

**THE SHROUD**

EPISODE 4

"ASCENSION DAY"

by

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THE SHROUD. EPISODE 4. ASCENSION DAY.

**INT. UNDERGROUND CELLAR - NIGHT**

BATELLO waits alone in a dark cellar, leaning against a wall, nervously rubbing his fingers.

NICO suddenly bursts into the room.

BATELLO  
Well?

NICO  
They're dead.

BATELLO  
Who?

NICO  
All of them.

This floors Batello.

BATELLO  
All of them?!

NICO  
Charny killed three of them himself.

Batello backs up into the wall, perplexed.

BATELLO  
Impossible.

NICO  
Damn you Batello, I warned you  
against this.

Batello snaps out of it. Looks at his brother.

BATELLO  
What did you say?

NICO  
Your temperment will sink us before  
we ever set foot on the crusader  
ship.

Batello slams Nico up against the wall, knife to his throat.

BATELLO  
I'll kill Charny myself.

NICO  
Are you even listening to me? We  
will not survive the night if you  
continue down this path.

BATELLO  
He knows, Nico.

NICO  
Knows what?

BATELLO  
About Sforza. Zeno. All of it.

NICO  
You're raving.

BATELLO  
It's only a matter of time before  
word reaches that withered old  
bishop Asti. We'll be hung for  
murder.

Nico stares horrified into Batello's feral eyes.

NICO  
My God... Men have spoken of your  
madness. I've always turned a blind  
eye to it... but now I see...

BATELLO  
You act surprised, brother. As if  
it's some stranger who looks upon  
you now.

Nico says nothing, cornered into silence.

Batello lowers his knife.

BATELLO  
The fleet leaves the city tomorrow.  
So we must act now. Before sunrise.

He walks away.

BATELLO  
Charny dies tonight. By my hand.

CUT TO - TITLES: **THE SHROUD**

**EXT. LAVATORY - NIGHT**

CHARNY, face still bloodied from the end of last episode,  
stops near a barrel of water.

He pauses a moment. Hears something. Looks around.

Nothing but darkness in the moonlight.

He crouches over, splashes cold muddy water on his face and across the back of his neck.

He stops again. Alert.

**EXT. STREETS - NIGHT**

Batello makes his way quietly down a deserted cobblestone street. He turns a corner, spots Charny, and immediately ducks back behind the corner.

Slowly he peeks his head out again, watches Charny splash water from the barrel.

Charny moves off, continues down the street.

Batello rounds the corner quietly and follows.

Charny stops at a wooden door. Takes another look around. Then heads inside.

Batello moves toward the door.

**INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT**

Charny walks through a dark storage space, boat parts and shipping crates piled up along the walls.

Batello follows silently, using the crates for cover.

Charny suddenly stops in the middle of an empty space. Stands rigid. Alone.

Batello grins. Sees his opening. Slips out his knife.

Just as he emerges from behind cover, he suddenly sees--

HAROUN -- walking up to meet Charny.

Batello immediately slips back behind cover. Watches the two men curiously.

HAROUN  
Gratitude for meeting me.

CHARNY  
(impatient)  
Get on with it.

HAROUN  
Does my saving your life not merit  
some sort of leniency?

CHARNY  
It merits you a chance to explain  
yourself.

HAROUN  
I only wish to--

CHARNY  
I know what you "wish". What I don't  
know is how you were aware of my  
purpose here.

HAROUN  
As I said, I have watched you during  
your time in Cyprus--

Charny suddenly GRABS HAROUN'S TUNIC--

CHARNY  
You test my patience, Saracen. How  
do you know about the shroud?

Batello raises an eyebrow.

HAROUN  
I intercepted your letters to the  
Christian abbot.

Charny simmers with fury.

CHARNY  
My letters to Stefano?

HAROUN  
I was careful to reseal them--

Charny suddenly HEADBUTTS HIM -- Haroun goes STUMBLING BACK,  
wipes blood from his nose.

CHARNY  
Those were private.

HAROUN  
They reached their intended  
destination nonetheless. I made sure  
of it.

Charny LUNGES at him, LANDS A FIST on Haroun's jaw. He LUNGES  
AGAIN -- but Haroun is quicker this time, DRIVES AN UPPERCUT  
which sends Charny reeling--

Batello stays crouched behind the crate, watching this with fascination.

Charny rights himself, fists clenched. Through gritted teeth--

CHARNY  
Christian parchment... tainted with  
heretic hands...

Haroun grips his sword hilt.

HAROUN  
Why do you care? You are godless.  
Same as I.

Charny calms down. Unclenches his fists. Haroun lets go of his sword.

HAROUN  
We are both of us heretics now.

He steps closer, urgency in his voice.

HAROUN  
I must board your ship.

CHARNY  
(scoffs)  
You've lost your mind as well as  
your faith.

HAROUN  
Can you do it?

CHARNY  
The bishop keeps a manifest of each  
galley. Counted to the last man.

HAROUN  
Then I can take someone's place.

Charny bursts into laughter.

CHARNY  
You can hardly pass as a Christian.

HAROUN  
I have done it before.

Charny's face turns grim.

CHARNY  
The monk is alive?

HAROUN  
Gianluca, yes. And the shroud he  
carries is untouched.

Charny turns away. Ponders this a moment.

Batello waits in his hidden corner.

Charny looks Haroun over.

CHARNY  
Lose the hair. And the beard.

HAROUN  
The hair only.

CHARNY  
(nods)  
Fine.

HAROUN  
Who will be removed from the  
manifest?

CHARNY  
Leave that to me.

He starts walking away.

CHARNY  
Just be at the harbor at first  
light, ready to leave.

Haroun is about to go. But stops a moment.

HAROUN  
I am Haroun.

CHARNY  
Charny.

Haroun smiles.

HAROUN  
I know who you are.

Haroun walks off. Charny watches him go, then leaves as well.

Behind his crate, Batello leans back. Stunned.

**INT. UNDERGROUND CELLAR - NIGHT**

Batello bursts into the underground cellar, where Nico is  
waiting.

NICO  
Well? Is it done?

BATELLO  
Change of plans. Charny lives... for  
now.

He turns to Nico, that sinister grin as always.

BATELLO  
It seems we are not the only ones  
with secrets...

**INT. TAVERN - NIGHT**

Charny enters the local tavern. Most of the soldiers have gone, a few linger here and there, some passed out, some more inebriated than others.

Charny spots one of the men passed out, head flat on the table. He shakes him.

CHARNY  
Come on, Roberge.

ROBERGE grumbles. Barely conscious.

Charny takes his arm, wraps it over his shoulder, hoists him up.

CHARNY  
I said come on.

**EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT**

Charny carries Roberge outside, mostly dragging him.

**INT. STABLES - MOMENTS LATER**

Charny carries him into some nearby horse stables.

CHARNY  
You're a decent enough fellow,  
Roberge...

He drops him in a pile of hay.

CHARNY  
...but somewhat lacking with a  
sword.

Roberge continues sleeping on the hay.

CHARNY  
I'm sorry.



**EXT. STABLES - NIGHT**

Charny walks out the door. Shuts it and bolts it with a board of wood. Takes a last look around. Then moves off into the shadows.

**EXT. GERACE CATHEDRAL - DAY**

CALABRIA, ITALY

Establishing shot of a somewhat modest church on a small hilltop.

**INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY**

Quiet and empty inside.

A man kneels before a crucifix. Eyes closed. Hands clasped in prayer. Dressed in the simple brown robes of a monk. This is **BARLAAM**.

VOICE (O.S)  
Your Eminence...

Barlaam opens his eyes. A priest stands by the door.

PRIEST  
You are summoned.

Barlaam sulks, as if a new burden has been dropped on his shoulders.

**INT. SACRISTY - MOMENTS LATER**

Barlaam stands on a small pedestal as a pair of priests attend to his clothes, ceremoniously dressing him in the extravagant white dress of a Catholic bishop.

**EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY**

Barlaam steps outside, where a horse-drawn carriage is waiting for him, the priests escorting him.

Just before he steps into the carriage, he stops. Takes a last look back at the church. Already longing for it.

With a sigh he climbs into the carriage.

**EXT. PALAIS DES PAPES - DAYS LATER**

AVIGNON, FRANCE

A horse-drawn carriage pulls up. Barlaam climbs out, looks up in disgust at the enormous, grandiose palace.

**INT. POPE'S CHAMBERS - DAY**

A cardinal escorts Barlaam to the doorway.

CARDINAL  
His Eminence, Bishop Barlaam.

Barlaam is horrified to find POPE CLEMENT VI sitting in an ornate bath, naked beneath the water, being bathed by a pair of androgynous-looking servants. He spreads his arms in delight.

POPE CLEMENT VI  
Barlaam of Calabria. Welcome to  
Avignon.

Barlaam steps closer. Drops to one knee. Kisses Clement's ring.

BARLAAM  
Holiness.

Barlaam stands up, fighting the urge to wipe his mouth.

POPE CLEMENT VI  
Does this make you uncomfortable,  
bishop?

BARLAAM  
You are the vicar of Christ,  
Holiness.

POPE CLEMENT VI  
Even the Lord Christ had to bathe  
himself now and then.

Barlaam bites down on his lip, suppressing his revulsion.

BARLAAM  
You summoned me, Holiness.

POPE CLEMENT VI  
The Church thanks you for making the  
trip. We trust it was not too  
difficult.

BARLAAM  
It was what it was.

POPE CLEMENT VI  
(chuckles)  
A scholar to the last.

Clement stands up, dripping. Barlaam turns his gaze away as the servants cover him with a robe.

The pontiff motions for the servants to leave as he pours himself a drink.

POPE CLEMENT VI

Wine?

Barlaam shakes his head, getting fidgety.

BARLAAM

Is there something I can do for you, Holiness?

POPE CLEMENT VI

On with it, eh? Very well. We need you to go to Constantinople.

Barlaam shudders at this.

BARLAAM

Holiness, I must protest--

POPE CLEMENT VI

We are well aware of your history with the Byzantines. And that is exactly why it must be you.

BARLAAM

With due respect, Holiness, I exist there as a pariah, no better than the worms who crawl beneath the earth.

POPE CLEMENT VI

You allude to a past which is settled. Your former rival, Gregory Palamas, is in prison. Is that not so?

BARLAAM

Still, my presence there may yet stir up some memories best forgotten.

POPE CLEMENT VI

As we recall, you did recant your... Orthodox ways, did you not?

Barlaam turns away. Nods grudgingly.

Clement puts down his cup. Steps closer.

POPE CLEMENT VI

We would not have summoned you if this task was not of the utmost importance. The success of our holy crusade rests on your assignment there. The Archbishop Henri desperately needs their ships.

He leans in closer.

POPE CLEMENT VI

The Empress will listen to you. And you alone.

Barlaam finally meets his gaze. Resigned to his duty.

**EXT. SEA PORT - DAY**

NEGROPONTE, GREECE

The soldiers of the assembled crusader armies are making their way on small boats toward the massive warships drifting off shore.

**EXT. CYPRIOT SHIP - SAME**

A papal soldier with a wooden board takes a head count as the Cypriot knights climb single file onto the galley. BEAUJEU stands beside him, supervising.

Charny, in armored chainmail and helmeted, is the next soldier who climbs aboard.

PAPAL SOLDIER

Geoffroi de Charny.

Beaujeu proudly pats his friend on the shoulder as he passes.

The next soldier climbs aboard. He wears a knight's helmet with a noseguard, not easy to make out the face, but we catch a glimpse of Haroun's black beard.

PAPAL SOLDIER

Roberge Tetreux.

Haroun nods as he passes them, Beaujeu eyeing him curiously.

Charny waits, nervous.

Beaujeu lets him pass. Charny breathes a sigh of relief. He leans in to Haroun, mutters quietly--

CHARNY

Get below deck and try to stay out of sight.

Haroun nods and heads off.

**EXT. SEA PORT - DAY**

At the edge of the harbor stand the crusade leaders -- HENRI, ZACCARIA, and ZENO -- watching as the last of the soldiers make their way to the waiting ships.

ZACCARIA  
How many galleys does that make?

ZENO  
Twenty.

ZACCARIA  
We were promised more. The Turks easily have three, even four times that number.

HENRI  
Keep faith, Martino. We will get them.

ZACCARIA  
When?

Henri stares off into the endless waters.

HENRI  
(quietly)  
Soon, I pray...

**EXT. AEGEAN SEA - LATER THAT DAY**

THE TWENTY GALLEYS of the papal crusade sail across the vast open waters of the Aegean.

**EXT. CYPRIOT SHIP - DAY**

Beaujeu sits alone on a bench. His mind far away.

CHARNY (O.S)  
Nervous?

Beaujeu looks up to find Charny standing there, smiling. He takes a seat beside Beaujeu.

BEAUJEU  
You think it would get easier.

He looks Charny over.

BEAUJEU

You're the veteran knight. You've been on more of these things than I have. How would you answer that?

Charny smiles. Looks out at the water.

CHARNY

Never gets easier.

He turns his gaze back at Beaujeu.

CHARNY

If killing a man should ever reach a place of comfort, then that is when we must question our humanity.

Beaujeu nods. Follows Charny's gaze out at the water.

BEAUJEU

Last year, when we left your home... what you said, about my tryst with Queen Joan... it struck a nerve...

CHARNY

Edward, that was not my place--

BEAUJEU

But you were right. I have not been loyal. To the king. The queen. Nor myself.

Charny nods. Lets him continue.

BEAUJEU

I keep thinking that is why Philip assigned me to Cyprus. Because he knew.

CHARNY

He sent you to Cyprus because you are a good soldier. One of his best.

BEAUJEU

Were it only true. We all know who is the best soldier here.

He pats Charny on the shoulder. Then his face goes grim.

BEAUJEU

I'm married, Geoffrey.

Charny's eyes go wide. Leans back, stunned.

BEAUJEU

Her name is Marie. A priest married us in Paris shortly before our departure, therefore our union is recognized by the Church. But I never told the court. Nor you.

He buries his head in his hands.

BEAUJEU

I'm sorry.

Charny suddenly realizes--

CHARNY

Did you join the crusade to be forgiven of your sins?

Beaujeu nods sadly.

BEAUJEU

I must admit, this was the reason at first. But now I wonder if even fighting for God would be enough.

Charny grips his shoulder.

CHARNY

Then fight for yourself. And for Marie.

Beaujeu smiles. Turns toward Charny.

BEAUJEU

Is that why you fight? For yourself?  
Or for Jeanne?

Charny offers a weak smile, unsure how to respond.

He gazes out stoically into the waters.

**INT. PERTHUIS CHAPEL - DAY**

The town chapel is mostly empty save for a parishioner scattered here and there.

Among them we find JEANNE, knelt in prayer. Eyes closed.

She makes the sign of the cross. Opens her eyes. Gets up to leave.

**EXT. CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER**

Jeanne steps outside. Pauses a moment to take in the townspeople milling, going about their day.

She starts to head off.

VOICE (O.S)  
Jeanne--

Jeanne turns to find--

GABRIEL -- standing just at the edge of the chapel. He wears simple layman's clothing.

JEANNE  
Father Gabriel?!

She steps closer, awkwardly giving him a quick hug.

JEANNE  
Should I fetch Stefano--?

GABRIEL  
NO -- Jeanne--

He holds up his hand. Nervous.

GABRIEL  
I'm here to see you.

He pauses, hesitant to reveal this.

GABRIEL  
I've renounced my vows.

She stops. Taken aback.

JEANNE  
(stunned)  
What?!

GABRIEL  
I did not come to this lightly.

He turns away, gazes into the distance.

GABRIEL  
When I left Perthuis last year, I was lost. I wandered the countryside for a while, tried to resume my clerical duties in other churches. But I could not wipe the thought of you from my mind... no matter how hard I tried.

He turns back to face her.



GABRIEL

I felt like a fraud wearing the collar. After a while, it began to weigh heavy around my neck. How could I in good conscience devote myself to God, when my true devotion lay elsewhere?

He steps closer.

GABRIEL

So one day I took the collar off. And I've not put it back since.

He takes her hand.

GABRIEL

I love you, Jeanne.

Jeanne's heart sinks. Mouth agape.

Gabriel lets out a long breath, as if a huge weight has been lifted.

GABRIEL

You don't know how long I've waited to say that.

JEANNE

Father, I--

GABRIEL

(correcting her)  
Gabriel.

JEANNE

Yes, of course... Gabriel...

GABRIEL

I don't expect you to say anything. But please--

He takes her other hand as well.

GABRIEL

-- if there's any part of your soul that feels the way it did last year, when you came to me... I implore you to not cast it aside.

He waits a moment, looks at her expectantly.

But finally he lets go of her hands.

GABRIEL  
I'll be at the Morlaix Inn... should  
you wish to talk.

He walks away.

Jeanne remains standing there, bewildered.

**EXT. COURTYARD, IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY**

CONSTANTINOPLE

A lavish and luxurious courtyard, bursting with lush greenery and walkways lined with marble fountains and statues.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S)  
Say it again.

BOY'S VOICE (O.S)  
"I am the resurrection and the  
life."

Sitting at a table in the promenade, we find YOUNG JOHN, a boy of about nine, reading from a book of large parchment.

Beside him sits the boy's mother, a blond-haired woman, late thirties, in a flowing red dress, adorned with pearls and assorted jewelry, fiercely calculating eyes masked by a quiet beauty. This is **EMPRESS ANNA OF SAVOY**.

ANNA  
Keep going.

YOUNG JOHN  
(reading)  
"He that believeth in me, though he  
were dead, yet shall he live. And  
whosoever liveth and believeth in me  
shall never die."

ANNA  
Very good. Turn to the next chapter.

A man in his sixties, dressed in royal attire, leans by the archway behind them, watching them with a stern eye. This is ALEXIOS APOKAUKOS.

ALEXIOS  
(softly)  
Empress...

Anna does not turn around or acknowledge. Simply ignores him.

ANNA  
Go on.

YOUNG JOHN  
(reading)  
"Unless a grain of wheat is buried  
in the ground, dead to the world, it  
is never any more than a grain of  
wheat."

Alexios clears his throat.

ALEXIOS  
Your visitor has arrived.

Anna nods. She strokes her son's hair.

ANNA  
That's enough for today. Go take  
your bath.

Young John leaps up and runs past Alexios into the palace.

Anna gets up. Approaches Alexios.

ALEXIOS  
He shouldn't be learning Scripture  
at such an age.

ANNA  
Is it the lesson that troubles you,  
Alexios? Or the teacher?

Alexios gives her a coy look.

ANNA  
I value your advice in matters of  
state, as always. But when it comes  
to my son, my heart shall remain  
sole advisor.

ALEXIOS  
He will be emperor one day.

ANNA  
One day.

She walks past him.

ANNA  
But not today.

He bows. Follows her into the palace.

**INT. THRONE ROOM, IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY**

Barlaam waits nervously in the throne room. He glances back at the guards standing by the massive archway, gleaming spears in hand.

VOICE

(announcing)

The Empress regent Anna of Savoy.

Barlaam spins to see Anna enter the room, a magnetic, alluring figure. She takes the throne seat, Alexios standing at her side.

ANNA

Bishop Barlaam, how good to see you here again in our fair city.

Barlaam bows.

BARLAAM

Thank you, your Grace. I am here representing his Holiness himself, Pope Clement the Sixth.

ANNA

And what does his Holiness have to say?

BARLAAM

He requests your help with his holy crusade in the Levant. Ships, men... anything you can spare.

The edge of Anna's lips curl into a slight smile.

ANNA

I've always admired your blunt approach, Barlaam.

BARLAAM

It is dire, your Grace.

ANNA

Umur Bey is a formidable enemy, they say. Brutal, but cunning. I'm told his people call him "Umur the Lion".

BARLAAM

He is a pagan.

Anna raises an eyebrow.

ANNA

A so-called "pagan" who has thwarted the Christian fleets at every turn.

BARLAAM

His Holiness deigns to correct that oversight presently. Your resources will go a long way in ensuring victory.

ANNA

And what would I get in return?

BARLAAM

The blessings of his Holiness, who represents the Lord Christ in all things.

Anna smiles again, ever so subtly.

ANNA

Discard your Vatican trappings. Speak not as a bishop. Speak as Barlaam the scholar. Barlaam the Basilian monk.

Barlaam narrows his eyes. Glares sharply at her.

BARLAAM

A Christian victory against Umur Bey will also hurt Kantakouzenos.

ANNA

Ah, there's the Barlaam I remember.

BARLAAM

Without Umur's forces, his claim to your throne will be severely weakened.

Anna glances toward Alexios, who nods agreeably.

Anna stands up.

ANNA

Tell the pontiff that he will have my ships.

She steps down from the throne and toward Barlaam.

ANNA

Would you like to visit Palamas in prison? He may still harbor some bitterness toward you, but I do believe he misses you.

BARLAAM

I have nothing to say to him.

ANNA

I doubt that. Your opposing beliefs  
almost tore the empire in two. That  
kind of rivalry surely deserves  
some... mending.

Barlaam looks at her. Bows.

BARLAAM

Empress.

He walks off toward the archway and exits, as Anna watches  
him with that subtle smile.

**INT. PRIVATE CHAMBERS - LATER**

Anna paces slowly in her room, going over the day's events in  
her mind.

ALEXIOS (O.S)

We are favoured.

She turns to find Alexios standing at the door.

ALEXIOS

This could not have gone better if  
we had planned it.

ANNA

It is a coup, yes. But we will need  
more assurances from the Curia than  
just empty promises.

ALEXIOS

Then perhaps what I tell you next  
will work in our favour once more.

He steps into the room.

ALEXIOS

The monk is alive.

For the first time since we've met her, Anna lets her regal  
guard down and expresses shock.

ANNA

The Benedictine that was on the  
merchant vessel last year? Bound for  
our shores?

Alexios nods.

ANNA

How is that possible? Umur Bey's pirates slaughtered everyone on board and burned the ship to the ground.

ALEXIOS

Indeed, that is what our sources told us at the time. But our spies in Smyrna have spotted him in Umur's fortress as recently as the week prior.

ANNA

And the shroud? Does he still have it?

ALEXIOS

That is unclear. But why would the Turks keep him alive, if not for that?

Anna starts slowly pacing the room again, her mind racing.

ANNA

We cannot leave the answer to chance.

She looks at him, a piercing gaze.

ANNA

The shroud was always destined for Constantinople. And it will be so again. When the Church learns of its whereabouts, they will come looking for it.

ALEXIOS

The pope is not as yet convinced of its legitimacy.

ANNA

The monks will persuade him eventually. And when the *Curia Romana* discovers that such a holy relic exists, they will pay any price to secure it.

She looks out the window.

ANNA

With Rome's backing, that will be the assurance we need to crush Kantakouzenos and any designs he may have on my son's throne.

She looks down at the courtyard, notices A LARGE MAN IN BULKY ARMOR, practicing his swordplay.

ANNA  
Who is that man?

Alexios glances out the window.

ALEXIOS  
His name is Sabarrus. A soldier of  
our Tenth Legion. A true Roman  
descendant of the old empire.

He leans in to Anna's ear.

ALEXIOS  
And one of our aforementioned spies.

Anna smiles, her eyes on the soldier.

ANNA  
Bring him to me.

#### **INT. PALACE CORRIDORS - EVENING**

A hulk of a man walks down the long marble and gold corridors of the Imperial Palace. He makes his way toward the archway of

#### **ANNA'S CHAMBER**

She turns to greet him.

ANNA  
Do you know who I am?

We get our first look at this beast -- SABARRUS.

SABARRUS  
Of course. You are the Empress.

ANNA  
What is my name?

SABARRUS  
Anna. Of Savoy.

She steps closer, a somewhat seductive stride.

ANNA  
You are Sabarrus. Your men call you  
"the Bear", do they not?

Sabarrus nods, almost embarrassed.



SABARRUS  
They do, your Grace.

ANNA  
Sabarrus...

She glides up to him. Lightly touches his rippling arm with her fingertips.

ANNA  
You've been to the city of Smyrna before?

SABARRUS  
Yes.

ANNA  
Then you know there is something there that the Turks possess. Something of great value.

Sabarrus nods.

SABARRUS  
The shroud of Christ.

She slowly circles him.

ANNA  
The pope has sent his Christian armies on one of their sanctimonious "crusades" to take the city back from the Turks.

She looks up at him.

ANNA  
You must get there before they do and bring the shroud back here.

SABARRUS  
What about the monk?

She thinks about it for a moment.

ANNA  
Save him, if you can. And if not...

She caresses his face.

ANNA  
...the shroud will do.

**EXT. AEGEAN SEA - DAY**

PALLENE PENINSULA, NORTHERN GREECE. SIX MONTHS LATER. 13 MAY 1344.

THE TWENTY WARSHIPS OF THE CRUSADER ARMY are scattered across the waters of the Aegean Sea, heading quickly toward a nearby shore.

Beaujeu stands on the bow of the lead Cypriot ship, staring ahead at the Turkish vessels lined up all along the shoreline.

Charny steps up behind him, his beard noticeably thicker. They exchange a quick glance and nod knowingly. Charny slips on his helmet, grim determination on his face.

**EXT. PALLENE COASTLINE - DAY**

On the stationed TURKISH VESSELS, men carry on with their tasks; loading crates and coiling ropes to anchors.

One of the Turks suddenly spots the quickly advancing CRUSADER FLEET in the distance.

He YELLS in Arabic to his shipmates, alerting them of the oncoming army...

**INT. BELOW DECK- PAPAL GALLEY - SAME**

Bishop Henri sits alone, eyes shut, quickly whispering a prayer. Makes the sign of the cross repeatedly.

**EXT. PALLENE COASTLINE - SAME**

THE CRUSADER SHIPS DESCEND RAPIDLY UPON THE UNSUSPECTING TURKISH FLEET -- with BATTERING RAMS extended, the first lead ships CRASH INTO THE TURK VESSELS -- hulls SHATTERING and sending the Turks TUMBLING ACROSS DECK--

GIANLUCA (V.O)  
*My dear abbot Stefano, I hope this  
letter finds you well.*

**INT. GIANLUCA'S ROOM, SMYRNA CASTLE -- INTERCUT**

GIANLUCA is seated at his table, penning a letter. He wears the white robes of a Muslim imam, a white Tuqiyah cap on his head, his beard longer.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*I write this to you in the hopes of  
explaining why I have done what I  
have done.*

**EXT. AEGEAN SEA- PALLENE COASTLINE - DAY**

More Crusader ships SLAM into the Turk vessels.

CYPRIOT AND HOSPITALLER KNIGHTS RUSH to the edge of their galleys with CROSSBOWS -- FIRING BOLTS into the Turkish ships--

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*When the Turks captured me and  
 brought me to Smyrna, I feared I  
 would die in a prison cell,  
 persecuted and tortured for my  
 faith, like the Christian martyrs  
 who died in the Colisseum centuries  
 ago.*

**EXT. CASTLE TOWER - DAY**

Gianluca and UMUR BEY dine together atop the castle walls.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*But instead, something else  
 happened.*

Umur passes him a piece of bread.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*I was accepted.*

**EXT. PALLENE COASTLINE - DAY**

An ARROW PIERCES through a Turk pirate and out the back of his head--

ARROWS AND CROSSBOLTS RAIN DOWN on the Turk pirates --  
 RUNNING FOR COVER as the Crusader ships maintain fire--

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*Like all of you, I thought Umur Bey  
 a heartless pagan tyrant.*

**INT. UMUR BEY'S CHAMBERS - DAY**

Umur intently studies a painting on the wall.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*But he is something else entirely.  
 The more time I spent here, the more  
 I came to see the philosopher. The  
 student.*

Close on Umur's eyes.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)

*The man.*

**EXT. AEGEAN SEA- PALLENE COASTLINE - DAY**

Crusader soldiers and knights HEAVE LONG LADDERS AND PLANKS ACROSS THE WATER -- rushing off their ships and boarding the Turk vessels.

The unsuspecting Turks SCATTER AND RUN as the ROARING KNIGHTS ATTACK, SWORDS RAISED--

GIANLUCA (V.O.)

*He could have forced me to convert.*

ROARING with fury, CHARNY DRIVES HIS SWORD down on a pair of Turks--

**INT. MOSQUE - DAY**

Gianluca is kneeled on a prayer rug, chanting and praying in Arabic.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)

*But I came to Islam on my own.  
Without force. Without coercion. Not  
once did he raise a hand against me  
in anger.*

Gianluca looks to the heavens, eyes closed.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)

*Only in friendship.*

**EXT. AEGEAN SEA - DAY**

THE KNIGHTS AND PAPAL SOLDIERS WREAK HAVOC upon the Turkoman ships -- SLAUGHTERING TURK PIRATES in droves -- scores of enemy vessels BURN IN THE BACKGROUND -- drifting aimlessly IN FLAMES--

HAROUN joins the battle against his former Turk brothers, his blade CUTTING THROUGH THEM with zealous rage--

GIANLUCA (V.O.)

*So I ask you to forgive me,  
Stefano, and accept my choice.*

Haroun DRIVES HIS BLADE through a pirate -- face spattered with blood, bloodlust in his eyes --

GIANLUCA (V.O.)

*The Church may call me traitor or  
apostate now...*

**INT. PERTHUIS CHAPEL - DAY**

STEFANO sits at a table, reads Gianluca's letter.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*...but I pray, in your heart, you  
 still call me friend.*

Stefano smiles.

**EXT. AEGEAN SEA - DUSK**

About SIXTY TURKISH SHIPS drift across the sea IN FLAMES--

Bishop Henri stands on the bow of the lead papal galley,  
 holding up a long crucifix staff.

He SHOUTS at the gathered Crusaders--

HENRI  
*LET THIS BE A WARNING TO UMUR BEY  
 AND HIS ZEALOT HORDES--*

He raises the cross higher.

HENRI  
*THE SWORD OF CHRIST SHALL TAKE  
 THEIR HEADS NEXT!!*

The Crusader armies RAISE THEIR SWORDS, SPEARS, AND AXES --  
 CHEERING and ROARING in victory --

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*No longer do I yearn to come home.*

**EXT. MOSQUE - DAY**

Gianluca reads from the Quran to a group of Muslim children.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
*I am home.*

**EXT. AEGEAN SEA - DUSK**

Charny, bloodied and black with soot, stands by the edge of  
 the Cypriot ship, standing apart from the others, watching  
 the Turkish boats burning, the flames reflected in his  
 haunted eyes.

**EXT. SMYRNA SHORELINE - DAY**

Gianluca stands alone by the quiet, peaceful shoreline of  
 Smyrna, staring out into the vast Aegean waters.

GIANLUCA (V.O.)  
As-salamu alaikum. *Your brother in*  
*Christ. Gianluca.*

He turns and starts to head back to the castle. But suddenly stops. Does a double take.

He spots something on the sand. Brought in by the tide.

He walks back slowly to the shoreline. Looks down to see--

A SEVERED HUMAN HAND -- the water around it red with blood--

Gianluca stares at it. Then looks up at the distant waters, an ominous gaze in his eyes...

FADE OUT