming fountain with the watchful stone lions surrounding it and we see:

SHADOW FIGURE is standing before us -- having the outline of a small child, not much older than five or six -- putting its hand on its heart.

SHADOW CHILD
My heart hurts.

BOOM!

MEHMET'S VOICE
Mine too.

INT. SULTAN'S TENT. TURKISH FRONT LINES - NIGHT

TAEKITH
(to Mehmet, lying next to her)
What's wrong, my love?

MEHMET wakes to find her looking into his eyes. Tears are rolling down his soft, oiled cheeks.

MEHMET
My brother haunts me.

Mehmet and Taekith are NAKED together in a sumptuous bed. Fresh peeled fruit and wine have been placed by their sides. Elaborate candles fill the room with an other-worldly orange light. They're both in their early 20's.

Taekith is blond and beautiful with strong GREEK features. Gold bracelets adorn her and she wears around her neck a GOLD COLLAR complete with d-rings. Mehmet's eyes sparkle with intelligence and his LONG BEAK OF A NOSE gives him a penetrating look, almost like a big parrot.

TAEKITH
You had no choice.

He pulls away from her...

MEHMET
Why is it so quiet?

TAEKITH RECOILS IN FEAR

MEHMET
Shehab!

SHEHAB - the chief eunuch - enters:

MEHMET
Why are my cannons quiet?

SHEHAB ED-DIN
There has been a sign, my Lord!

MEHMET
What sign?

SHEHAB ED-DIN
The Moon has been swallowed whole.

MEHMET
Has it swallowed my cannons too?

SHEHAB ED-DIN
My Lord?

EXT. SULTAN'S TENT. CONTINUOUS

General ZAGANOS PASHA approaches at a gallop. Dismounting in front of the Sultan, he makes quick obeisance and reports:

ZAGANOS

My great Sultan! The Moon has been swallowed and the men are scared. What do we tell them?

Mehmet coolly approaches the kneeling Zaganos.

MEHMET

You tell them to start fighting for their sultan or I will have you all killed. You fools! I have been told there was a breach, but now instead of pushing this advantage you wait for me to tell you the obvious: Attack!

A beat, as Mehmet gestures for him to rise.

MEHMET

(patiently)

Tell them this is a sign from God: As the Moon has been swallowed, so too will the city be swallowed by this Army of God.

Zaganos grins and nods - he gets it - and quickly mounts, galloping off into the dark night. We hear him shouting from far off, and then, just like magic, the war cries begin anew with trumpets sounding and cannons firing.

Mehmet stares longingly at CONSTANTINOPLE off in the distance. Fires on the ramparts illuminate the OUTLINES OF ITS MASSIVE WALLS that have stood for over a thousand years.

MEHMET

I will have you, or I will die trying.

EXT. LAND WALLS, MESOTEICHION SECTION, LYCUS VALLEY -
CONTINUOUS

WHAM!

A CANNON BALL SLAMS into the WOODEN STOCKADE that's been hastily erected to fill the giant hole. Defenders are scattered but the stockade holds. A HAIL OF ARROWS comes out of nowhere, landing everywhere.

SOLDIER

Arrows!

Constantine crouches under an UMBRELLA OF SHIELDS. He locks eyes with one of his protectors: a YOUNG TEENAGER shaking with fear. Constantine grabs the young soldier's arm.

CONSTANTINE

(grinning)

Steady boy, you're protecting a Roman Emperor.

The teenager acknowledges but can't stop shaking.

The sickening sound of ARROWS PUNCHING through shields and armor.

A HOWLING SHRIEK as TURKISH TROOPS throw scaling ladders against the wooden stockade.

Like a flower opening its petals, the SHIELDS peel away one by one to reveal Constantine in the center.

We hear a VOLLEY OF MATCHLOCK MUSKET FIRE and DEFENDERS FALL from the top of the stockade, hitting the ground in front of us with a series of THUDS.

CONSTANTINE

Come on!

Constantine rushes to the top and with a straight thrust of his sword impales a JANISSARY that's lunging at him - the long blade cleanly going through the Janissary's exquisite cloth coverings.

In SLOW MOTION the mortally wounded janissary falls to his knees and we see he's holding a CROSS.

SLOW MOTION ENDS with Constantine kicking the body free from his sword - with the HAND DROPPING THE CROSS. A SWORD COMES OUT OF NOWHERE SLAMMING INTO CONSTANTINE'S BACK causing him to DROP HIS SWORD. Constantine turns around and grabs the ATTACKING-JANISSARY'S forearm with one hand and with his other hand VIOLENTLY BREAKS the attacker's SWORD-ARM at the elbow with a push. ANOTHER JANISSARY has scaled the RAMPART and is about to swing when Constantine reaches for his sword-hand locking the two of them together in a deadly grip... Janissary HEAD-BUTTS Constantine, knocking him down, Constantine sweeps the Janissary off his feet and they start punching each other: Constantine's NOSE IS BROKEN, HIS JAW IS HAMMERED - the weeks of constant fighting are getting to him and he's losing it. INTENSE FIGHTING GOING ON ALL AROUND. The Janissary is on top of Constantine and is CHOKING him: FACE TURNING BLUE and he's about to pass out when the Janissary GROWLS at him... A look of ANIMAL-ANGER FLASHES IN CONSTANTINE'S EYES and he ROARS back, GRABBING the man's face in his hands and BITTING PART OF IT OFF.

Constantine shoves the screaming janissary off the rampart and coolly wipes the blood and flesh from his mouth.

Slashing away, Giovanni manages to join up with Constantine and helps him to his feet.

TURKISH MARTIAL MUSIC is blaring in the background with the trumpets sounding like the Archangel Gabriel's arrived amid a DISCO OF DEATH.

Giovanni deflects a sudden sword stroke with the flat of his ax and then with a lunging step forward stabs the TURKISH ATTACKER in the throat with a dagger. Freshets of blood fly from the sliced artery. A SWORD comes out of nowhere and glances Giovanni's side with a loud metallic ring. Immediately counter-attacking, Constantine spears Giovanni's attacker through the mouth. Giovanni turns around to see: TURKISH ATTACKER WITH A HOOKED LANCE trying to topple one of the earthen barrels that forms the wooden stockade's rampart.

GIOVANNI
(pointing in that direction)
Constantine!

Constantine rushes over and WHACKS THE MAN'S ARM OFF and the hooked lance tumbles down onto the WHITE BORK CAPS OF THE JANISSARIES that are climbing up the ladders with the DAGGERS IN THEIR TEETH shinning in the firelight.

Defenders rush out to join Constantine and the Janissaries are pushed back down the scaling ladders.

We look out across the MILES OF OUTER WALLS and see the SHAPES OF HUNDREDS OF JANISSARIES climbing upwards. GREEK FIRE sprays down on them and TERRA-COTTA HAND GRENADES explode with violent bursts drowning out the SCREAMING as BURNING BODIES run away from the SEA OF GREEK FIRE.

CLOSE ON JANISSARY ARCHERS patiently waiting. A command is SHOUTED and a hail of arrows - like a swarm of angry bees - FLIES OFF into the night.

Cannons start thundering again.

Constantine and his soldiers fall back behind the relative safety of the wooden stockade as CANNON BALLS crash all around.

CONSTANTINE
(looking at the deep dent in
Giovanni's side armor)
Are you ok?

He looks at Constantine, their faces dark with dust and gore. Masonry exploding around them... dust...

GIOVANNI
God still loves me!

Constantine starts laughing, Giovanni can't help himself and starts laughing too. More masonry explodes... growing clouds of dust...

DISSOLVE TO BLACK

EXT. LAND WALLS, MESOTEICHION SECTION, LYCUS VALLEY - MORNING

SLOW PAN shows the aftermath of the previous night's fighting.

DETACHMENT OF TURKISH CALVARY rides past the heavily battered FIFTH MILITARY GATE in the Outer Wall.

A BUZZARD makes a gristly meal of a DEAD JANISSARY. It picks at the rotting flesh, tearing a bloody chunk free. An approaching TURKISH CORPSMAN interrupts its meal and it GREEDILY GULPS down what it can, escaping into the gray morning sky where it joins the HUNDREDS OF BUZZARDS circling the HUNDREDS OF CORPSES.

The cannon are silent.

EXT. CONSTANTINOPLE. OUTSIDE CHORA MONASTERY, NEAR BLACHERNAE PALACE - CONTINUOUS

A TURK wearing a magnificently embroidered silk vestment walks past a ROW OF ORTHODOX MONKS. He's being escorted by a MILITARY GUARD. A PIECE OF SHIT flies out of nowhere and hits him right in the chest, leaving a BROWN STAIN on his beautiful silk costume.

MILITARY COMMANDER
Halt! Present!

The Guard snaps to attention, their shields ready and lances out.

MILITARY COMMANDER
This is an Emissary under truce! He is not to be harmed! You are to respect his person!

VOICE FROM THE CROWD
Respect the pagan? Why!

MILITARY COMMANDER

(softly, to the Turk)

Wipe that scowl off your face. Bow your head to these people, and keep your eyes on the ground.

(a beat passes and the Turk finally lowers his head)

Look, the Pagan is repentant! Now let us pass in peace! He is here to see your Emperor and beg for his forgiveness!

The Turk laughs to himself with his head still lowered.

After an awkward pause, they resume their march through the streets of Constantinople.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE.

Constantine is bent over a LARGE BOWL OF WATER, his hands dip into it, cupping the cold water over his dirty face. As he washes the dirt and gore away we get the first clear picture of what he looks like: HUGE, DEEP SCARS RUNNING DOWN THE RIGHT SIDE OF HIS FACE FROM TEMPLE TO CHIN. He reaches for his teeth and we see that he's missing quite a few; he SPITS OUT a MESS OF BLOOD and A TOOTH comes with it.

The heavy stone room is GLOOMY, the torches on the walls cast flickering shadows everywhere.

Constantine grabs a towel from a nearby servant and slowly wipes his face. There are bags under his eyes, his left eye is bleeding and bruised, and his NOSE IS BROKEN.

Constantine motions and more SERVANTS appear out of the darkness. They begin to remove his ARMOR. He's standing, seemingly lost in thought as the layers of protection are peeled away. SHADOWS flicker on the walls like DANCING GHOSTS. They remove his cloth garments and he's NAKED: COUNTLESS SCARS, BRUISES AND CUTS... the shocking brutality of a life spent fighting. There is a fresh BRUISE ON HIS BACK running along the right shoulder, and there's a BIG SLASH on his RIGHT FOREARM. His frame is well proportioned and muscular, but it's clearly being pushed to its limits. He turns to look at one of the servants attending him.

CONSTANTINE

How bad?

SERVANT

(observing the slash on his forearm)

The cut is deep, my Lord. I will treat it but first we must clean you. You must sit so the dogs can clean you.

Constantine sits and TWO DOGS come into frame and begin to eagerly LICK away at the bloody flesh. A bucket is brought in and servants start to GENTLY SPONGE his NAKED BODY.

A SHADOW enters through a STONE ARCHWAY and as it gets closer we see it cast a shadow of its own: GEORGE SPHRANTZES comes into view.

SPHRANTZES

The Ambassador is here.

CONSTANTINE

Who?

SPHRANTZES

Mehmet's brother in law.

CONSTANTINE

What, has he come to surrender?

Sphrantzes smiles at this.

Constantine PUSHES the dogs away.

SPHRANTZES

We should accept an offer if it buys us survival time. A government in exile.

CONSTANTINE

All isn't lost. The Hungarians are on the march, and the Venetians have set sail.

SPHRANTZES

Just rumors, my Lord.

CONSTANTINE

The Venetians have set sail. Their Baillie assured me of this, and surely we can trust the Venetians...

(starting to laugh)

Ah! But what does it matter?

(sighing with pain)

What else can we do now but hope, and put our trust in God.

SPHRANTZES

We haven't had much luck hoping or trusting.

CONSTANTINE

(sarcastically)

Didn't you see the sky tonight?

He motions for the servants to leave them. Slowly rising to his feet, he takes Sphrantzes by the shoulders and looks him hard in the eyes:

CONSTANTINE

What choice do I have in all of this?
You've seen Mehmet's good faith, no?
You've seen how that boy breaks oaths and promises. How can I put my trust in someone like that? How can I escape and leave my people to the clemency of a liar? They've put their faith in me.

SPHRANTZES

We leave with the people -

CONSTANTINE

(lowering his voice)

And where do we go, George? Huh? Even if we could, which we can't, where would we go? Do we wander off to Italy? Our hands out, begging for charity from the Latins?

SPHRANTZES

Well, we've received about as much help from the Pope as we have from the Sultan of Egypt.

CONSTANTINE

(smiling)

I think you're being too hard on our friend in the Vatican.

SPHRANTZES

You're right: one man can't move a lost Faith.

CONSTANTINE

The west is out, and we can't go south, nor east. We could go north, but Europe would swallow us whole. We have to make our stand here, in our land, in this city which is all that remains of our empire.

(touching Sphrantzes's cheek)

There are things more important than surviving. This is what I tell myself... most of the time it works.

SPHRANTZES

(desperate)

But time, it buys us something!

CONSTANTINE
(pulling away from Sphrantzes)
With nowhere to go it buys us nothing but
a cowardly end in a foreign land. We're
Romans, damn it! We can at least live up
to our Name.

A long beat.

SPHRANTZES
How did it come to this?

He takes Sphrantzes's head in his hands and KISSES him on the
forehead.

CONSTANTINE
No, my brother, dear to my heart, don't
ask me that question.

Sphrantzes breaks down and starts crying, Constantine, still
naked, takes him into his arms and consoles him.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE. AUDIENCE CHAMBER.

CLOSE ON CONSTANTINE'S FACE, he's wearing a DIADEM. A voice
rings out...

VOICE 1
(strong Turkish accent)
The most mighty Sultan!

VOICE 2
The most wicked Sultan!

Laughter erupts from the audience hall.

CONSTANTINE
Silence! How dare you interrupt my
honored guest. And in my hall. Who did
that?

A GREEK OFFICER sheepishly steps forward.

Constantine motions for him to leave.

A walking beat as the Greek Officer is escorted out.

CONSTANTINE
Continue, please.

The sound of someone clearing their throat.

VOICE 1

The mighty Sultan
(pausing)

offers to raise the siege if you agree to pay a yearly tribute of one hundred thousand bezants. Or, if you prefer, abandon the city. Take all of your possessions with you, and no one will be harmed.

Hold a beat on Constantine's face. His BROKEN NOSE is swelling.

VOICE 1 is revealed to be Mehmet's brother-in-law: ISFENDIYAROGLU ISMAIL BEY. This is the same Turk we saw before being escorted by the military guard. His richly embroidered silk robe now has a COUPLE OF STAINS on it.

ISFENDIYAROGLU

You have been offered this same generosity once before, and yet you refused my Lord's attempt to save your lives then. He instructs me to tell you that his generosity will not come again. This is your last chance to save yourselves. You cannot save the city, so save yourselves: Leave, now!

Constantine rises to his feet.

CONSTANTINE

Shouting isn't necessary. Tell your master I will respond by the end of the day.

Constantine leaves.

Isfendiyaroglu laughs to himself and shakes his head in disgust.

ISFENDIYAROGLU

(under his breath)

Fool. Your arrogance will kill everyone.

FOLLOWING Constantine walking away.

COURTIER

My Lord. Should we let the Ambassador leave by the Palace Gate?

CONSTANTINE

No. Let him leave the way he came.

COURTIER

And what of the Officer?

CONSTANTINE

Tell him,

(pausing for effect)

not to do that again.

INT. SULTAN'S TENT.

Isfendiyaroglu is in new clothing, the brown stains are gone, and we see that he's seated to the right of his brother-in-law, Mehmet.

PAN UP AND BEHIND to reveal that Mehmet is at the HEAD OF A CIRCLE of a DOZEN OR SO IMPORTANT LOOKING SOLDIERS AND OFFICIALS. The Grand Vizier, HALIL PASHA is present. Seated next to the old Vizier is the much younger Second Vizier and general Zaganos Pasha, who we've seen before. The young general TURAHAN PASHA is seated next to Zaganos. On Mehmet's other side is his chief imam, SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN. Also among those present is a young Wallachian prince converted to Islam - RADU BEY, brother of Vlad Dracula.

Halil Pasha rises to speak.

HALIL PASHA

My Sultan. You have proven your martial prowess. The forces of Christendom have been humbled under the might of your armies. Truly, you are correct in saying that this siege has gone on too long.

Halil turns to look at the assembled.

HALIL PASHA

As we have all learned, the Hungarian general John Hunyadi is on the march. And there are reports that Italian fleets have sailed and will be here any day. We have strong forces, my Lord, but I fear for your safety if we're attacked on two fronts.

MEHMET

My respected teacher, I think you place too much faith in rumors.

ZAGANOS

My Lord. May I speak?

Mehmet nods approvingly.

ZAGANOS

Even if the Christians arrive, they will prove useless against the might of our forces. But they won't arrive, my Lord, because they are too divided to do anything but talk. They are like women: all talk, no bite.

A few subdued laughs. Mehmet even cracks a smile.

MEHMET

I know one or two women that could prove you wrong. But please, continue.

ZAGANOS

Thank you, my Lord. And we all know of the omens that speak about the fall of this dead and decaying empire, which is now just a starving, empty city. The Prophet, peace be on him, has told us: "Have you heard of a City of which one side is land and the other two sea? The Hour of Judgement will not sound until seventy thousand sons of Isaac capture it!"

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN

Yes my Lord! The Great General is correct! My heart aches for this.

(shocked at his own daring)

Please, forgive me, but my spirit sings. Praise be the Prophet! Peace be upon him.

With a look of patience, Mehmet turns his attention back to Zaganos.

ZAGANOS

The first ruler of the city was Constantine, whose mother was Helena, and we're told that its last ruler will also be Constantine, whose mother will also be Helena... this has come to pass! - this is the fulfillment of prophecy before our eyes!

A number of the younger officers including MAHMUD PASHA, Turahan Pasha and Radu Bey rise to their feet and start pleading to press the attack. Mehmet quiets them with a wave of his delicate looking hand.

MEHMET

(to Halil Pasha)

It appears, my old teacher, that you are too much of a good friend to the Christians. Your... tolerance, has blinded you to what is clearly before us: Victory.

Halil rises to speak but Mehmet shakes his head disapprovingly. Zaganos is beaming.

MEHMET

(bowing his head, palms upward)

If God so wills.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE.

FOLLOWING Constantine walking - down a thick stone hallway - towards HEAVY WOODEN DOORS being guarded by an OLD EUNUCH SERVANT who has a smooth face with youngish features. The eunuch is wearing a well-worn curved sword.

The eunuch excessively bows before Constantine who waves him aside; he rushes to open the heavy doors in time but Constantine can't wait and pushes them open...

to reveal a BEDCHAMBER. The DOORS CLOSE BEHIND US with a WHOOSHING SOUND.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE. BEDCHAMBER.

Sunlight is streaming in through high windows.

CAELINA is lying on a MASSIVE BED, waiting for Constantine.

She has strong ARAB features, she is young to middle age with raw beauty.

CAELINA

(getting up)

Let me see your wounds.

Constantine takes off his purple robe to reveal he's NAKED underneath.

A FIRE BLAZES in the corner.

She lovingly inspects his bruised and battered body: studying the fresh bruise along his back...

CONSTANTINE

(wincing)

You should have seen the other guy.

She's not amused. She goes on to look at the BLOODY BANDAGE on his right forearm. In the firelight we can see the HENNA written all over her hands; the complex, winding patterns seeming to move with a grace all their own...

CAELINA

This needs to be stitched. They are careless not to see this!

She brushes away a lock of dark hair from his battered face.

CAELINA

(soft voiced)

And your nose, your nose will not survive the war.

CONSTANTINE

Yeah, broke again.

CAELINA

It's like the Walls. They break, we fix.

CONSTANTINE

But the Walls still run straight.

They smile into each other's eyes.

GENTLY TRACING HER FINGER down his nose -

CAELINA

Your nose will too.

following its CROOKED AQUILINE OUTLINE... she continues down to his lips, and with her FINGER barely touching them she says in a gentle voice:

CAELINA

No crying.

CONSTANTINE

(grimacing)

What's the point?

CAELINA

I cannot love a man with crooked nose.

Sighing and accepting his fate, Constantine grabs an intricately weaved towel and holds it up to his nose.

She places her hands the top of his nose.

CAELINA

Deep breath now.

Constantine inhales and exhales.

CAELINA RE-BREAKS HIS NOSE with a CRUNCHING sound.

CONSTANTINE
Damn the devil!

BLOOD POURS OUT and Constantine spits it away from his mouth.

CAELINA
Hush! Be a man!

Constantine laughs while spitting out more blood as it pours into his mouth.

CAELINA
More deep breath. You ready?

A beat.

CAELINA
Stop laughing.

With her hands forming a TRIANGLE at the top of his nose, she waits for him to exhale, and then she RUNS HER HANDS DOWN HIS NOSE with an audible CRUNCH as her fingers press down hard.

Constantine drops his head, SIGHING...

CAELINA
(pushing his head up)
Let me see.
(wiping blood away)
Straight enough.

He's RELIEVED.

She takes a fresh towel and tenderly wipes away the blood while her other hand runs through his long hair, straightening out the locks as he gazes off into the distance...

CAELINA
(whispering into his ear)
Who steals you from me?

Looking into her eyes with a long beat.

CONSTANTINE
You have all of me.

CAELINA
Your empire of dirt doesn't have you?

A quiet beat.

CAELINA
Who has you?

CONSTANTINE
This woman has me.

CAELINA
Tell me about this woman.

CONSTANTINE
Well, let me see. She's from Mecca,
Arabia. And she has strong hands.

Caelina embraces his face with her hands.

CONSTANTINE
And she uses these hands -
this Arab woman does - to straighten me
out!

CAELINA
Hey!

She playfully pushes his head away.

CONSTANTINE
But I can't help it, I love her.

CAELINA
What is her name? This woman you love?

CONSTANTINE
Caelina.

CAELINA
You love a slave then?

CONSTANTINE
I love you.

CAELINA
(softly)
I am your slave. Do with me as you will,
Dragases.

He slowly moves towards her.

TIME TRANSITION TO:

AFTERNOON

The high windows are welcoming a warm breeze: GIANT IMPERIAL TAPESTRY flutters above the two lovers.

There's BLOOD on CAELINA'S NAKED BODY and we can see that not just her hands but much of her body is covered in HENNA, which is now smudged.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

You are my Empress.

For the first time in the movie Constantine looks RELAXED: his breathing has slowed down and his bruised face is at peace, although his nose is still bleeding a little bit.

Caelina places herself on top of him, her bent legs straddling his strong chest. Towering over him, with HIS BLOOD ON HER, she looks at him coldly:

CAELINA

No, I am your mean, Arab woman.

SLAPPING as he GRABS HER ASS

CONSTANTINE

Yes you are.

A beat as his hands move up to her face...

CONSTANTINE

(pulling her close)

And so much more.

KISSING

CAELINA

We will be ok?

CONSTANTINE

I have faith in my men, they won't let us down.

CAELINA

(softly)

Insha' Allah.

She rests her head on his chest.

CLOSE ON CONSTANTINE'S STRONG HANDS moving their way through Caelina's hair. She begins to softly sing - in Arabic - a chapter from the Koran: THE JINN. Her melodic voice rising and falling with the ancient words...

KNOCKING on the bedchamber doors.

Caelina turns her head - her NAKED ASS still up in the air. She crawls off Constantine and gets back into bed, pulling a sheet over both of them.

CONSTANTINE
(frustrated, looking up at the ceiling)

Enter!

The heavy wooden doors creak open to reveal:

EUNUCH
My Lord!

CONSTANTINE
(still looking up)
Why do you take heaven away from me?

EUNUCH
Do you hear it, my Lord?

CONSTANTINE
(laughing)
The attack resumes? I thought I had until the end of the day.

EUNUCH
Listen!

Constantine sits upright, and listens carefully.

CONSTANTINE
Chanting.

EUNUCH'S VOICE
They carry the Holiest Mother of God around the walls!

Constantine looks over at Caelina who's wearing a WRY SMILE.

CONSTANTINE
(softly to her)
The Mother of God.

CAELINA
(straight faced)
My God was not born.

CONSTANTINE
(smiling)
Maybe he should have been, he'd be more humble.

EXT. OUTER WALLS, LYCUS VALLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

RINGING

The sound of hundreds of church bells fills the air.

The HOLY ICON - the Hodegetria - passes in front of us.

CONSTANTINE'S FACE passes by - GLASS jewels in his diadem.

A PRIEST begins chanting a prayer and we see

HUGE HOLE in the ancient masonry that's been plugged with a WOODEN STOCKADE. This is the scene of last night's fighting.

PULL BACK: THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE walking behind ORTHODOX and CATHOLIC PRIESTS holding RELICS. The Catholic priests don't have beards.

The Emperor is with a group that includes GEORGE SPHRANTZES, THEODORE KARYSTINOS and LUCAS NOTARAS, among others.

The PROCESSION stops in front of the WOODEN STOCKADE that we were just looking at.

SIGN OF THE CROSS. The Greeks and Catholics are making it in OPPOSITE WAYS.

CONSTANTINE

(crossing from right to left)

The blood of Christ... should unite us
all...

LUCAS NOTARAS

(softly)

Not in this damn world.

CONSTANTINE

but we let what's in our blood -- these
passions and desires -- divide us, and
weaken us. We forget our true purpose
here, which is to love our neighbor as
ourselves.

THEODORE KARYSTINOS

And to love God above all else.

CONSTANTINE

God doesn't want our love, he wants us to
love each other.

LUCAS NOTARAS

Amen to that.

CONSTANTINE

I've seen too much evil done for God's
love: people murder for God, destroy for
God. God doesn't want that.

THEODORE KARYSTINOS

(making the sign of the cross
right to left)

How do you know?

CONSTANTINE

Do you really think God wants us to kill
each other?

Constantine starts laughing.

THEODORE KARYSTINOS

(looking around)

My emperor, you should not be laughing.

CONSTANTINE

My friends, blood of my blood in Christ,
if we were angles looking down on us,
we'd be laughing too.

THEODORE KARYSTINOS

Let us pray then that the angels never
look down and see a false prophet seated
on the Throne of our Savior. May I die
before that happens!

The nearby priests are surprised by Theodore's loud rant.

An awkward beat.

The priests begin singing Kyrie-elieson.

LUCAS NOTARAS

(over the singing)

We are all with you, my Lord!

Sphrantzes sneers at this.

SPHRANTZES

Your money isn't.

It suddenly starts RAINING.

Constantine looks up at the sky.

CONSTANTINE

Who are you with?

DOWNPOUR.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD

My God!

Constantine WHIPS AROUND to see:

HOLY ICON HAS SLIPPED OFF ITS PLATFORM.

There it lies on the muddy ground with the RAIN POUNDING DOWN on it.

Everyone is AGHAST. Constantine rushes over to the fallen icon and holds it close to his heart.

CONSTANTINE

(addressing the shocked crowd)

What would you have me do, my people?!

Only the sound of the downpour.

Holding the ICON up to the sky:

CONSTANTINE

Would you have me give this away?!

CROWD

(resounding)

No!

CONSTANTINE

Then how can I give away what is even more dear to my heart: you! Just like our Savior did, for every last one of you I would gladly give my life!

A beat.

CONSTANTINE

Now I ask you! Will you do the same for me?!

A few startled YES'S emerge from the crowd, quickly followed by a chorus of:

CROWD

Yes! Yes! Yes!

CONSTANTINE

And will you lay down your life for our families?!

CROWD

Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

CONSTANTINE
For our future?!

CROWD
Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

CONSTANTINE
(shouting over them)
I will too! My people, we fight for our name as Romans! We fight for our faith! But most importantly we fight for our families and our way of life! This is why we shall stay here! In our city! Forever!

CROWD
Long live the Emperor! Long live the Emperor! Long live the Emperor!...

SPHRANTZES
(pulling Lucas aside)
Any news about the Venetians?

LUCAS NOTARAS
Didn't you hear? The scout ship finally returned this afternoon... with no sign of our promised fleet.

SPHRANTZES
The same ship that sailed out three weeks ago?

LUCAS NOTARAS
Yes.
(barely audible)
Better the sultan's turban than the pope's miter.

SPHRANTZES
You would say that!

LUCAS NOTARAS
(sad grin)
The Catholics have brought us nothing but pain and destruction. They sacked our city, or have you forgotten?

SPHRANTZES
What do you call this?

LUCAS NOTARAS
(into Sphrantzes's ear)
I would rather die under a sultan, than bow and scrape under Latin rites.

A beat as he measures Sphrantzes's reaction.

LUCAS NOTARAS

That doesn't make me a traitor, it makes me a true believer.

SPHRANTZES

You only believe in yourself.

INT. SULTAN'S TENT

Mehmet is reading a DOCUMENT written in Greek. He looks up, and standing before him are TWO YOUNG MEN clothed in fine attire who look like they got caught in the rain.

He DROPS the document.

ATTENDANT rushes over and grabs it from the floor, bowing and scraping the whole way.

MEHMET

(laughing)

He makes me a counter-offer...

(a beat as he becomes frustrated)

What gives you the right to stand in my presence?

ROMAN AMBASSADOR 1

Sultan, a man treasures most that which he is about to lose.

MEHMET

You treasure daring then?

ROMAN AMBASSADOR 1

(matter-of-factly)

We treasure the freedom to be men: we have been sent to deliver this message, not to bow down before you.

MEHMET

You fool, even now you are not free. You belong to me like your father belonged to my father, and all the way back to my glorious ancestor: Ottoman.

A beat.

MEHMET

Give up the city! Save your people!

(calming down)

Betray your foolish emperor and I will make it worth your while.

ROMAN AMBASSADOR 2

We cannot be bought.

Mehmet nods and a huge janissary - HASAN - comes forward.

MEHMET

I only need one of you to deliver my message.

Hasan looks for direction but Mehmet SHRUGS. Hasan STABS Ambassador 2 in the liver, the young man cries out but is quickly silenced by more cuts: Freshets of blood spray on Ambassador 1's FACE.

We can hear his corpse being dragged out of the tent.

MEHMET

Are you ready for my message?

Ambassador 1 coldly nods, his face dripping with the other one's blood.

MEHMET

My generosity is limitless - I repeat my offer, again: You have my word that if you give me what is mine I will give free passage to every soul inside with all they can carry. I will give the Morea to your emperor - to be his to rule -, and to his brothers I will give them lands to their liking. We shall all live in peace, as friends.

Mehmet descends from his throne and walks over to the ambassador. A CIRCLE OF JANISSARIES quickly forms around them, swords at the ready. Mehmet pulls out a delicate white towel from his pocket and begins to gently clean the young man's face.

MEHMET

(in a soft voice)

But if you continue to deny me what is mine, I will take it, and I will kill all of you. Death will enter with me, and the city will be a smoking ruin.

ROMAN AMBASSADOR

(coldly)

He doubts your word.

Mehmet takes his time, carefully wiping away the blood.

MEHMET

Do you doubt me?

ROMAN AMBASSADOR

(standing firm)

I doubt you.

Sound of swords being UNSHEATHED.

MEHMET

This is what death sounds like. Remember
it. Tell him it's coming.

Mehmet drops the bloody towel.

Mehmet's religious advisor -- SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN -- has
been standing off in the corner this whole time, lurking in
the shadows.

The Sheikh makes a loud COUGHING SOUND.

Mehmet flashes a look of vexation, and starts walking towards
the door.

MEHMET

(shouting, with his back to us)

Convert to Islam! And this can all end.

(pause)

Or don't.

CLOSE ON ambassador's face: it's steeled.

MEHMET'S VOICE

(trailing off as he leaves the
tent)

Give me what is mine! I am the Sword of
Islam!

The circle of Janissaries sheathe their swords. They slowly
PULL BACK and file out of the tent leaving the ambassador
alone with the Sheikh, who's still lurking in the shadows.

ROMAN AMBASSADOR

(to the Sheikh, in Arabic)

Why would God need a sword?

The Sheikh is STARTLED by this and hurriedly leaves the tent,
like a mouse avoiding a cat.

ROMAN AMBASSADOR

He wouldn't.

The ambassador looks down at his companion's blood, closes his eyes for a long moment, and then walks outside where we see the WANING MOON.

EXT. TURKISH CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Mehmet and Zaganos are walking on the muddy ground with the Janissary Bodyguards spreading out and surrounding them.

MEHMET

Do you see the Moon? It is a sign.

ZAGANOS

From God?

MEHMET

You have heard of the prophecy?

ZAGANOS

(nodding)

The city will fall when the moon is waning.

MEHMET

I tell you, there is truth in it!

Zaganos deeply bows.

MEHMET

My priest tells me so.

ZAGANOS

(disapprovingly)

The man who looks at stars?

Mehmet stops and STARES at the WANING MOON. The guns are silent, and we can hear his folds of clothing flapping in the evening breeze.

MEHMET

He tells me the stars are haunted. That there are gates here which can take us, there. The Babylon Book of the Dead...

(turning to Zaganos)

What do you want to do?

ZAGANOS

Fight for God.

MEHMET

(looking hard at Zaganos)

The soul of a poet is a hard thing to bear, my friend. Every day I am driven to despair.

(MORE)

MEHMET (cont'd)
(now at the Moon)
But on this night, me thinks, my despair
disappears, if only for a short while...

ZAGANOS
(breaking the awkward silence)
Glory to God.

MEHMET
(lost in thought - automatically)
God is the greatest.

Mehmet looks in the direction of the front lines and the
city.

MEHMET
Go ask the men what they want to do.

ZAGANOS
I already have, they want to fight.

MEHMET
You lie. When did you ask them?

ZAGANOS
Just this very evening, my Lord. You
sent for me earlier.

MEHMET
(laughing)
Right, I did.
(looking at the front lines)
Time slows down and weeps. And in it, I
weep too. This world stretches me tight
with tension and if I break I only have
myself to blame, for God will say, what
can I do but smile?
(to Zaganos)
Fill that moat. Give me what is mine.

Zaganos smiles.

EXT. TURKISH FRONT LINES - DAWN

A CRACKLING FUSE is burning down.

PULL BACK and the burning fuse disappears into a HEAVY FOG
covering everything.

Silence, as we wait for the inevitable to happen:

BOOM!!!

We see a CANNON - fly out of the fog - and LURCH back in its cradle.

A beat.

And then we hear a tremendous CRASH in the distance.

MORE CANNONS FIRE. A chorus of devastation greets our ears.

EXT. OUTER WALL. MESOTEICHION SECTION - CONTINUOUS

THICK FOG is covering everything.

GIOVANNI'S VOICE

Ahh!

Giovanni emerges from the FOG. A piece of WOOD is stuck in his LEFT SHOULDER blade.

GIOVANNI

Pull it out.
(becoming frustrated)
Do it!

GENOESE SOLDIER

Aright.

The soldier starts to pull...

GIOVANNI

(grabbing the soldier's arm)
Oh! Bad idea... bad idea! Take me to a medic.

ALONG ANOTHER SECTION OF THE WALLS

LUCAS NOTARAS

Are they back?

Constantine cautiously peers down from the BATTLEMENT at the grayness below, and listens...

CONSTANTINE

(suddenly)
Yeah.

RIPPLES OF FIRE as anti-personnel cannons hurl WALNUT-SIZE SHOT into the fog producing SCREAMING and SHOUTING.

Cannon BOOM in the distance with the inevitable CRASHES soon following, one of which:

BLOWS CONSTANTINE INTO THE FOG

INT. PALACE - DREAM SEQUENCE

THE SOUND OF RINGING.

A POLISHED METAL surface FILLS FRAME and in it we see a REFLECTED FIGURE walking towards the camera until its REFLECTION FILLS FRAME; and we can start to make out Constantine's face... his features are WARPED and BLURRED (because of the imperfections in the metal).

CONSTANTINE'S REFLECTION begins to change into ANOTHER FACE - that of his older brother, JOHN, who's features are more elegant and graceful than Constantine's.

CAMERA LURCHES.

JOHN'S FACE speaks:

JOHN

What would our father have done?

RINGING SOUND dies out.

JOHN

What would he have done, Dragases.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

Our father is no more. John, where are you?

JOHN

Brother.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

Yes.

JOHN

What did our father love?

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

He loved us, he loved our mother...

JOHN

And he loved the people.

John's blurred and changing features become out of sync with his dialogue.

JOHN

You're killing them to keep power.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

(desperate)

No, I don't love power, I never wanted it. I was always loyal to you, and to father. My heart --

JOHN

The city gives you power.

John's face begins twisting into SHADES OF RED, blurring and bending into each other.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

The city's all we have left.

The shades of red become a BAND OF LIGHT, that rises...

JOHN

The city is lost, Dragases. Look at the signs around you, God is leaving. Save the people. Run. Run!

CAMERA LURCHES again and the DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS.

RINGING SOUND has returned.

The fog's been temporarily blown away.

CONSTANTINE'S POV: soldiers are shouting at us but all we hear is the RINGING SOUND. A sudden BLAST knocks the SOLDIER in front of us OUT OF FRAME. Dust and debris rain down.

WIDE SHOT - Constantine rises from the ground. He almost looks almost like a marble statue now... all gray and white... completely covered in dust. A weary Lucas is trying to steady him. SOLDIERS RUN past in a blur.

CONSTANTINE

(unsure)

Run...

EXT. INNER WALL GATE

Lucas is helping a badly shaken Constantine through an INNER WALL GATE; Giovanni rushes into frame.

GIOVANNI

Is he hurt?

(looking him over)

What's wrong?

LUCAS NOTARAS

We need to get him out of here. Now!
Help me.

They each take one of his arms and accompanied by a small guard of GENOESE SOLDIERS make their way down the mostly empty MESE THOROUGHFARE to a nearby DWELLING.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Knock! Knock!

Giovanni KICKS open the door and they enter -

INT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

DARK. BROODING.

They help Constantine to a simple wooden chair... he slumps down into it; the chair CREAKS.

The Guard stands watch outside.

GIOVANNI
(to the Medic outside)
More black magic!

LUCAS NOTARAS
You just had some.

Giovanni SCOWLS and points to the HOLE in his left shoulder blade.

The MEDIC comes and Giovanni eagerly opens his mouth as a small amount of BLACK LIQUID is poured in... GREEDILY GULPING it down. A look of peace rolls over him. Lucas looks disgusted, and sits down.

GIOVANNI
(to a seemingly oblivious
Constantine)
Can you hear me?

CONSTANTINE
Yes. I can hear you.

LUCAS NOTARAS
What's wrong?

CONSTANTINE
(shaking his head)
I don't know... Do we?... Should we
evacuate the city and save the people?

Lucas moves his chair so he's directly facing Constantine.

LUCAS NOTARAS

I think you mean evacuate the people and save the city, because that's all that's going to be saved.

CONSTANTINE

Yes, that's what I think. I can't trust him.

LUCAS NOTARAS

Mehmet's complicated, if we could only talk with him over good wine, I think we could come to an arrangement... that he might honor.

Constantine sighs.

LUCAS NOTARAS

He's not a fanatic, he's smart and he can be reasonable when he wants to. Those walls aren't really protecting us anymore, they're sealing our fate.

GIOVANNI

We're not giving in to the unbelievers.

LUCAS NOTARAS

You're not the Emperor.

GIOVANNI

I may not be the Emperor, but I'm the one holding those damn walls.

LUCAS NOTARAS

Without your damn mercenaries all you'd be holding is your limp dick with your bum arm.

GIOVANNI

Huh! I spend my fortune to help you, while you hold yours in Italian banks, far away and safe from danger.

Lucas reaches for his sword.

GIOVANNI

Go on now! Who's going to stop me from running you through with my sword?

LUCAS NOTARAS

Let's see how well you fight with opium in you.

Lucas unsheathes his sword and Giovanni follows in quick order. Constantine puts himself between the two of them.

CONSTANTINE

All we have is each other.
(looking down)
My brother talked to me.

LUCAS NOTARAS

Your brothers are, hundreds of miles
away.

CONSTANTINE

It was John.

LUCAS NOTARAS

(grabbing his seat)
Oh...

CONSTANTINE

He asked me why I still fight, why I'm
not trying to save the people.

LUCAS NOTARAS

My Emperor...

Constantine motions for silence.

CONSTANTINE

He told me our city's lost. He told me
to leave it, and run away with our
people.

GIOVANNI

Dreams are not certainty.

CONSTANTINE

They most certainly are not.

Constantine sits back down, and looks off into the distance.

CONSTANTINE

You know, when I was young - a bull -
nothing could beat me down. I remember
how my father was beat down by those damn
sieges till he couldn't even dress
himself. And now I look at me, and that
bull is gone. I'm getting beat down too.

LUCAS NOTARAS

We all lived through those sieges, well,
(looking angrily at Giovanni)
most of us.
(back on Constantine)
(MORE)

LUCAS NOTARAS (cont'd)
But this has been the worst by far. That
we have held out this long is a -

RUSTLING SOUNDS coming from somewhere within the dwelling.

LUCAS NOTARAS
Who's there?

Giovanni finds a LITTLE GIRL hiding nearby.

GIOVANNI
It's just a child.

CONSTANTINE
Bring her here.
(setting her on his lap)
Shh, little one, it's alright.

A beat.

CONSTANTINE
If the Turks take the city, what will
become of you?

She looks up at him. Constantine takes her hand and holds it
to his heart: her TINY HAND on his banged up and dirty
BREASTPLATE.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE
I won't abandon you.

Cannons boom in the distance, and there's commotion outside.
Giovanni and Lucas step out to see what's going on.
Constantine is alone with the child. He GENTLY SETS HER
DOWN. He stands up and stretches his back, UNBUCKLES his
breastplate and lets it hit the dirt floor with a thud. The
little girl seems unsure. He reaches around his neck and
takes off a SIMPLE NECKLACE with an ivory pendant.

KNEELING

CONSTANTINE
I want you to have this.

IVORY PENDANT

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE
She was my mother.

CLOSE ON HELENA'S SIDE PROFILE carved into the ivory.

CONSTANTINE
Her last words to me were: I will be
with you always.
(MORE)

CONSTANTINE (cont'd)
(placing it in her hands)
I will be with you, always.

She CLUTCHES the necklace close to her heart.

HUGGING: she disappears in his arms.

Getting up... reaching for his breastplate and heading for the door - takes one last look inside where we see:

Still CLUTCHING the necklace.

Constantine turns and disappears into the fog outside.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS HEADS OFF with a detachment of soldiers.

CONSTANTINE
How's the shoulder?

GIOVANNI
(grinning)
Nothing black magic can't fix.
(making sure Lucas is out of
earshot)
You know about his deceit then?

CONSTANTINE
Yeah, I know about the money.

GIOVANNI
So while you're forced to take a
collection from everyone, including the
poor -
(motioning to the house)
such as from that little girl's parents,
who are probably off fighting at the
walls - the richest man in Constantinople
gets to keep all of his.

CONSTANTINE
(putting his breastplate back on)
Not all of it.

GIOVANNI
(irritated)
A good amount!

CONSTANTINE
(shrugging)
His family is still here. And he's not
leaving, so if it comes to it, I'm sure
he'll come through.

GIOVANNI

What good is that now, the time for
money's passed.

CONSTANTINE

(running his hand through his
dusty hair)

Not yet. We have a friend in the
Sultan's court.

Giovanni looks on.

CONSTANTINE

(inspecting Giovanni's wound)

We're trying to work some magic of our
own:

(padding his shoulder)

those ambassadors had gold.

Cannon BOOM nearby.

CONSTANTINE

(looking in the direction of the
booms)

Let's just hope our friend hears us.

GIOVANNI

The time for money's passed, my Lord,
(pulling away)
we need a miracle now.

EXT. TURKISH CAMP - EVENING

The FOG IS LIFTING and the SETTING SUN is burning the
landscape in deep colors.

Cannons boom. We see one of the SUPER CANNONS fire... it
recoils, kicking up a big cloud of dust. Oil is poured onto
the bronze behemoth to cool it...

CLOSE ON the sizzling oil.

The cannons go silent.

SOUND OF HERALDS wakes us from the trance of watching that
SIZZLING OIL.

HERALDS VOICE

Your Sultan wishes to address you! Men
of God, make obedience!

Super Cannon Crew stops what they're doing and kneels as

Mehmet passes by on his WHITE STALLION.

THOUSANDS OF TURKISH SOLDIERS AND CHRISTIAN AUXILIARIES are KNEELING before Mehmet.

Mehmet DRAWS HIS ELABORATE SWORD with a metallic scraping sound.

MEHMET

(shouting, with his sword raised)

As I am the Sword of Islam, you will be my blade that cuts the unbelievers to pieces! God willing! I swear by the eternal God, and his Prophet, and by the four thousand prophets and by the soul of my father that all of the treasure in the city will be yours! God has allowed us three days to take what is ours! And you shall have it!

THOUSANDS OF VOICES

(in Arabic)

There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet! ... There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet! ...

Mehmet thrusts his sword into the air. Thousands continue to sing out the ACCLAMATION OF FAITH. The Christian auxiliary soldiers are mostly silent. The CROSSES on their chests distinguish them from the rest of Mehmet's army.

FADE as the CHORUS rings out.

INT. SULTAN'S TENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

BLACKNESS

The Acclamation of Faith is slowly changing into something very different, the rhythm is the same but the content is...

SOUND OF MOANING assaults our ears.

An orange light flickers on the TENT WALLS which the super-humidity has left soaked.

A BLACK EUNUCH stands at attention in the corner. The flickering light makes the scars on his emotionless face seem like they're alive - wriggling. He suddenly starts to grimace, and grabs his stomach.

Taekith is on top of Mehmet; the heavily jeweled GOLDEN COLLAR is still around her neck and her eyes are heavily painted giving her an almost ghoulish appearance.

The tent walls are dripping with moisture.

Black Eunuch COLLAPSES.

The MOANING is louder now.

Taekith stops moving. Mehmet wants to keep thrusting but she stops him by placing her HANDS on his SMOOTH CHEST.

TAEKITH

My love, what did you tell me when we first met?

MEHMET

(impatiently)

What?

TAEKITH

The first time we met. What did you say?

MEHMET

(laughing)

I didn't meet you, I took you!

TAEKITH

(caressing his body)

I know you did.

MEHMET

(abandoning himself)

I took you.

TAEKITH

And what did you say about my people?

MEHMET

(a slave to her hands)

I said... I don't remember.

Taekith's HANDS are moving slowly towards his NECK.

TAEKITH

(gently massaging his neck)

What did you say?

MEHMET

(gently penetrating her, and not caring about anything else)

I don't remember.

TAEKITH

You said the Greeks are weak, like fruit hanging from the tree - you take from them what you want.

MEHMET
(thrusting in and out of her)

Yes.

TAEKITH
(hands now around his neck)
Yes, yes, you took me from my parents...
after you murdered them.

MEHMET
(really getting into it)

Yes.

TAEKITH
And now you want to take from everyone.

MEHMET
(beaming)
The strong take from the weak: it's the
natural order.

TAEKITH
(softness gone)
I will show you weak.

TAEKITH STRANGLES MEHMET

At first Mehmet thinks this is part of the game, continuing to enjoy himself as she tightens her grip around his oiled neck. NO AIR... Mehmet starts choking and Taekith hangs on for dear life. He understands what's happening and tries to fight back but can't - HIS ARMS ARE TIED TO THE BED. Desperate and scared, Mehmet is writhing around like a snake and KNOCKS OVER A CANDLE that starts a rug on FIRE.

MEHMET'S FACE IS TURNING BLUE. TAEKITH TOWERS OVER HIM. SHE'S CRYING: STREAMING TEARS are making her heavy makeup run in BLACK LINES while the fire continues to grow in the background.

JANISSARIES RUSH IN. Taekith SCREAMS and is knocked off and THROWN INTO an OIL LAMP that spills all over her.

A JANISSARY raises his GLEAMING SWORD above Mehmet who is staring at him wild-eyed. The leather cords are CUT.

EXT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

TAEKITH IS ON FIRE AS SHE RUNS OUT OF THE TENT,

TAEKITH
(unearthly scream)
Run! Run!...

Janissaries escape with Mehmet as the tent becomes a conflagration.

Mehmet tenderly feels around his neck. The cut LEATHER LASHINGS are still tied around his RAW, BLEEDING WRISTS. He starts to cough violently... he recovers and looks up to see Taekith's COLLAPSED BODY, burning in the distance.

He's watching her burn when something else catches his eye. His jaw drops.

It's barely noticeable at first, just one more light amongst the thousands already before him, but this one shouldn't be: A REDDISH LIGHT IS AT THE BASE OF THE DOME OF THE CHURCH OF ST. SOPHIA. It looks like fire... but it can't be, because as it SLOWLY CLIMBS the enormous dome it's moving as a BAND OF LIGHT, growing in intensity as it rises.

SHEHAB ED-DIN
(out of breath)
My Sultan! What can -

MEHMET
Maeshot... Get me Maeshot!

A GRIZZLED OLD MAN passes through the Janissary Guard.

MEHMET
(transfixed on the light)
What is it?

CLOSE ON the climbing band of REDDISH LIGHT

MAESHOT
(with surety)
It is a sign that great change is about to happen. Their spirit is leaving, going back to the sky. The stars and planets have decreed this to be so and the light you see in front of you, great Sultan, is confirmation that this will come to pass.

The band of LIGHT is approaching the top of the giant dome.

MAESHOT'S VOICE
Gods of the sky, remember us.

Mehmet turns to look at his astrologer.

MAESHOT
(eyes closed)
Gods of the earth, remember us.

Mehmet turns his attention back on the DOME.

CLOSE ON Mehmet's face: Staring intensely, unsure. He fights back a cough.

As the LIGHT reaches the TOP it momentarily GLOWS with a whoosh of light. And then, just like that, IT'S GONE. The dome is dark again.

EXT. WALLS - CONTINUOUS

CONSTANTINE
(staring at the dark dome in the distance)
My God.

VOICE
(crying out)
God has left our city!

CLOSE ON Constantine's face.

CONSTANTINE
(in the direction of the voice)
Damn you.

A beat as the commotion builds - SOLDIERS and CITIZENS are talking excitedly when someone high up on the rampart shouts:

VOICE
Look! Fires in the distance! Help is coming!

EXT. TURKISH CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Mehmet moves through the MOTIONS OF SALAH, but he's pointing towards St. Sophia's dark dome instead of Mecca.

The rest take cue, and THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF TURKISH TROOPS begin to follow their Sultan through the motions of prayer. Like the bloom of countless birds in synchronized flight, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF BODIES move together in unison: They rise from prostrate, to sitting, to turning their faces towards the right shoulder, and then to the left, and then from there they begin all over again. The Islamic Remembrances boom from thousands of voices: DEAFENING.

EXT. WALLS - CONTINUOUS

Constantine is ON TOP OF THE WALLS to see for himself:

Far out - way past the Turkish camp - there's a LONG SERIES OF LIGHTS dotting the horizon.

ITALIAN SOLDIER
(shouting in Italian over the
Islamic chanting)
You see the lights, way off in the
distance?

CONSTANTINE
(shouting over the din)
What's that?

GREEK SOLDIER
(pointing to way off in the
distance)
The lights, my Lord! Do you see them?!

CONSTANTINE
Yes!

GREEK SOLDIER
Hungarian army?

CONSTANTINE
When did they appear?!

ITALIAN SOLDIER
(in Italian)
They are angels coming to save us!

GREEK SOLDIER
As soon as we were done watching the
light on the dome, that's when we saw
them!

CONSTANTINE
What's that?!

GREEK SOLDIER
After the dome!

Constantine acknowledges

Our attention moves off the lights and down to the:
INCREDIBLY LONG DARK LINES OF FIGURES MOVING IN UNISON to the
ROARING CHANTING.

GREEK SOLDIER
(in Italian)
He doesn't speak Italian, you idiot!

ITALIAN SOLDIER
Well he should! It's an Italian world we
live in!

GREEK SOLDIER
(in Italian)
Then where's all your Italian friends!

ITALIAN SOLDIER
I'm here, aren't I!

They're about to come to blows when Constantine CRASHES into the Italian.

SLOW FADE.

DARKNESS. The sound of the Islamic Remembrances is as loud as ever.

Out of the darkness, a FLICKERING WHITE LIGHT appears in the center of the screen and the SOUND OF CHRISTIAN PRAYER drowns out the Islamic chanting: A MAN - A WOMAN - AND A CHILD'S VOICE.

INT. SMALL HOUSE FROM BEFORE - CONTINUOUS

The MAN, WOMAN and little girl are praying in front of a LONE CANDLE. The little girl is the one we met before, and she's wearing Constantine's necklace.

We can hear the sound of THOUSANDS OF MUSLIMS reverberating outside.

CLOSE ON the LITTLE GIRL'S FACE. Her tiny lips are filling the screen as she follows along with her parents in prayer.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE. BEDCHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

FLICKERING LIGHT - The CHILD'S LIPS have TRANSFORMED into a WOMAN'S LIPS. The prayer being spoken has changed also, it's now an ISLAMIC PRAYER.

CAELINA GOES PROSTRATE and moves through the motions of the Salah as she faces towards Mecca. She rises, holding up her hands to God as a supplicant.

CAELINA
(very emotional)
God, my Life, my Hope, protect us. Give
the man I love strength. Please God!
There is no God but God, and Mohammed is
his Prophet.

EXT. WALLS - CONTINUOUS

The deafening sound of the Islamic Remembrances is back!

GREEK SOLDIER
(in Italian)
Help me, we need to get him to safety!

ITALIAN SOLDIER
What do I do?!

GREEK SOLDIER
Grab him!

They each take one side of Constantine's limp body and carry him away.

EXT. DAWN

The sun's ORB climbs above the horizon while thousands are SHOUTING AND SINGING to the LIVELY MUSIC of fifes, trumpets, pipes and lutes.

FOCUS on the SUN - burning... SEARING THE FRAME.

EXT. CONSTANTINOPLE - CONTINUOUS

In the MORNING LIGHT we're presented with a SWEEPING TOUR of CONSTANTINOPLE to the soundtrack of TURKISH MARTIAL MUSIC:

The POWERFUL DOME OF ST. SOPHIA sails past us, it's HUGE GOLDEN CROSS blazing in the morning sun. The ringing of church bells can be heard.

The MAGNIFICENT COLUMN OF JUSTINIAN, its COLD METAL EYES staring back at us.

Down below we see the ENORMOUS RUINED HIPPODROME. It's stone structure already crumbling, but still mostly intact. Shadows fall over the race track.

The CHURCHES OF ST. SERGIOS AND ST. BACCHOS are below us now. Their church bells ringing.

The RUINED PALACE OF CONSTANTINE with its GREAT GATE.

The RUINED SENATE HOUSE

THE MAJESTIC DELPHI TRIPOD with its three snakes heads, their jaws open - seeming to hiss at us!

THE SEA WALLS with HUNDREDS OF TURKISH SHIPS patrolling in the background.

FOLLOWING THE MESE - the freeway of Constantinople - westward, we travel past the FORUM OF THEODOSIUS.

HOUSES AND FIELDS ARE EVERYWHERE. THE STONE RUINS of giant buildings poke out of the landscape. PEOPLE LOOKS LIKE ANTS below us.

The MAJESTIC CHURCH OF THE HOLY APOSTLES.

THE SPRAWLING GROUNDS OF THE IMPERIAL BLACHERNAE PALACE are off to our right as we move towards the immense THEODOSIAN LAND WALLS that we've seen so much of.

Orchards, fields, and homes are everywhere... The Queen of Cities is now mostly a PATCHWORK OF FARMS.

We DESCEND closer to:

Heavily battered THEODOSIAN LAND WALLS. We see a familiar section of the walls - the Mesoteichion section in the Lycus valley - where a patchwork of earth and wooden stockades fills the countless voids made by the stone cannon balls.

THOUSANDS OF CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY TROOPS are filling the MOAT.

THE SUPER-CANNONS are lumbering CLOSER TO THE WALLS. Dozens of oxen and hundreds of men are dragging the giant behemoths forward.

MUSKETFIRE crackles from both sides. ARROWS whiz past. From behind the WALLS a TREBUCHET snaps into motion, its mechanisms hurtling an INCENDIARY BOMB. The bombs crashes past the moat, SPRAYING FIRE.

SCREAMS

Continuing farther out, we're finally at the source of the music that we've been hearing all along: CIRCLES OF MEHTERS - Turkish military bands.

EXT. TURKISH CAMP - MORNING

The JANISSARY MUSIC provides a lively backdrop to the FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE that's permeating the whole camp. The HYPNOTIC BEATS absorb the rhythmic movements of the CHRISTIAN IRREGULARS as they frantically haul buckets of earth to fill the moat. A HAIL OF ARROWS descends on them and quite a few are dropped short of their goal - their BUCKETS HITTING THE GROUND where they fall. TREBUCHETS open fire and hurl their fiery cocktails up and over at them: CRIES OF AGONY as christian irregulars are ROASTED ALIVE. Turkish cannon return fire.

LONG SERIES OF BOOMS!

Followed by a LONG SERIES OF WHAMS!

More incendiary bombs stream overhead, but this time from the Turkish lines. FIREBALLS rise up from behind the WALLS. An INNER WALL TOWER is collapsing on the far end of the screen.

A CHRISTIAN SOLDIER stumbles at the edge of the MOAT and FALLS IN. A LONG LINE OF JANISSARIES armed with WHIPS AND MACES prevent anyone from helping him as he's buried alive by the buckets of earth thrown on him. His cries for help are drowned out by musketfire.

EXT. LAND WALLS. MESOTEICHION SECTION LYCUS VALLEY - DAY

GIOVANNI'S VOICE

Fire!

The TREBUCHET'S MECHANISM SNAPS into motion, hurtling the BOMB UP AND OVER - its CREAKING competing with the WHISHES of arrows and SNAPS from muskets.

SOLDIER ON THE WALL

Direct hit!

GIOVANNI

Beautiful.

Giovanni grabs a drink of wine. Pausing, he notices a YOUNG GENOESE SOLDIER looking forlorn.

GIOVANNI

What's wrong?

Inspecting the young man's head for wounds.

GIOVANNI

Why the sad face, man? You're perfect in body, no?

YOUNG GENOESE SOLDIER

I'm sorry, sir. It is a stupid thing.

GIOVANNI

Let me guess, love?

The young man nods.

GIOVANNI

Let me tell you a secret: All love is lost.

VOICE

We're ready to fire again, sir!

GIOVANNI
(without taking his eyes off the
young soldier)
Fire for same effect!

The sound of MECHANISMS SNAPPING into motion, their wooden
structures CREAKING under the stress of sudden movement.

GIOVANNI
It's not for me to say, but love is
fragile, like a womb. It's so precious
that -

CRIES OF MEN BEING ROASTED ALIVE

GIOVANNI
(placing his rough hand on the
youth's smooth cheek)
nothing of this world can open it, only
God can open it, and when he does no one
can take that from you. People will fail
you, they'll betray you, they die, but
God doesn't die, and so his love is
eternal and that's the only love worth
trying for.
(gently patting his cheek)
And that is the only love we need.

Turkish cannon open fire, BLOWING DOWN part of the WALL in
front of them.

GIOVANNI
(grabbing him)
If we live through this, you can have any
woman you want! Now man up! Women are
for whims and I need you here now, as a
man!

He STARES into the youth's EYES.

GIOVANNI'S VOICE
Yes! That's it.

Giovanni GRABS THE YOUTH'S FACE

GIOVANNI
(laughing)
To hell with them!

YOUNG GENOESE SOLDIER
To hell with them.

GIOVANNI
To hell with them!

YOUNG GENOESE SOLDIER
(getting into it)
To hell with them!

GIOVANNI
God loves us!

YOUNG GENOESE SOLDIER
He loves us!... We will win, sir!

GIOVANNI
(beaming)
So let's fucking win this already.

The young soldier gets it: Giovanni releases him, and grabs more wine.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE - EVENING

STONE HALLWAYS

The sound of FOOTSTEPS

We BOUNCE behind Constantine as he's being helped through the dark, damp hallways of the palace by the pair of Greek and Italian soldiers from before. Servants are bowing their heads, no words are said. We're soon face to face with the old smooth-faced eunuch guarding the massive wooden doors to the bedchamber.

CONSTANTINE
Thank you.

GREEK SOLDIER
Are you going to be ok, my Lord?

Constantine smiles and nods.

CONSTANTINE
Come, take my hand.

The Greek does as ordered, but the Italian doesn't understand. The Greek's about to explain it to him when Constantine takes the Italian's hand and lays it over the Greek's, HOLDING BOTH OF THEIRS IN HIS.

A beat.

Constantine looks at the Italian who nods. Constantine bows his head in silent prayer, and the two follow suite.

For a moment, in that dark hallway, centuries of religious differences disappear: the Filioque controversy and all of the other abstract differences evaporate in the light of what's real: human understanding.

CONSTANTINE

Go now, they need you on the walls. I'll join you shortly.

Seeing them disappear into the darkness, he turns to the eunuch who deftly unlocks the massive doors and pushes them open:

BEDCHAMBER

Caelina is prostrate, her back facing the camera.

The SOUND of the doors closing with a THUD, and the lock grating on metal.

Constantine walks over and looks down at her, he's expressionless. HE DROPS TO HIS KNEES beside her as she continues through the motions of Salah.

Cannon boom in the distance.

He opens his eyes with a sigh and then LIES NEXT TO HER as she finishes praying.

CONSTANTINE

Do you ever wonder, what's the point of it all?

Caelina licks her finger and uses it to wipe some blood off of his cheek.

CAELINA

(softly)

You can't ask why...

CONSTANTINE

Why does God bring such evils upon us?

She lies down next to him: they're both looking up at us, THEIR FACES FILLING THE SCREEN.

CONSTANTINE

If God's all powerful and good, then why is there suffering in the world?

CAELINA

You ask questions you cannot ask. It is like asking God, why he creates all this. No?

CONSTANTINE
What can't I ask him?
(turning to her)
Don't you ever wonder?

CAELINA
(closing her eyes)
In the name of God, most generous, good,
and all merciful. Say: We sought to pry
into the secrets of the Heavens but found
it full of fierce guards and shooting
flames. We sat in places of vision and
listened, but any one who listened found
a shooting star waiting for him. We do
not know if this means bad for the
dwellers of the planet, or if God wishes
to guide and help them. He is the
knower of the Unknown,
(opening her eyes and turning to
look at Constantine)
and He does not divulge His secret to any
one. He comprehends all that has been
given them, and keeps count of
everything.

A long beat.

CONSTANTINE
Where you there when I created the Earth
and Skies? The Stars up in Heaven?
Where you there when I did these things?
(closing his eyes)
I want to believe there's a reason for
all of this. That all of this suffering
has some purpose in the end.

Caelina moves her finger over his lips.

CAELINA
Sshh... These are just words we speak.
Listen to the silence within you,
everything has purpose. This has a
reason. And this too...

She takes his hand and moves it out of frame.

A flicker of recognition comes across his face and he lets
out a long sigh just as there's a loud barrage of cannon
fire.

CONSTANTINE
This may be the perfect time for us to
get married.
(MORE)

CONSTANTINE (cont'd)

The Patriarch has run away, the priests are scared, hell everyone is so scared they might actually let me marry a Muslim.

CAELINA

Mehmet abandon the siege?

CONSTANTINE

Maybe, if we let him officiate the wedding.

(laughing)

But then the Western Powers would attack us.

CAELINA

Between hard place and rock.

CONSTANTINE

Yes, between a hard place and a rock.

CONSTANTINE

(staring into her eyes)

Will you marry me?

She rests her head on his chest.

CAELINA

What does your heart tell you?

HOLDING HER TIGHT as they lie on the PRAYER RUG.

EXT. BLACHERNAE PALACE - EVENING

RAMPARTS

Martial Music fills the brisk night air.

CONSTANTINE

It's like a goddamn party down there.

Surveying the action below us in a WIDE PANORAMIC SHOT: Firelight is LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT SKY as THOUSANDS OF TROOPS work to fill the moat, and stock arms and supplies. We see groups of soldiers DANCING. CIRCLES OF MEHTERAN BANDS are everywhere with their cymbals clashing and their drums beating...

SINGING, DANCING, CELEBRATION

TREBUCHET snaps into motion and a fiery projectile arcs out at the Turkish camp, landing with an EXPLOSION. The Turks return fire: their cannons BLASTING AWAY at a distant section of the wall.

CONSTANTINE

The moat's almost filled again. How many times has it been?

SPHRANTZES

I've lost count.

CONSTANTINE

(looking out at the camp)

This can't go on forever, if disease doesn't get them, grumbling will.

(staring...)

We just have to hold out a little bit longer. Two months of hell -

Sound of sobbing.

CONSTANTINE

What's wrong, brother?

SPHRANTZES

I'm afraid for my family.

CONSTANTINE

You asked me how it came to this: We didn't back down this time, we stood our ground. We keep our faith in each other, and we'll get through this.

A beat as Constantine STARES DOWN the celebrating Turks.

EXT. TURKISH CAMP - CONTINUOUS

GROUP OF TURKISH SOLDIERS are DANCING. There is SINGING and CHANTING.

SCORES OF CHRISTIAN AUXILIARY TROOPS are filing past them carrying buckets of earth. CROSSES are sewed onto their uniforms.

FOCUS on the Turkish soldiers dancing before us. In the firelight we can see the JOY in their eyes. The martial music is making everything hypnotic: Cymbals CLASH, and drums beat to the rhythms of the cannons firing at the long curtain of the city's walls. A battery of cannon are firing off to our right at the MESOTEICHION SECTION of the walls. The terrible barrage lights up the night sky. The defenders fire back with small artillery pieces that poke streaks of fire into the darkness. Defenders launch projectiles that land short of the firing cannons. The singing and dancing goes on unabated.

The music and singing is so loud that it DROWNS OUT the musket fire happening all around us - we just see bright FLASHES OF ORANGE LIGHT dot the background... like fireflies on a summer night.

TORCHLIGHT

POV

CLOSE on MAN'S HANDS

Holding a WOODEN SQUARE with a leather cord running through it. Engraved on this square we see an excerpt from the Gospel of Mark: THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NEAR MY CHILDREN REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS

The rough hands caress the Words.

We pan up to see a SEA OF WHITE BORK caps: hundreds of janissaries are keeping watch to make sure the christian irregulars keep up the pace while filling the moat.

COUNTER POV

In the flickering light we see a clean shaven face with EUROPEAN features wearing a white bork cap and clothed in a janissary uniform - his DOLMA jacket is embroidered around the shoulders.

JANISSARY HOLDING THE SQUARE
My parents talked about it.

JANISSARY #2
Soon, it will be a city of god.

JANISSARY HOLDING THE SQUARE
We must trust in God.

Janissary #2 sees a CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY lag and he lashes out at him with his whip, striking the man repeatedly until he falls down, dropping his bucket of dirt.

JANISSARY #2
Christian dog! Move!

CLOSE again on the hands caressing the wooden square. He takes it, and places it carefully around his neck.

JANISSARY HOLDING THE SQUARE
Easy brother, we were once them.

JANISSARY #2

We may have been born Christian, but
we're not anymore! God and the Sultan
saved us from being dogs like them.

He resumes his whipping of the downed christian.

Janissary #1 stops #2's hand.

JANISSARY HOLDING THE SQUARE

The dead can't carry buckets.

FADE OUT

EXT. TURKISH CAMP - MORNING

SILENCE

A WIDE SWEEPING SHOT shows the moat completely filled in with
countless dead bodies scattered all around it.

EXT. LAND WALLS. MESOTEICHION SECTION LYCUS VALLEY -
CONTINUOUS

The two defenders from before:

GREEK SOLDIER

(in Italian)

They've stopped firing.

An ARROW suddenly comes out of nowhere landing in their midst
with a rattling sound as it bounces off the masonry.

ITALIAN SOLDIER

Spoke too soon!

(looking at it)

Wait, there's a note attached to it.

(fumbling with it)

I can't read this, here -

GREEK SOLDIER

We have this day in peace.

A long beat.

ITALIAN SOLDIER

Anything else?

GREEK SOLDIER

We should run for our lives.

ITALIAN SOLDIER

Fuck 'em.

GREEK SOLDIER

Amen.

The Italian soldier makes the sign of the cross from LEFT TO RIGHT while the Greek soldier makes IT the OPPOSITE WAY. They notice this and stop, staring at each other; finally, one of them says:

GREEK SOLDIER

You are my brother in Christ.

The Italian embraces the Greek.

All around SOLDIERS AND CITIZENRY are hauling earth and wood to repair the fresh holes in the walls. The sound of activity is in stark contrast to the silence from the Turkish camp.

We notice Constantine is among those working, as is Giovanni who's helping him LIFT A BARREL of earth to the top of the makeshift rampart.

CONSTANTINE

1, 2, 3!

Constantine and Giovanni struggle with the weight of the barrel - Giovanni's wounded shoulder is giving him a hard time - but eventually they heave it up and over. They pause for breath, looking at each other.

CONSTANTINE

Bring the next!

We see them repeat the same task but this time Constantine LOSES HIS BALANCE as they reach the top:

CONSTANTINE

Watch out down below!

Constantine is about to go over with the barrel when Giovanni reaches out and GRABS his arm just in the nick of time.

The barrel CRASHES to the ground.

Giovanni hoists him back up.

GIOVANNI

Bring the next!

CONSTANTINE

I must give you a new title: Royal Handler.

GIOVANNI
Na, sounds too plain.

The two men STRUGGLE and finally get the last barrel in place.

CONSTANTINE
It's going to happen tonight.

GIOVANNI
I was thinking it'd be sooner.

CONSTANTINE
No, I believe the word from our christian brothers on the other side, we have this day in peace.

GIOVANNI
We should make the most of it then.

CONSTANTINE
Amen to that.

A long beat as Constantine and Giovanni look out at the quiet Turkish camp. It spreads out far as the eye can see.

CONSTANTINE
Look at them. Bent on our destruction. What is the saying of our Savior? What profit is it to gain the world and lose your soul?

GIOVANNI
They're not worried about that.

An arrow suddenly WHIZZES by.

CONSTANTINE
I think they heard me!

A laughing beat.

Constantine and Giovanni take a break and sit against the barrels. The work carries on busily around them. Giovanni nurses his bandaged shoulder.

CONSTANTINE
(running his hand against a barrel)
We need to bless these walls.

Constantine leans in.

CONSTANTINE

(whispering)

You were right about the time for money having passed. It seems like our gold fell on deaf ears, and one of our men didn't come back.

GIOVANNI

We have only our faith in God then. That's enough. He loves us.

CONSTANTINE

(to himself)

If he truly loves us, then why is he putting us through all this?

Giovanni grabs him.

GIOVANNI

I have laid down everything for you, and now you question my foundation. If God doesn't love us, then how come we've lasted so long?

CONSTANTINE

My Serbian stubbornness?

GIOVANNI

Doesn't hurt, but it takes true faith to prevail.

CONSTANTINE

What is faith?

SOLDIERS are passing in front of them, bowing, and going about their work.

CONSTANTINE

Remember that fog we just had?

Giovanni nods.

CONSTANTINE

We've never had a fog like that this time of year. Never. There was something not real about it. Faith is like that fog: I feel like it blinds me, and yet I'm too sacred to find my way out of it because I'm afraid there might be nothing there if I look too hard.

GIOVANNI

I will not fight for a man that doesn't believe.

CONSTANTINE

I believe in God, and our Savior, I just want to know why he's making us suffer? Is this

(motioning to what's around him)
supposed to be a sacrificial altar?

GIOVANNI

Faith means you don't ask why...

CONSTANTINE

You just stay in the fog then?

GIOVANNI

Life is that fog: only one man has come back from the dead, Jesus Christ, our most Holy Savior who loves us. You want to know what Jesus knows and you can't, no one can, we have to trust that he is the Word of God who died for our sins. His love is eternal.

CONSTANTINE

Funny way to show love.

Giovanni looks upset.

CONSTANTINE

Look, I have faith in you, and I have faith that the sun's going to come up tomorrow, but it's hard for me to just believe in something because I'm supposed to. When I was young, I believed without thinking, but now I feel like if we don't ask why, then -

A TREBUCHET SPRINGS INTO ACTION: no bomb is thrown -- test firing its mechanism.

CONSTANTINE

(motioning)

we're like that catapult: blindly doing the bidding of others.

GIOVANNI

You think too much: be young again. You're asking dangerous questions and God doesn't reward doubters.

Giovanni gets up,

GIOVANNI

You have a responsibility to believe.
Stop being selfish.

and LEAVES THE FRAME, we're still on Constantine sitting there with his back up against the barrels.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE. AUDIENCE CHAMBER - DAY

A HOLY RELIC is on a table. It's a bit of bone encased in a gold encrusted box.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

They are to be carried around the walls.
I will lead the way.

CONSTANTINE

The church bells are to ring! I want God to see and hear everything.

He looks over in the direction of his bedchamber.

CONSTANTINE

Everything.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE. BEDCHAMBER.

CONSTANTINE

My Queen. Come with me.

CAELINA

But if the people find out?

CONSTANTINE

I want you by my side.

CAELINA

I can't. They will say a Muslim has taken the city.

She reaches for his face, gently putting her hand against his cheek.

CAELINA

But I will walk behind you.

CONSTANTINE

You asked me if my kingdom was more important than you. You are first in my thoughts.

CAELINA

A king's time is not his own. Your people need you. Let us go, my love.

Constantine holds her hand against his face, closing his eyes.

EXT. TURKISH FRONT LINES - LATE AFTERNOON

The sound of HOOVES hitting the ground at a fast gallop.

A seemingly endless train of HORSES fly past.

MEHMET RIDING HIS WHITE ARABIAN STALLION.

Zaganos is racing to catch up to him.

ZAGANOS

My Lord!

MEHMET

(shouting back)

The Sword of Islam waits for no man!

ZAGANOS

We've gone past it!

MEHMET

Oh.

The train of calvary comes to a halt. Horses neighing as clouds of dust rise up in the still air.

The sound of HUNDREDS OF CHURCH BELLS RINGING.

CRESCENT MOON HANGS OVER THE CITY - the sun is getting low.

We're at: HEAD OF THE GOLDEN HORN

MEHMET

Where is it again?

ZAGANOS

(pointing to some stones in the distance)

There, my Lord.

The large group dismounts. Shadows are growing.

MEHMET

Who found it?

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN

(excitedly)

It was I, Great Sultan! A vision led me to it.

MEHMET

A vision from God I hope?

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN

I swear my life on it.

MEHMET

(whispering)

Don't swear your life on anything unless I give you permission first. How would it look if you're wrong and I have to kill you?

(subdued laugh)

But of course, you're not wrong, are you.

Mehmet turns around and faces the assembled Officers and Janissaries:

MEHMET

The Sheikh is certain! I am too! There lies the tomb of the Companion of the Prophet Mohammed! Peace be upon Him.

ASSEMBLED GROUP

Peace be upon him.

MEHMET

Poor Ayyub,

An awkward pause.

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN

(whispering)

Ansari.

MEHMET

Ansari! Cut down while doing God's work! Buried there before us, his tomb profaned by the Christians! Listen to me! It is our duty to reclaim this tomb! And give him the respect and dignity that's due a Companion of the Holy Prophet!

ASSEMBLED GROUP

Peace be upon him!

MEHMET

Yes, Peace be upon him,
(turning to the City)
and may God stop those damn bells.

Turning to the Sheikh

MEHMET
Walk with me.

A DETACHMENT OF JANISSARIES starts to accompany them.

MEHMET
(to his bodyguard)
Stand off.

Walking over to the "tomb"...

MEHMET
(to the Sheikh)
I don't see anything.

The Sheikh is trembling.

MEHMET
Stop that! It doesn't look good.
Besides, you're safe in my graces, for
now.

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN
I am sorry, my Sultan

MEHMET
(padding him on the back)
Yes, I'm sure you are, now tell me
something. What do I tell the men
tonight? How do I reach their hearts and
make them give me what I want? What
animates them? Martyrdom or booty?

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN
You know the answer, Great Sultan.

SMILING

MEHMET
Leave me.

The Sheikh makes an over the top show of obeisance, and
scurries away.

MEHMET
(to a nearby Janissary officer)
Have Zaganos approach. Don't follow us.

Zaganos approaches and bows down before Mehmet who motions
for him to get up. Zaganos follows closely behind his
master.

EXT. WALLS OF CONSTANTINOPLE - CONTINUOUS

RINGING OF BELLS

HOLY ICON

Passes before us. The gold on it glitters in the late afternoon sun.

The CHANTING of a prayer.

HOLY ICON is being held in front of the Outer Wall near the Mesoteichion section. There's a HUGE HOLE in the ancient masonry that a stout WOODEN STOCKADE - the same one that Constantine and Giovanni we're helping to build - is trying to bandage.

PULL BACK to reveal:

THOUSANDS crowding around PRIESTS holding RELICS. Orthodox and Catholics priests are present. Constantine is standing behind the priests, the nobility and officers behind him.

Thousands make the SIGN OF THE CROSS in unison. The Greeks and Italians making it in OPPOSITE WAYS.

High up on the ramparts, soldiers keep guard.

CARDINAL ISIDORE motions for Constantine to come forward.

The ringing of bells recedes into the background.

CARDINAL ISIDORE
Lead us, Emperor.

An ORTHODOX BISHOP hands Constantine the most venerated icon in Constantinople - the MARY AND CHILD HODEGETRIA -, the HOLY ICON we've seen before. Constantine's hands TREMBLE. The bishop steadies him, and they exchange a look of understanding. Constantine looks at it: MARY HOLDING THE INFANT JESUS AT HER SIDE. The paint seems almost alive with MARY'S BLACK EYES filling the frame...

CAELINA, with her dark eyes

is standing some distance away, wrapped in a BLACK robe with a green head-cloth, and a black scarf covering much of her face. Several PALACE SERVANTS are with her.

FROM CAELINA'S VANTAGE POINT: Constantine is saying something with the icon held high up above him.

All of the people around Constantine are bowing their heads and those around Caelina are beginning to do the same. Caelina looks around, and after a moment's pause, bows her head too.

A beat of silence.

Caelina raises her head in time to see Constantine bring the icon down to his lips and kiss it.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD
You should keep your head lowered.

The voice is coming from an OLD WOMAN wearing tattered clothes. She growls at Caelina. Caelina growls back.

CAELINA
Quiet you old badger. Shave your mustache and leave me alone.

OLD WOMAN
You look like a Turk.

Caelina confronts her.

CAELINA
No, I'm not. I'm something more mean than that.

Caelina STARES HER DOWN and the old woman retreats into the disappearing crowd.

CAELINA
Ah, fool.

Constantine and the procession have moved on, Caelina is left alone with her two servants. She looks up at the top of the OUTER WALL - CLIMBING the battered steps to look out and see:

ENDLESS TURKISH CAMP. There is hardly any activity down there. She SPITS at it.

LUCAS NOTARAS'S VOICE
I feel the same.

She COVERS UP HER FACE.

LUCAS NOTARAS
I'm sorry to startle you.

She bows her head.

LUCAS NOTARAS
They told me you were up here. We should go down, they've been shooting arrows.

Caelina nods and he follows her down, as they reach the bottom he pulls her aside.

LUCAS NOTARAS
(smiling)
What are we going to do with you?
Sometimes I curse the day I bought you.

CAELINA
(with her eyes cast down)
I am not yours anymore.

LUCAS NOTARAS
No, you are not. You belong to an
emperor. And the Emperor belongs to you,
you have captured his heart. Give me
your hand.

Caelina pulls away from Lucas.

LUCAS NOTARAS
It's OK. Please.

She looks at him, and slowly gives him her hand.

LUCAS NOTARAS
I want you to know that the Emperor has
my full support. And that means you do
too. No matter what happens, I will do
all I can to protect you.

SHE GRIPS HIS HAND

LUCAS NOTARAS
Shall we join the procession?

She nods, and lets go of his hand.

LUCAS NOTARAS
No, don't follow me, walk with me.
Please.

She shakes her head.

LUCAS NOTARAS
(smiling)
As you want.

She resumes walking two steps behind him.

We STAY on them walking away from us. Their voices are
trailing off with church bells ringing in the background.

LUCAS NOTARAS
I'm sorry for the wrongs I've done you.

Caelina looks in his direction and nods.

LUCAS NOTARAS
And I forgive you for biting me.

Caelina stops.

LUCAS NOTARAS
(turning around to look at her,
he's laughing)
Come on you.

They continue on their way.

EXT. TURKISH CAMP

Turkish soldiers are KNEELING before Mehmet as he walks through THE ENDLESS CAMP with Zaganos behind him, hand on sword. They approach a tent that has a DOG chained to a post. Mehmet stops to look at the poor creature.

MEHMET
You see that?

ZAGANOS
The dog?

MEHMET
You know what its problem is?

Mehmet walks up to the dog and it retreats back. A scared look comes over its face as Mehmet's long beak of a nose enters the frame.

MEHMET
(to the dog)
Your problem, my friend, is that you only need to bribe the Vizier and you will be free.

ZAGANOS
My Lord, I would never

Mehmet waves his hand, stopping Zaganos from saying anything more. He mutters something to the dog but we can't hear what's being said.

Mehmet rises to his feet and looks at the HUNDREDS OF KNEELING TURKISH TROOPS surrounding him.

MEHMET
(low voice)
Poor creatures, you exist for my doing.

He approaches Zaganos who's starting to kneel when Mehmet shakes his head in disapproval, stopping him. Zaganos hesitantly rises. Mehmet whispers something into his ear. He stands back and looks hard at Zaganos, who's surprised.

EXT. ST. SOPHIA CATHEDRAL - EVENING

Caelina and Lucas approach the MASSIVE BRONZE DOORS of the church which are wide open.

CAELINA
I cannot enter.

LUCAS NOTARAS
You should return to the Palace. I will have guards escort you.

CAELINA
No, I am fine with me.

LUCAS NOTARAS
No you're not, my men will protect you.

CAELINA
May God protect you and your family.

She reaches for his hand, cupping it in hers.

LUCAS NOTARAS
You're the best investment I ever made.
Take care, Caelina.

He watches her leave - with SOLDIERS - and disappear into the CROWD outside the church. Turning around, he looks up at the GIANT STRUCTURE before him. We can hear the BYZANTINE CHANT coming from inside.

Lucas passes through the DOORS and into...

INT. ST. SOPHIA - CONTINUOUS

the lights of thousands of candles, filling the giant space with an otherworldly glow.

WALKING IN we PAN UP and see the GIANT MOSAIC of Christ Almighty - Christ Pantocratoros - in the center of the MASSIVE DOME above us. There is a procession of angels dancing around him. The powerful head is framed by a halo in the form of a cross with the Greek words Omega, Omicron and Nu written in dark, bold letters.

CLOSE UP on Christ's eyes.

DARK EYES

We hold on those dark eyes for a long beat.

BYZANTINE CHANT REVERBERATES through the GIANT SPACE,
creating a hypnotic state of mind.

FULL OF WORSHIPPERS

FOLLOW LUCAS as he makes his way to the back of the church.

The gold of the mosaics GLITTERS in the flickering light.
The polychrome marble seems alive as the different colors
look like snakes TWISTING their way upwards...

He finds Constantine.

CONSTANTINE
(to Lucas)
How is she?

LUCAS NOTARAS
Safe. My men are taking her back to the
Palace.

CONSTANTINE
Do you feel it?

LUCAS NOTARAS
Union, finally.

CONSTANTINE
Yes, we're all here together, East and
West, singing for God.

VOICES are rising up from everywhere.

CONSTANTINE
I need to get ready, but I can't bring
myself to leave. I never really noticed
how beautiful it was until now.

LUCAS NOTARAS
(looking up)
Truly, Justinian outdid Solomon.

PAN UP to the giant mosaic of Christ Pantocratoros. The DARK
EYES are looking down on us. The EYES BEGIN TO MOVE and they
morph into:

EXT. STREETS OF CONSTANTINOPLE - NIGHT

A BLACK MASS running towards us down the empty street - we see it's a PACK OF BIG BLACK DOGS, their EYES SEEMING TO GLOW RED. SHOOTING PAST US. The houses are dark: it's like a ghost town.

EXT. TURKISH CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Quiet. CAMP FIRES dot the landscape.

INT. ST. SOPHIA - CONTINUOUS

The CAMP FIRES MERGE INTO CANDLES and we find ourselves back in the great church. The church is almost empty now. The singing has stopped. Constantine is kneeling in front of us. We hear him MURMUR as he fervently prays. The candles are burning with a slow, patient intensity.

CUT TO: Constantine walking out of the church, his back to us, his figure framed by the GIANT DOORWAY.

EXT. ST. SOPHIA

Theodore Karystinos and Lucas Notaras are waiting for him outside.

CONSTANTINE
(walking down the steps)
Time for the inspection?

They nod.

A soldier is holding the bridle of Constantine's ARABIAN MARE. Constantine greets his horse and effortlessly mounts her. John and Lucas mount up. Constantine rides off a bit and then turns around, looking up at the CHURCH'S DARK SILHOUETTE.

LUCAS NOTARAS'S VOICE
We'll see it again.

Constantine GALLOPS off, racing down the empty street, they race after him. The horses' hooves creating a rhythm of echoes as they leave the screen.

EXT. TURKISH FRONT LINES - CONTINUOUS

The GALLOPING SOUND merges into the sound of TENS OF THOUSANDS OF MUSLIMS moving in unison to the Isha Prayer as they dutifully perform the Salat. They are facing towards the WALLS. The assembled Faithful look like a big black wriggling thing in the night.

INT. HALIL PASHA'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

ZAGANOS

For the love of money you would betray
your Faith?

He throws a BAG OF MONEY in front of Halil Pasha, it hits the
ground with a METALLIC THUD.

HALIL PASHA

I do not answer to you! You are below
me, Second Vizier. Where is the Sultan?

ZAGANOS

The Sultan is not here, I am. All of
your counsels urging restraint, even
retreat, were done in greed. You are
being paid christian gold to do their
bidding. Gabour Ortachi!

HALIL PASHA

(face to face)

My counsels have only ever been with the
interests of the Sultan at heart. I am
the Grand Vizier, not you. I decide your
fate, you don't decide mine, dog.

ZAGANOS

Wrong. The Sultan has decided both of
ours.

ZAGANOS

(to guards)

Arrest him, by the order of the Grand
Vizier.

INT. ANTECHAMBER OF HALIL PASHA'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Halil Pasha is being led out in chains. Mehmet EMERGES from
the shadows once he's gone.

MEHMET

(relieved)

That was easy.

ZAGANOS

The act was easy, my Lord. Finishing him
off will be hard.

MEHMET

After tonight, things will get a lot
easier. Just keep him quiet and out of
sight. He has been a thorn in my side
since... I can't tell you how many times
he has hurt me. I am tired of being
hurt.

Mehmet HUGS Zaganos. Zaganos looks scared and hesitantly reciprocates.

MEHMET

(whispering into his ear)

You must win this for me, I can't do this anymore, this damn siege has gone on too long.

ZAGANOS

(soft voice)

The men are waiting for you.

Mehmet tightly hugs Zaganos and then releases him with a sigh.

EXT. TURKISH FRONT LINES - MINUTES LATER

MEHMET

(to the assembled thousands)

We are all Kings in God's eyes! There is no man here whose life I don't hold equal to my own!

CLOSE UP on a TURKISH SOLDIER snorting a laugh. The SOLDIER next to him notices this, and grins.

MEHMET

But God chose me to be your Sultan! And there is only one God! Let no man say otherwise! But some do! The men in that city say God has a son!

Mehmet starts laughing and his audience takes cue, nervously joining.

MEHMET

The God you just prayed to tells us that they are wrong!

VOICE FROM CROWD

About what, great sultan?!

Zaganos flashes a look of disdain.

MEHMET

About God. But we are not taking this city to prove they are wrong about God! No. We are taking this city because God wants us to! He told the Prophet, peace be upon him, that he wants us to have it! Think of all the wealth that lies in wait for you! Gold, women, slaves, property!

(MORE)

MEHMET (cont'd)

Think about it, it is all yours for the taking!

The assembled thousands let out a huge ROAR! Mehmet shines with delight.

MEHMET

The first man, the first man to scale those walls will have my eternal gratitude, and the Government of the East! And one more thing!

A long beat as thousands wait in suspense.

MEHMET

You cannot lose!

ROAR from the crowd.

MEHMET

God is great!

THOUSANDS OF VOICES

God is great!

MEHMET

God is great!

THOUSANDS OF VOICES

God is great!

MEHMET

(unsheathing his sword and raising it high above his head)
The Sword of Islam calls out to you!
Take what is yours!

HUGE ROAR.

Mehmet looks over at Zaganos and grins. Zaganos smiles and bows his head.

MEHMET

The Sword of Islam!

The thousands ROAR.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE -

CONSTANTINE

You have all been good servants to me.
Loyal to the last.

There are DOZENS OF SERVANTS before us. One of them, the old eunuch who guards the bedchamber doors, steps forward.

EUNUCH
My Lord?

CONSTANTINE
Yes.

EUNUCH
You have brought shame on your family.

Constantine calmly walks over to him.

EUNUCH
You know why.

CONSTANTINE
You must keep my secret.

EUNUCH
Why should we?

CONSTANTINE
Because I love her, and because I am your Emperor.

Another servant steps forward.

OLD WOMAN SERVANT
But she is one of them, my lord!

CONSTANTINE
(to all of them)
Can I trust you?

EUNUCH
Please, we beg you, don't ask us to profess our loyalty to that one.

CONSTANTINE
You would disobey me?

The eunuch shakes his head NO and deeply bows.

CONSTANTINE
I am a man, I'm not made of stone. Can I help it that I love her? I ask you, can I help it? She has done no harm to you or this city. I love her more than life.

Constantine turns and angrily walks out. Sphrantzes is waiting for him and quickly approaches.

CONSTANTINE
(to Sphrantzes)
Come, we don't have much time.

FOLLOW Constantine and Sphrantzes walking through PALACE HALLWAYS that are dark and foreboding.

CONSTANTINE
If those dogs outside don't tear her to pieces, the dogs inside will, and all because she's Arab.

SPHRANTZES
A Muslim, my Lord.

CONSTANTINE
(stopping)
No, not you too.

SPHRANTZES
No, of course not! You know me better than that. But what can you expect? With them bent on our destruction out there, and a Muslim in here, in the Palace of all places.

CONSTANTINE
(walking again)
It was not my idea to fall in love with her.

Reaching the Imperial Bedchamber - the doors slightly ajar.

CONSTANTINE
Promise me you will protect her like one of your own.

SPHRANTZES
You know a promise isn't needed.

They GRASP each other's right forearm: ROMAN HANDSHAKE

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE. BEDCHAMBER -

Caelina is standing when Constantine enters; Sphrantzes waits outside. She's wearing the same clothes as before: wrapped in a black robe with her hair covered in a green head-cloth, and her face hidden behind a black scarf.

CONSTANTINE
You will go with Sphrantzes. You will be safe with him.

Caelina tenderly strokes his cheek.

CONSTANTINE
Which side do you think God is on?

CAELINA
God is what is right.

CONSTANTINE
Which one of us is right then? Me, or
that boy out there shouting in the night?

Caelina smiles.

CAELINA
God does not need sword.

CONSTANTINE
No, he doesn't. But it'd be nice if he
had one about now and swung it at his
head.

CAELINA
And why not yours too?

CONSTANTINE
(smiling)
I'd like to think I'm on the right side.

CAELINA
You are right to stay and fight. I am
with you. I won't leave you.

SPHRANTZES POV

Caelina is saying something more to Constantine but we can't
hear it. He gently removes the scarf from her face and they
KISS in a long embrace.

SPHRANTZES
(to himself)
My God, life is a horrible mystery. We
would run away from it if we didn't have
to live it.

EXT. TURKISH FRONT LINES. LYCUS VALLEY - NIGHT

1:30 AM flashes on the SCREEN in BOLD LETTERS

The quiet is BROKEN by a THUNDEROUS barrage of cannon fire.
MARTIAL MUSIC kicks in as cannons sound off to a melody all
their own. Seconds later, a COUNTER MELODY ensues as the
stone balls CRASH into the Outer Walls in the Lycus Valley.

A TURKISH COMMANDER is shouting something but cannon fire drowns him out.

Under the light of flares, and with cannons still firing, we see before us a LONG LINE OF CHRISTIAN TROOPS running towards the OUTER WALLS. We TRACK them as they run towards the WALLS with STONE CANNONBALLS whizzing over their heads, impacting before them. The SIGNS OF THE CROSS are on their uniforms, and their weapons range from WOODEN CLUBS to LONG SWORDS.

CUT TO Mehmet astride his brilliant white Arabian horse. He seems delighted by what he's seeing:

THOUSANDS OF CHRISTIAN TROOPS are pouring against the OUTER WALLS like a tidal wave.

BACK ON MEHMET

MEHMET

(to Zaganos, beside him)

I can't think of a better use for Christians than to have them fight their own.

ZAGANOS

If only our whole army was these dogs.

MEHMET

But it wouldn't be an army of God then!

Zaganos bows his head in acknowledgement.

EXT. OUTER WALLS LYCUS VALLEY

Amid crumbling masonry, WAVE AFTER WAVE OF CHRISTIAN TROOPS beat against the walls, hurling their SCALING LADDERS upwards as stones and arrows rain down on them. They hack away at the earthen barrels on top of the wooden stockade. Buckets of GREEK FIRE pour down and DOZENS OF SCREAMING FIGURES break free, burning alive.

CLOSE UP on one of the BURNING FIGURES running back towards the camp. The flares rain down an ORANGE-RED LIGHT that shows him running into a SOLID LINE OF TURKISH SOLDIERS armed with thongs and maces. The Turkish soldiers make way for the burning-humanity that's running past them at breakneck speed. But further back, there's another line of soldiers - JANISSARIES - who quickly CUT the BURNING FIGURE to pieces: A POLISHED, BRIGHT sword cuts deep into the man's back, severing his spine and dropping him into a heap of flames. A sword cut to the neck ends the other-worldly screaming coming from the FACE OF FLAMES.

More and more CHRISTIAN TROOPS are trying to retreat but they're being beaten back by the endless TURKISH TROOPS.

CANNONS THUNDER

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

BOOM!

TRACK in on the last fired CANNONBALL impacting against the OUTER WALLS IN THE LYCUS VALLEY. The impact COLLAPSES a section of wall...

MASONRY AND RUBBLE RAIN DOWN ON CONSTANTINE AND GIOVANNI who are hacking away as a team against the endless supply of CHRISTIAN AUXILIARY TROOPS. DUST EVERYWHERE. A GIANT OF A MAN with the sign of the cross emblazoned on his breast-plate lunges over the barrels at CONSTANTINE who, without losing a beat, takes the DAGGER in his left hand and stabs the GIANT in the jugular - freshets of blood fly at the camera.

Constant boom of cannon fire.

GIOVANNI swings his DOUBLE-HEADED BATTLE AX at an AUXILIARY who had the bad luck of POKING his head above the barrels at the worst possible time - the AUXILLARY'S HEAD gets lopped off like it's nothing.

Masonry explodes around us... DOZENS OF CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY TROOPS are blown to bits by the blasts. BODY PARTS rain down on Constantine and Giovanni, covering them in gore.

The defenders let out a blood curdling cry. Constantine brushes away the gore from his face and raises his LONG SWORD over his head. The SOLDIERS gather around him and ready themselves. Almost on cue, a new wave of CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY TROOPS slam into the battered OUTER WALLS and the fighting resumes with a renewed intensity. BLOOD EVERYWHERE as the flares overhead cast MOVING SHADOWS that make it hard to tell what's real and what's not, who's the enemy and who's not as CROSSES ARE ON BOTH SIDES' UNIFORMS.

CHAOS OF WAR.

3:30 AM flashes on the SCREEN in BOLD LETTERS

The cannon go silent and we can hear the SOUND OF HUNDREDS OF CHURCH BELLS RINGING.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS COMES THE PIERCING SOUND OF WHISTLES

FADE IN to the IMAGE OF INDISTINCT SHAPES coming at us... ordered, marching in lock and step - the FOCUS SHARPENS and we see THOUSANDS OF TURKISH ANATOLIAN SOLDIERS filing past us in perfect order, swords drawn. They look like drops of mercury rolling into the LYCUS VALLEY with their POLISHED BREASTPLATES shining under the flares. They step over the piles of dead as the few remaining christian irregulars stumble back to the rear.

The defenders LOOK EXHAUSTED -- their coughing and hard breathing is producing clouds of condensation. THEY JUST STARE at the DENSE LINES coming their way.

CONSTANTINE
(turning to the soldiers)

Men!

Camera PANS to show us what Constantine is seeing: MANGLED BODIES AND BATTERED ARMOR WITH SUNKEN FACES COVERED IN BLOOD AND GORE. There is no rallying cry from the SOLDIERS anymore, they're barely able to hold their weapons upright.

CHURCH BELLS STOP RINGING.

A BYZANTINE FLAG flutters in the night breeze, it's perforated with BULLET HOLES.

Constantine turns his attention back on THE BATTERED SOLDIERS who are looking for him to say something, anything, that will put courage back into their hearts.

Silence.

Constantine looks to Giovanni, who looks away. The calm reassurance that Giovanni's worn the whole movie has been replaced with worry.

GIOVANNI
Get ready men!

LONG LINES OF TURKISH SOLDIERS APPROACH THE OUTER WALLS - The FRONT LINES break free in a run and they

CRASH INTO THE STOCKADE throwing dozens of scaling ladders against it - a few manage to make it up and over but are quickly CUT DOWN. CANNON SOUND OFF in the distance as axes, swords and heads go flying. THE REAR LINES advance and stop; lining up, they take careful aim at the top of the crenellated stockade and fire on command.

CONCENTRATED SNAP OF MUSKET FIRE.

DOZENS OF SOLDIERS FALL OFF THE TOP, TURK AND DEFENDER ALIKE.

Then the cannon begin firing at the stockade.

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM... The cannon begin to sound like corks of champagne being popped open.

THE EXPLOSIONS

CRASH

DIRECT HIT TO THE STOCKADE by one of the SUPER-GUNS.

Wood and dirt fly everywhere as the 800 pound ball shatters a large section of the wooden structure.

HIGH PITCH RINGING

CONSTANTINE KNOCKED TO THE GROUND. A SEVERED ARM NEXT TO HIM. He slowly gets on his knees and seeing the SEVERED ARM, grabs it, looking at his other arm just to make sure that it's still there.

CONSTANTINE'S POV

Heavy dust in the air. Everything is ORANGE-RED from all of the flares overhead. All we hear is high pitch ringing. The CAMERA jerks reflecting Constantine's uncertain footing. A SOLDIER approaches us, and tries to take the SEVERED ARM away but CONSTANTINE resists, hanging onto it: the SOLDIER is aghast. We brush past him. HERE COME THE TURKS - bursting through the hole and pouring inside the WALLS. A TURKISH SOLDIER is running straight at us and swings his sword at CONSTANTINE'S LEFT ARM causing him to drop the SEVERED ARM and grab the ATTACKER'S SWORD HILT. WE ARE WRESTLING WITH THE TURK when GIOVANNI'S AX SLAMS INTO THE ATTACKER'S HEAD killing him instantly and ENDING THE POV.

Constantine is in a daze.

GIOVANNI

Can you hear me?!

It doesn't look like he can. A TURK comes out of nowhere and TACKLES GIOVANNI TO THE GROUND. HE GETS GIOVANNI INTO A CHOKE HOLD. CONSTANTINE IS JUST WATCHING this happen until he suddenly comes to his senses and KICKS THE TURK in the head, knocking him off GIOVANNI. GIOVANNI QUICKLY ROLLS OVER on top of him AND SLITS HIS THROAT WITH A DAGGER.

GIOVANNI

(gasping, to Constantine)

You're back.

CONSTANTINE
(confused)
Have we won?

GIOVANNI
(coughing)
Small victory!

Giovanni motions for some of his GENOESE SOLDIERS to take Constantine away. Giovanni's coughing fit continues.

THEODORE KARYSTINOS
(to Giovanni)
Come on man!

Theodore grabs Giovanni by his LEFT ARM:

GIOVANNI
Goddamn it!

Breaking free of Theodore's hold.

GIOVANNI
Are you trying to cripple me!

Giovanni pulls out a flask and GULPS down the dark liquid.

FIGHTING GOES ON AROUND THEM. Theodore enters the FRAY of defenders holding back the Turkish tide.

BRUTAL HAND TO HAND FIGHTING.

A look of peace comes over Giovanni.

GIOVANNI
(relaxed)
Oh God, do you still love us?

EXT. INNER WALLS LYCUS VALLEY

Constantine has his back up against the INNER WALL. We can hear the awful fighting going on around us. Close, threatening, right around the corner. He still looks like he's in a daze... he CLOSES HIS EYES.

INT. STONE BUILDING ON ISLAND OF LEMNOS - BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

COMMOTION...

MAN'S VOICE
My Lord! Come, it is the end.

CONSTANTINE'S POV -- we follow a BLURRY, DARK FIGURE through STONE HALLWAYS. VOICES emerge from the corners uttering indistinct words. WHAT SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE DROPPING METAL TABLEWARE -- LOUD CLATTER.

CATERINA IS BEFORE US, LYING ON A SMALL BED, WHITE SILKEN SHEETS OVER HER. She's not smiling this time. CONSTANTINE'S HAND gently reaches down and Caterina grasps it, pulling it to her face.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

Why?

A tear streams down CATERINA'S ASHEN FACE. Her lips move, and what sounds like an ECHO says:

CATERINA

Soon...

More SOUNDS OF COMMOTION in the background.

Still in CONSTANTINE'S POV, he's turning to see where the noise is coming from when she YANKS HIS HAND to bring his attention back on her. She looks straight into our eyes but the softness is gone, it's been replaced by a look of steel.

CATERINA

(no echo this time, in a serious, deep voice)
Soon.

A beat.

CATERINA

We will be together.

EXT. INNER WALLS - END DREAM SEQUENCE

The fighting rages on, we can hear the CLANGING OF STEEL and the LOUD SNAPS OF MUSKETFIRE.

CONSTANTINE

(Opening his eyes)
I don't want to die!

He rises to his feet and collects himself.

CONSTANTINE

My love, I can't be with you now. Give me more time, God. I need more time.

OUTER WALL

Constantine slices at a TURKISH SOLDIER with his sword,
DECAPITATING the man: freshets of blood.

More TURKS keep piling in through the fresh hole. A GROUP OF
TURKISH MUSKETEERS takes aim and fires, sending bullets
WHIZZING by Constantine. A roar comes from the DEFENDERS and
they rush in to massacre the MUSKETEERS who are busy
reloading.

The young genoese soldier that Giovanni was comforting has
been shot through the neck and is bleeding out. Constantine
bends down to try to help him. A TURK lunges at Constantine
and a nearby GREEK SOLDIER tackles him onto the bloody
ground. With the Greek and Turk fighting in the BACKGROUND
we focus on Constantine and the young genoese soldier in the
FOREGROUND.

WHAM - the Greek punches the Turk in the face.

Constantine TAKES THE YOUNG MAN'S HEAD IN HIS HANDS.

CANNON sound off in the distance.

The TURK HEADBUTTS THE GREEK, and then begins ruthlessly
PUNCHING him.

YOUNG GENOESE SOLDIER
(barely alive)
Tell her I loved her, and only her...

CONSTANTINE
Sshh... she loves you.
(caressing his head)
It's ok child, you can go now, she loves
you.

Darkness comes over his eyes.

Desperate, the Greek kicks the Turk in the nuts, and elbows
him across the face, knocking teeth out.

TURKISH SOLDIER
AH!!!

The Greek grabs a nearby rock and SAVAGELY BEATS the Turk's
head to a pulp in the background, while in the foreground,
Constantine is gently setting down the young soldier's head.

Constantine pulls the Greek away from his head bashing.

CONSTANTINE
(to the Greek soldier, pointing
at the dead Turk on the ground)
He's dead!
(MORE)

CONSTANTINE (cont'd)
(pointing at the Turks in front
of them)

They're not.

The Greek soldier comes to his senses. Theodore joins them, out of breath. Constantine leads the trio forward to:

A MELEE OF DEATH: Swords swinging everywhere, axes too, muskets firing. There are shouts, cries, sobbing. It's still dark out, the TURKISH FLARES streaming overhead are the only source of light. Into this melee of death the THREE enter. We lose sight of them in the darkness and confusion.

TIME LAPSE to:

5 AM flashes on the SCREEN in BOLD LETTERS

FILLING THE FRAME before us is the HILT OF A SWORD. The fires in the background provide just enough light to make out its shape, it looks like a CROSS. As we PULL BACK we see that the sword is stuck deep in a TURK'S BELLY, and there's A WALL OF DEAD before us. Onto this pile of humanity a fortification is being hastily constructed with rubble, earth and anything else the defenders can get their hands on.

TURKISH FRONT LINES - CONTINUOUS

CUT TO Mehmet who's mounted on his brilliant white Arabian stallion. He looks disappointed by what he sees. Zaganos is mounted on a horse next to him and is covered in the grime of war.

MEHMET

(to Zaganos, without looking at
him)

Enough! Assail them with everything and
then send in the Janissaries.

Zaganos motions to an AIDE next to him and the cannons begin erupting with an awful violence. We're FOCUSED ON the HEADS OF MEHMET AND ZAGANOS when the firing starts: Zaganos doesn't flinch a bit when the cannons start firing in the near background - sending out their flames into the night sky - while Mehmet jumps in his saddle, lowering his head and covering his ears with displeasure.

MEHMET

(shouting over the cannon fire)

I will take this city, damn you! You
hear me!

Zaganos coolly nods.

The SUPER-GUNS begin firing and the ground shakes. Mehmet takes a long look at Zaganos and is about to wheel his horse around when ZAGANOS grabs the reigns from him.

ZAGANOS
(to Mehmet, shouting over the
cannon fire)
My Lord!

MEHMET
(annoyed)
What?

ZAGANOS
You must lead them in, my Lord. You will
have only one chance.

MEHMET
For what?

ZAGANOS
(smiling)
To be remembered forever! You must lead
from the front when we take her!

MEHMET
When I take her?

ZAGANOS
(still smiling)
Yes, when you take her my Lord!

The cannon fire is too great now and it drowns out the rest of what's being said. As Zaganos and Mehmet look out towards the WALLS we see a panorama of destruction: CANNONS throwing out stone balls with orange fire, those balls creating huge clouds of dust when they impact while dozens of trebuchets arc their flaming incendiary bombs into the night sky.

Amidst all this violence THOUSANDS OF JANISSARIES are beginning to form up into dense ranks. In the EARLY MORNING LIGHT - still more night than dawn - we see a SEA OF WHITE BORK CAPS.

The firing stops.

The Janissary Army begins moving forward with Mehmet in the lead on his white horse.

All we hear is the slow, ordered marching of thousands of feet.

EXT. OUTER WALLS - CONTINUOUS

The sun's still below the horizon, but dawn's peeking through.

MARCHING SOUND is ominous as the DEFENDERS hurriedly to try to patch up the fresh holes in the OUTER WALL and its WOODEN STOCKADES - they're struggling past exhaustion.

GIOVANNI
(looking out at the sea of white
bork caps coming at them)
All love is lost.
(LOOKING AT CONSTANTINE who's
helping with the repairs)
You doubted, you fool, and now God has
abandoned us.

Giovanni pulls out his FLASK and empties it, some of the dark liquid spilling down his chin. He throws it away.

SOLDIER'S VOICE
Sir, they're almost in range!

GIOVANNI
(starting to slur)
Wait for my command!

EXT. TURKSIH FRONT LINES - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA moves with the THOUSANDS OF BOBBING WHITE CAPS that are perfectly ordered in their lock and step.

MEHMET PULLS BACK, watching the Janissaries file past him.

BACK ON Giovanni calmly looking out at the nightmare before him.

GIOVANNI
(without expression)
Fire!

BACK ON the Janissaries

SERIES OF BOOMS

WALNUT-SIZE SHOT RIPS THROUGH THE JANISSARY FRONT LINES. The shot tear through the soldiers like they're made of paper, punching through shields, armor, and bodies like they're nothing. THREE JANISSARIES are dropped by a single piece. Heads are made into bloody pulps. Limbs are neatly removed. The survivors keep marching on like nothing's happened.

Mehmet is surrounded by a guard of Janissaries forming a protective circle around him.

Someone shouts out ARROWS, and they quickly raise their shields to protect him. An iron umbrella darkens Mehmet's features in the growing dawn.

DOZENS OF JANISSARIES are cut down by the hail of arrows, but they keep coming...

The CRESCENT MOON makes the polished armor and weapons shine with a beautiful, white light. Their white caps look like waves of whitecaps rolling in the dark ocean.

TURKISH MARTIAL MUSIC fills the air. As the Janissaries approach the filled-in moat their pace quickens and they slam into the OUTER WALLS and WOODEN STOCKADES like a tsunami. Scaling ladder after scaling ladder rises upwards.

TURKISH MUSKETEERS fire at DEFENDERS on top of the WALLS. We hear the balls shatter and ricochet off stone.

Out of the chaos we FOCUS IN on one of the Janissaries - a GIANT OF A MAN - who springs up the ladder with superhuman quickness and hurls himself to the top and over! Giovanni is there and swings his heavy battle ax into the giant who grabs the handle of the blade and tumbles off the defenders' side of the rampart, pulling Giovanni with him.

GIOVANNI AND THE GIANT LAND WITH A HARD THUD. The giant's bleeding from his side. Giovanni rolls off him and Constantine's suddenly there, spearing the giant before he can get up. A host of GREEK SOLDIERS come over and join their emperor in skewering the now dead giant turk.

CONSTANTINE

(to the soldiers around him)

No more get over!

Constantine looks for Giovanni, but he's gone.

OUTER WALLS

HUNDREDS UPON HUNDREDS OF DARK SHAPES are scaling to the top. Stones and greek fire pummel them, but to no avail, they just keep coming...

BLARING WHISTLES sound. The attacking JANISSARIES begin a quick, orderly retreat. Hot on their heels is a FRESH WAVE OF JANISSARIES and the whole thing starts over: A WAVE OF WHITE POURS into the LYCUS VALLEY and strikes against the WALLS to the incessant pounding rhythms of Turkish martial music. From our upper vantage point, it looks like a LIQUID is spilling against a surface and spreading out; looking closer, however, we see that some of the liquid is escaping INTO THE WALLS...

EXT. OUTER WALLS, KERKOPORTA GATE

DOZENS OF JANISSARIES are pouring through a SMALL GATE - SALLY-PORT. The DEFENDERS there are overpowered.

EXT. OUTER WALLS, LYCUS VALLEY

We're seeing what CONSTANTINE is seeing: A TURKISH FLAG flying from the OUTER WALL BATTLEMENTS near the PALACE.

SOLDIER

(to Constantine)

My Lord! I've just come from there, they haven't broken through!

CONSTANTINE

Are they past the Inner Wall?!

SOLDIER

Not yet.

CONSTANTINE

How did it happen?!

SOLDIER

Someone forgot to lock the door!

SUN IS RISING

CONSTANTINE picks up a discarded TURKISH SHIELD. As he reaches the TOP OF THE BATTLEMENT a JANISSARY comes at him, he deflects the blow with his shield while a nearby GREEK SOLDIER slices into the attacker below the belt, causing him to peel away and join the PILES OF DEAD down below. Arrows are flying everywhere. Constantine's SHIELD absorbs two crossbow bolts with LOUD THUDS. A JANISSARY reaches the top of the battlement and Constantine tries to knock him back but the Janissary grabs the shield, pulling Constantine over the edge with him. Constantine lets go of the shield just in time as the Janissary falls over. CONSTANTINE raises his long-sword to deflect a blow, but a nearby JANISSARY GRABS THE HILT of Constantine's sword and he's overpowered. GIOVANNI APPEARS OUT OF NOWHERE and slices into the attacker with his ax. Constantine is too worn out and lets go of his sword to PUNCH the Janissary over the side. CONSTANTINE'S SWORD IS GONE. At this moment a MUSKET BALL SLAMS INTO THE BACK OF GIOVANNI'S LEFT ARM and travels into his cuirass with an AWFUL CRUNCHING SOUND. Giovanni drops his heavy ax and slowly collapses to his knees. Constantine doesn't see this happen, he's picked up a CURVED JANISSARY SWORD and is exchanging blows.

CONSTANTINE'S POV

Time's slowed down. The clashing of swords in front of us sounds like musical instruments, or maybe it's just the Turkish martial music blaring in the background. We're in Constantine's body as it swings into a deadly arc deflecting a blow and then turning quickly into the ATTACKER to deliver a mortal hit. In front of us a GROUP OF GENOESE SOLDIERS is CARRYING SOMEONE off the battlements and away.

CONSTANTINE'S VOICE

Giovanni! Where are you?!

THEODORE'S VOICE

He's been hit!

END CONSTANTINE'S POV

Constantine rushes down the battlement, arrows flying past him.

Constantine pushes through the RETREATING GENOESE.

INNER WALL GATE

CONSTANTINE

Where are you going?

GIOVANNI

Where God himself will lead these Turks.

CONSTANTINE

Leave your men with me!

GIOVANNI

They are free to choose...

The GENOESE SOLDIERS PUSH CONSTANTINE OUT OF THE WAY. He stands there in shock as GIOVANNI IS CARRIED THROUGH THE INNER WALL GATE.

SOLDIER'S VOICE

The City is taken!

The stream of FLEEING SOLDIERS turns into a flood. Italian and Greek alike begin pushing their way through the narrow gate.

EXT. TURKISH FRONT LINES - CONTINUOUS

Zaganos is intensely watching the fighting on the STOCKADE.

ZAGANOS

(to Radu Bey)

Something has changed up there!

Radu can't hear him over the marital din.

ZAGANOS

Something has changed! Do you see it too?!

RADU BEY

Their numbers seem less!

ZAGANOS

Yes, the city is ours!
(turning to the Janissaries)
Hasan! Are you ready to die for your Sultan?!

We've seen this giant before when he executed the ambassador: seven feet of brooding muscle with no smile.

ZAGANOS

(grinning)
I think he is.
(to Radu)
Send them in!

Radu salutes and barks out a command that sends Hasan and THIRTY JANISSARIES rushing forward.

SCALING LADDERS rise up and Hasan quickly reaches the top, grabbing the lance of a DEFENDER and throwing him over while SPEARING ANOTHER DEFENDER trying to stop him. He's on top of the battlement now. Theodore rushes at him and Hasan easily deflects the blow with his ax and is about to crush Theodore when a GREEK SOLDIER stabs him in the liver. More GREEK SOLDIERS swing at Hasan turning him into a bloody mess. But while everyone's preoccupied with stabbing Hasan his THIRTY JANISSARIES ARE CLIMBING UP AND OVER.

The tide is turning.

MORE AND MORE JANISSARIES are on top of the BATTLEMENTS.

INNER WALL GATE

Constantine is desperately trying to close the gate, but he can't, there's too many SOLDIERS escaping through it. A GREEK SOLDIER pushes Constantine out of the way and knocks him to the ground.

The JANISSARIES are now between the OUTER and INNER WALLS. A loyal contingent of GREEK TROOPS are struggling to hold them back.

THEODORE KARYSTINOS
(helping Constantine to his feet)
My Lord! What do we do?

Constantine brushes off mud and gore from his face. He calmly begins to TAKE HIS ARMOR OFF.

Theodore registers a look of understanding.

Constantine takes a long, hard look at the AWFUL VIOLENCE inching towards them; he looks up and we see:

CRESCENT MOON hanging majestically in the smoke filled, early morning sky.

CONSTANTINE
Rosy fingered dawn, this is the last time we shall see each other. To you God, I commend my soul, but I give my heart to another.

(to Theodore)
Go! Hurry! Make sure she's out of the Palace. Help George protect her. She carries something very valuable, worth the world to me.

THEODORE KARYSTINOS
My Lord! I can't leave you!

CONSTANTINE
(crying)
If you love me, you will do what I say. Now go!

PUSHING HIM AWAY

CONSTANTINE
Go!

THEODORE ESCAPES through the crowded gate.

Constantine wipes the tears from his face, GRABS A DISCARDED SWORD and walks forward to join the futile resistance. The JANISSARIES are starting to break through the THIN GREEK LINE and come at Constantine with a mad fury; he calmly dispatches a YOUNG JANISSARY with cold efficiency. Another JANISSARY SWINGS - Constantine PARRIES the blows but is WOUNDED in the leg -; his attacker is suddenly pushed forward and out of sight by a SWARM OF JANISSARIES rushing past Constantine like he's in the EYE OF A HURRICANE.

NIGHTMARE: His sword is KNOCKED from his hands... TRAPPED.

A long beat as they continue to RACE PAST CONSTANTINE - oblivious to who he is and seeing only the OPEN GATE before them - their WHITE BORK CAPS look like a surging river of white in the early morning light.

CONSTANTINE
(full of despair)
Kill me!

His plea is finally heard: TWO JANISSARIES take notice and stop just long enough to HAMMER him in the front and back dropping HIM TO HIS KNEES where he's quickly KNOCKED OVER by the rushing bodies.

CLOSE ON CONSTANTINE'S FACE lying in the dirt, he's still alive as COUNTLESS FEET TRAMPLE HIM into the bloody ground. So many FEET that we lose sight of CONSTANTINE and it becomes a BLUR OF MOTION...

EXT. TURKISH FRONT LINES - MORNING

CONSTANTINOPLE lies before us, from a distance it appears calm and quiet. The smoke has cleared and we can see the TERRIBLE DAMAGE TO THE WALLS.

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN
(to Mehmet)
Truly, you are the Sword of Islam. You have succeeded where all the hosts of Islam spread out over all the ages failed.

Mehmet wears a Mona-Lisa smile.

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN
Shall we reclaim the Tomb of the Companion of the Prophet?

MEHMET
That can wait. I want to see my City first.

Radu Bey approaches Mehmet

RADU BEY
(bowing down before Mehmet)
My Sultan.

MEHMET
Rise. Speak.

RADU BEY
A delegation of notable captives wishes to see you.

Mehmet laughs.

MEHMET

They can wait. I am not in the mood to hear tales of misfortune. Where is my Grand Vizier?

RADU BEY

(head bowed)

He is coming, my Lord.

MEHMET

Tell him to hurry up. I want to enter my city while there's still something left!

EXT. HAGIA SOPHIA

HUNDREDS OF TURKS are attacking the GIANT BRONZE DOORS of the church.

INT. HAGIA SOPHIA - CONTINUOUS

The church is full of REFUGEES and a service of Matins is being sung by the frightened multitude who are praying, singing, crying, clinging to one another, scared out of their minds.

BOOM BOOM BOOM... The TURKS relentlessly keep up their attack on the doors. The CLANG OF THEIR WEAPONS RESOUNDING inside the giant space.

BAM!

AWFUL CREAKING SOUND

Everyone stops singing except for the PRIESTS.

The TURKS cautiously enter. There's no resistance and they begin to RAPE AND PILLAGE. WOMEN are torn from their HUSBANDS. CHILDREN are torn from their parents. MEN are killed. We see a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN thrown up against a wall and raped. We see an OLD WOMAN sliced in half. THE FLOOR quickly becomes slick with blood. While this is happening the PRIESTS continue with the mass, shouting above the cries and screams of their congregation.

TURKS advance towards the HIGH ALTAR and finally kill the priests, grabbing the gold plated PATENS and CHALICES.

Fights break out amongst the TURKS over who gets what - CAPTIVES are being pulled every which way. Some of the WOMEN are being tied together with their veils and scarves.

FOCUS ON a CRYING CHILD in a pool of blood, a BOOT enters the frame and we see

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH OF THE HOLY SAVIOR, CHORA

HOLY ICON is before us on an altar surrounded by burning candles and flowers. TURKS come into frame and one of them takes the ICON from its pedestal and throws it on the ground while another takes his sword and HACKS IT INTO FOUR PIECES. Candles are overturned and anything of value is grabbed.

ABOVE THE ALTAR there's an ICON OF AN ANGEL watching this happen, it's fiery eyes seeming to burn.

SCREAMING EVERYWHERE

EXT. CHURCH OF THE HOLY SAVIOR, CHORA - CONTINUOUS

Outside, an ORTHODOX NUN is standing at the edge of a giant well-shaft. She's so beautiful that DOZENS OF TURKS are begging her with hand gestures to step away so they can enjoy her. She turns her eyes up upwards and FALLS INTO THE DEEP HOLE where she lands with a crunching THUD on her SISTERS' BODIES.

INT. BLACHERNAE PALACE. BEDCHAMBER

With a WHOOSH the massive wood doors swing open, TURKS rush in, but Caelina is nowhere to be seen.

COMMOTION

EXT. GATE OF ROMANUS - OUTER WALL - AFTERNOON

MEHMET IS RIDING THROUGH THE BATTERED GATE with Zaganos and Sheikh Ak Shemseddin close behind him. The three of them are surrounded by COUNTLESS JANISSARIES and ARCHERS. PILES OF DEAD are everywhere and we can hear the buzzing of flies. The STENCH is overwhelming and Mehmet covers his mouth with a fine piece of purple linen. A EUNUCH notices this and rushes over to help him but Mehmet brushes him aside; Zaganos nudges his horse close to Mehmet's and tenderly ties the linen cloth around his neck, carefully adjusting it so that it rides on his nose. Mehmet nods in appreciation and they continue their journey through the carnage.

EXT. MESE

The Sultan and his entourage are traveling down the main thoroughfare of the city. Everywhere there's death and destruction. RANSACKED HOUSES have LITTLE FLAGS planted in front of them with insignias.

We recognize the HOUSE OF THE LITTLE GIRL... it's door is broken down and there's only darkness inside. TRAINS OF SAD CAPTIVES pass by with their TURKISH MASTERS bowing down as Mehmet rides past them. The DEAD are everywhere, men, women and children. MEHMET stops to look at something on the ground, he has a SOLDIER grab it for him, and holding it in his hand we see it's: THE NECKLACE WITH CONSTANTINE'S MOTHER ENGRAVED ON IT.

MEHMET

(holding the necklace)

My God, what a city we have given over to plundering and destruction.

ZAGANOS

It is God's will, Great Sultan.

MEHMET

(dismissive)

God willing this, doesn't make it any easier to see.

Mehmet briefly examines the necklace's metal:

CLOSE ON his hands feeling the IRON RINGS.

He tosses it aside.

Looking down the thoroughfare we see the GREAT DOME of HAGIA SOPHIA rise up in the distance in the late afternoon sky.

EXT. HAGIA SOPHIA

The Sheikh is thanking God in Arabic. The CHURCH STEPS are being washed clean of blood by A LARGE GROUP OF TURKISH SOLDIERS.

Mehmet dismounts, helped by SERVANTS who also untie the linen from his face. He stands for a long minute in front of the ancient church, gazing up at its GIANT STRUCTURE. Then he stoops down to pick up a HANDFUL OF DIRT and raising it above his head sprinkles it over his PERFECTLY WHITE TURBAN. The Sheikh nods approval and gestures for Mehmet to ascend the washed steps with him. All of the SOLDIERS bow down as the Sultan slowly walks up the steps of the great church with his Chief Imam, the Sheikh, two steps behind him.

INT. HAGIA SOPHIA - CONTINUOUS

Entering through the battered and broken bronze doors, Mehmet is greeted by a mostly empty structure. The blood and gore have been cleaned up and it's as if nothing happened here. But suddenly there's a RINGING NOISE coming from somewhere inside...

NAVE

A TURKISH SOLDIER is hacking away at the marble floor with his sword.

MEHMET
(to the vandal)
You would strike what is mine?!

The soldier registers who's shouting at him and quickly runs away.

Mehmet turns around to look at the Sheikh who bows his head. He grabs the Sheikh's chin and gently raises it:

MEHMET
(looking him in the eyes)
Go, do your God thing.

The Sheikh scurries off and ascends the ALTAR, the same altar where the priests were just killed at.

Zaganos and a number of soldiers and janissaries have entered the church and see MEHMET BOWING DOWN, they take their cue and bow down with him as the Sheikh cries out:

SHEIKH AK SHEMSEDDIN
(in Arabic)
There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his Prophet!

CUT TO a HUGE WHITE TURBAN filling the frame. The TURBAN rises up and we REVERSE ANGLE to see MEHMET'S FACE with a LOOK OF CONTENTMENT.

EXT. HAGIA SOPHIA - EVENING

TURKISH SOLDIERS are on top of the huge dome dismantling the GIANT GOLDEN CROSS. Warning their comrades down below, they break it free and it TUMBLES OFF the dome, bouncing on the edge and finally CRASHING TO THE GROUND. A SWARM OF LOOTERS descends on it.

A beat as we dissolve to black.

What sounds like SAILS FLAPPING IN THE WIND...

FADE IN

EXT. NEAR GATE OF ROMANUS - DAY

BODY after BODY is being thrown into a large ditch. A couple of CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY SOLDIERS reach down and roughly handle CONSTANTINE'S CORPSE... It's a mess.

Flies are everywhere and the stench is awful. We recognize one of the soldiers from earlier in the movie when he was almost whipped to death by the Janissary, we'll refer to him as "CHRISTIAN DOG."

CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY SOLDIER
(muffled by the towel around his
face)
Wait, is this him?

CHRISTIAN DOG
(setting the corpse down for a
closer look)
I can't tell, where's his armor?

CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY SOLDIER
(looking around)
Someone must have took it.

CHRISTIAN DOG
(from a distance we see him
examining the corpses's head)
He has scars on the right side of his
face. This was the last place he was
seen...

CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY SOLDIER
(hushed)
You think they should come take a look?

CHRISTIAN DOG
Fuck them.

CHRISTIAN AUXILLARY SOLDIER
Our secret then?

CHRISTIAN DOG
Yeah: The Immortal Emperor.

They see a TURK approaching.

CHRISTIAN DOG
(lowering his voice)
Besides, you think they'd give the reward
to us christian dogs.

The men share a laugh and quickly resume their burying -
throwing Constantine into the mass grave.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN FAR EASTERN TURKEY

A LONG TRAIN OF CAPTIVES is making its way in the SHADOW OF A
MOUNTAIN.

Months have passed and it's late summer now - a RIPE APPLE TREE greets them as they slowly pass under its branches.

We see a VERY PREGNANT WOMAN approach: her hands are bound together and she's tied to the people in front and back of her with THICK CORD ROPES. As she gets closer we see that it's: CAELINA. She passes in front of the camera and looks straight at us - framed by the RED APPLE TREE:

CAELINA

(looking down at her protruding belly)

Someday you will drive them from our city back to this tree.

(looking up to the sky)

Your dad will help you.

THE END