

THE SHROUD

EPISODE 5

"THE LION"

by

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THE SHROUD. EPISODE 5. THE LION.

EXT. SHORES OF SMYRNA, ANATOLIA -- NIGHT

A calm night on the shores of Smyrna. The inner city lays dormant and mainly in darkness, punctuated by sporadic pockets of campfire and oil lamp.

Near the shoreline, a solitary TURKISH GUARD sits by a small bonfire, which is sputtering out. He stokes it with a stick in one hand, his other hand clutching at his cloak, bristling from the cool ocean air.

He suddenly perks up. Alert. Senses movement.

He gets to his feet, starts to make his way cautiously toward the noise.

He spots a dark shape just at the edge of the water.

As he gets closer, he can start to make out through the darkness the distinctive shape of a small boat.

He stops. Looks back at the bonfire, which has completely petered out.

He resumes his approach, slowing his pace as he nears, hand on sword hilt.

He steps up toward the boat, peers inside. His eyes go wide as he sees--

A DEAD TURK GUARD inside the boat -- throat ripped open, as if mauled by some beast.

Horrified, the Turk draws his sword and spins around -- only to see a giant man standing behind him, rabid eyes and gritted teeth -- SABARRUS--

The Turk barely has a moment to swing his blade when Sabarrus CLAMPS DOWN ON THE TURK'S SWORD ARM and twists -- a sickening CRUNCH of bone is heard, but before the Turk can even let out an agonizing scream, Sabarrus SEIZES THE MAN'S THROAT in a vice-like grip and squeezes, CHOKING THE AIR from his lungs -- Sabarrus's predatory eyes stare into the Turk's terror-stricken own, before SINKING HIS FINGERS into the Turk's throat -- PIERCING FLESH and drawing blood --

-- and RIPS OUT THE MAN'S LARYNX IN ONE PULL -- BLOOD GUSHES from the Turk's throat as he collapses into the boat beside his dead comrade--

Sabarrus, face smeared with the Turk's blood, eyes glazed with madness, turns his gaze toward the city in the distance, up at Smyrna Castle...

TITLES: THE SHROUD

INT. MOSQUE - DAWN

GIANLUCA steps inside the mosque. In the doorway behind him we can see the hazy, sunlit dawn of a new day.

INT. ALCOVE - MOMENTS LATER

Gianluca washes his feet from a bucket of water.

INT. MOSQUE - MORNING

Gianluca kneels on a prayer rug, eyes closed in meditation. At this early hour he is alone in the mosque. However, outside we can hear the chants of prayer in the distance, scattered across the city.

Gianluca brings his head down to the carpet. Whispers a prayer in Arabic.

As he lifts his head back up, he senses someone. Opens his eyes and looks toward the doorway to find--

UMUR BEY standing there, watching him calmly.

GIANLUCA

Bey --

UMUR

No, please. Don't let me disturb your prayers.

Gianluca stands up.

GIANLUCA

The ritual was done.

He moves to a nearby table, methodically arranging items, preparing the day's lesson.

GIANLUCA

Did you wish to discuss something?

Umur nods, steps inside.

UMUR

You... as it were.

Gianluca glances over his shoulder curiously.

GIANLUCA

Me?

Umur sits down at the table.

UMUR

I wonder what I've done to deserve
one such as you.

Gianluca looks somewhat flustered.

UMUR

Before your arrival, there was
unrest in our city. The tribes were
fractured. There was even discord
among the Islamic scholars.

Gianluca leans against the wall, listens.

UMUR

But you've brought change. Your
somewhat "unique" perspective has
brought them together.

He smiles as he reflects on it.

UMUR

The people have taken to you. They
gather here in numbers never before
seen.

GIANLUCA

I only offer what is in my heart.

UMUR

Perhaps that is one such
explanation. Your presence alone has
seen a calming effect here.

His mood darkens.

UMUR

But there are murmurs in the
streets. Whispers of unrest again.
You've no doubt felt it too.

He studies Gianluca's eyes.

UMUR

You wear the gloom on your face like
a shroud.

Gianluca turns away uncomfortably.

GIANLUCA

The mood is fleeting. It will pass.

UMUR

You don't seem too certain of that.

Gianluca doesn't respond.

UMUR

You know, I've often contemplated how Christians reconcile the pacifist doctrine of their Messiah with the violence they supposedly commit in his name.

GIANLUCA

I have often wondered the same... when I counted myself among them.

UMUR

These constant "crusades"... wars... are they not an affront to their Christ god?

GIANLUCA

The contrary. It is God Himself, and His only begotten son, who demand that blood be spilled in their name. At least, that is how they view it.

Gianluca struggles to look Umur in the eye as he admits this--

GIANLUCA

As do we.

UMUR

We are no better than the infidels, is that it?

Gianluca watches him nervously.

UMUR

Is this what you preach to our people?

GIANLUCA

I tell them to follow their hearts. It will not lead you astray.

Umur nods.

GIANLUCA

The Christians could be plotting an attack as we speak.

Umur leans in, a deadly gleam in his eye.

UMUR

You know this for fact?

GIANLUCA

There are omens everywhere. You must have felt them.

UMUR

You surprise me, imam. I did not take you for a charlatan.

GIANLUCA

It could be tomorrow. Or the year hence. All I ask is you do not ignore the signs.

Umur stands up. Glares at Gianluca for a moment, who meets his gaze with intent.

Umur nods and leaves the mosque, leaving Gianluca somewhat troubled.

INT. MORLAIX INN - NORTHERN FRANCE - DAY

GABRIEL stuffs the last of his belongings inside a duffel sack. He strings it closed and swings it over his back.

EXT. MORLAIX INN - MOMENTS LATER

Gabriel leaves the inn, bag slung over his shoulder. Starts to make his way down the road.

VOICE (O.S)

Gabriel...

Gabriel spins to find--

JEANNE -- approaching slowly, slight hesitation on her part.

GABRIEL

Jeanne -- ?

JEANNE

I didn't mean to startle you.

GABRIEL

No, it's just... I didn't think you'd come.

JEANNE

I thought the same at first. Part of me still does.

Gabriel steps closer.

GABRIEL

I'm sorry... about what I said the other day. I did not wish to put you in a corner.

JEANNE

You spoke your heart. Such expression requires no apology.

She looks away, hesitant to broach the subject.

JEANNE

Does your heart still feel so?

Gabriel's eyes light up.

GABRIEL

It did. But now that my eyes look upon you, even more so.

Jeanne smiles. But the smile fades just as quickly.

JEANNE

It has been a year since Geoffrey has gone. His last wish was for me to live a happy life, even if it could not be him to give me such a life.

Gabriel hangs his head sadly.

JEANNE

Somewhere in my mind, I held hope he would return. But as the days pass, the likelihood seems less so.

GABRIEL

Whatever he thought of us... whatever his feelings toward me... I still believe he does the Lord's work.

Jeanne nods.

JEANNE

I felt secure in his arms. But perhaps I mistook that feeling for love.

She locks eyes with Gabriel.

JEANNE

But with you, I felt comfort. Joy, in our love of Christ.

She steps up to him, takes his hands in hers.

JEANNE
I felt happy.

Gabriel drops his bag and wraps Jeanne in a tight embrace.

GABRIEL
How I longed for this day.

He breaks away, gazes into her eyes.

GABRIEL
The joy you bring me is immesurable.
I shall live my days reminding you
of it.

They embrace again.

As we hold on Jeanne, eyes closed, smiling, a single tear
rolling down her cheek...

EXT. AEGEAN SEA - DAY

The waters are calm beneath blue skies. Almost serene.

Drifting slowly forward are the TWENTY WARSHIPS OF THE
CRUSADER ARMY.

EXT. CYPRIOT SHIP - DAY

HAROUN stands at the ship's bow, still wearing his bloodied
armour from last episode, now hooded to conceal his face. He
looks out forlornly at the blue sea ahead.

HAROUN
It seems endless.

He appears to be speaking to no one, but then behind him we
see--

CHARNY -- standing there, also in his war torn armour.

CHARNY
Your senses remain sharp. Even after
battle.

HAROUN
Honed from a lifetime of fear.

Charny steps up beside him. Follows his gaze out at the
water.

CHARNY
Fear of what?

HAROUN
What all men fear--

He casts a quick side glance at Charny.

HAROUN
Death.

CHARNY
The fear never leaves you? Even in
times of peace?

HAROUN
There is no peace.

He looks up at the deep blue sky.

HAROUN
When there is no battle, there is
anticipation of battle. And when
there is no anticipation, there is
suspicion. And between all that,
there is--

CHARNY
Fear.

Haroun nods.

HAROUN
But it has made me the warrior I
have become.

CHARNY
The warrior who waits for war.

HAROUN
There is nothing else.

Charny watches the gentle waves.

CHARNY
You fought well back at Pallene.

Haroun acknowledges with a nod.

CHARNY
There may be many more battles
before we reach Umur Bey's shores.

HAROUN
I will fight a thousand battles if
it brings me face to face with that
infidel sympathizer.

CHARNY

How can you be sure that you will be the one to deliver him to the afterlife?

HAROUN

I will not allow it of anyone else.

CHARNY

You may not have a choice in the matter.

Haroun smirks. Says nothing.

HAROUN

You did not celebrate with the others.

Charny gives him a questioning look.

HAROUN

After our victory at Pallene. You stood off in a corner. Away from the other men.

CHARNY

I do not recall bringing you aboard this ship to observe my actions.

HAROUN

For a soldier as skilled and renowned as yourself, killing still does not come easy. It weighs on you.

CHARNY

I do not celebrate death, if that's what you're getting at. No matter the cause.

HAROUN

Then what is your role in all of this, Frenchman?

Charny gives him a curious side glance.

HAROUN

You say you do not fight for your God, yet here you stand, onboard a crusader ship, fighting Christian enemies.

CHARNY

Let's get something clear, Saracen.
Ours is a partnership of necessity.
Do not mistake me for a friend, and
certainly do not address me as such.

HAROUN

I simply observe, as is in my nature
to do.

Charny's face goes grim.

CHARNY

You need not concern yourself. Just
get me to the shroud.

HAROUN

Seeking a relic of Christian
importance. Strange for a godless
man, is it not?

Haroun narrows his eyes, staring at Charny with genuine
curiosity.

HAROUN

Perhaps it's not something you
seek... but something you are
running from.

Charny gnashes his teeth. He leans in close to Haroun.

CHARNY

Just get me to the shroud.

Charny walks away, and as Haroun watches him leave with an
intrigued look, CUT TO--

BATELLO -- watching them from the bow of one of the
nearby Venetian ships.

NICO (O.S)

You play with fire, brother.

NICO steps up from behind.

NICO

I've been thinking... perhaps we are
on this crusade for a higher
purpose. Perhaps we are truly here
to redeem our sins.

BATELLO

We are here because I cut off
Giovanni Sforza's head. Don't try to
convince yourself otherwise.

NICO

Your obsession with Charny will see
our end.

Batello suddenly grabs Nico's tunic.

BATELLO

It will see our rise, brother.

He lets him go. Returns his gaze to the Cypriot ship.

BATELLO

Charny and the Turk will lead us to
a prize greater than redemption.
We'll have enough riches to fund a
new mercenary venture. Enough to
drive the Catalan Company out of
business.

Nico looks down at his feet, worried. Batello notices.

BATELLO

Fret not, brother. You will have a
position of importance in our new
company. My accounts man. How does
that sound?

He puts a reassuring hand on Nico's shoulder.

BATELLO

There's no one else I trust.

Off Nico's doubtful look...

INT. PAPAL GALLEY — DAY

Below deck, inside the bishop's cramped private chambers,
HENRI, ZACCARIA, and ZENO stand gathered around a table, all
staring at a map of the Anatolian coastline.

ZACCARIA

Pallene was a decisive victory. But
I'm not sure our forces can emerge
from another battle unscathed.

ZENO

Martino is right, bishop. We were
lucky we came out of that skirmish
with minimal casualties, and with
all our ships intact.

HENRI

It was by God's grace alone that we
lay waste to the pagan horde.

Zaccaria and Zeno exchange a quick doubtful look.

ZACCARIA
Your Eminence, if we are to
encounter more resistance, we need
more ships.

HENRI
His Holiness has assured us that our
twenty will be sufficient.

ZACCARIA
Sufficient for what?! A banquet?

ZENO
Martino, calm yourself--

ZACCARIA
We are outmanned and outgunned. The
Turk ships number in the hundreds.
Perhaps thousands. We need to start
thinking about reinforcements.

HENRI
From where, perchance? Chios?

This shuts Zaccaria down.

HENRI
I have warned you about diverting
our armies for your personal
campaign.

ZACCARIA
(low)
I was merely suggesting--

Henri walks away.

HENRI
Our twenty will do.

He exits the room and closes the door.

ZACCARIA
I'm beginning to think this was a
mistake.

ZENO
Martino --

ZACCARIA
That doddering old fool knows
nothing of warfare.

ZENO
Old fool or not, he leads this
crusade. He speaks for Pope Clement.

ZACCARIA
Then perhaps we should take our
orders from elsewhere.

Zeno gives him a grave look.

ZENO
You dare not suggest what I think
you just did--

ZACCARIA
All I'm saying is--

ZENO
I will not hear of it again. Do not
even think it. Is that clear?

Zaccaria steps up close.

ZACCARIA
You have no authority over me.

Zeno simply glares at him.

ZACCARIA
You command the Venetian fleet. I
lead the papal army. That is where
our alliance ends.

Zaccaria walks out of the room, leaving Zeno glaring coldly
at the door.

INT. PRISON - CONSTANTINOPLE - DAY

BARLAAM is escorted by a guard through a narrow underground
tunnel, lined with prison cells.

The guard stops. Points him toward one of the cells.

Barlaam nods his thanks and steps reluctantly toward the
cell, looks through the bars at the man sitting inside the
cage; long brown beard with flecks of grey, broken and
dejected. This is GREGORY PALAMAS.

Palamas cranes his neck and casts his eyes upon Barlaam. Not
very surprised to see him.

PALAMAS
You are here to shame me.

BARLAAM

I take no pleasure in this, Gregory.
You must know this.

PALAMAS

You've said your piece. Now leave.

Barlaam lowers his head, about to obey. But lingers a moment.

BARLAAM

I long for a world where two men may
have a discussion -- philosophical,
theological, spiritual, what have
you -- without fear of being
silenced.

PALAMAS

(sadly)

That is not this world.

Palamas looks him over.

PALAMAS

You wear the robes of the *Curia
Romana*. The sheer audacity of it.

BARLAAM

I am Christian. As are you. Does it
matter if the robes are Orthodox or
Roman?

PALAMAS

It mattered enough to launch false
accusations against me and have me
imprisoned.

BARLAAM

That was not my intent.

PALAMAS

But it was the result. That is all
that matters.

BARLAAM

Damn you, Palamas, will you not see
reason in this?

PALAMAS

You ask me to see reason? The synod
ruled in my favour! My triads were
accepted as doctrine. Yet you could
not stand to see my teachings become
law. So you slander me.

A simmering anger inside Barlaam quietly bubbles to the surface.

BARLAAM

You dared to explain the unknowable.
God cannot be explained. Anything
else is blasphemy.

PALAMAS

Our day will come, Barlaam. The
hesychasts cannot be dismissed so
callously. The doctrine of a new
faith has already been written. You
just don't know it yet.

Barlaam simmers quietly.

PALAMAS

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have
mercy on me, a sinner.

Barlaam leaves, stewing with fury, Palamas's voice echoing
down the tunnel as he repeats the mantra over and over.

PALAMAS (O.S)

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have
mercy on me, a sinner. Lord Jesus
Christ, Son of God, have mercy on
me, a sinner. Lord Jesus Christ, Son
of God, have mercy on me, a
sinner...

EXT. SERBIAN COAST — DAY

A Turkish warship docks at the harbor along the Serbian
coastline.

Umur Bey stands at the bow of the ship, as behind him his men
throw ropes over the port side, his eyes locked on the castle
in the distance.

INT. PRIZREN CASTLE — DAY

Umur marches into the castle with his entourage, and is
immediately greeted by a man in a brown robe, long scraggly
hair and beard, somewhat ragged and disheveled. This is JOHN
VI KANTAKOUZENOS.

KANTAKOUZENOS

Umur, my friend--

He enthusiastically walks up and wraps Umur in a hearty
embrace.

KANTAKOUZENOS
Thank God you are here.

UMUR
Good to see you too, old friend.

Kouzenos breaks off the embrace, hurriedly saunters off, waving Umur to follow.

KANTAKOUZENOS
Come, come, we have much to discuss.

INT. PRIVATE CHAMBERS - LATER

Umur and Kouzenos are alone in his small chambers, Umur sitting at a table while Kouzenos nervously paces.

UMUR
All goes well?

KANTAKOUZENOS
What do you think? I'm a prisoner in a Serbian castle.

Umur gestures at their surroundings.

UMUR
Quite a lavish prison.

KANTAKOUZENOS
You know what I mean.

UMUR
But what I meant was you, John Kantakouzenos.

KANTAKOUZENOS
Me?

A beat, as he ponders the question.

KANTAKOUZENOS
I am not well, Umur. Not well.

He moves toward the window, gazes out at the grey landscape.

KANTAKOUZENOS
They took my home.

UMUR
The empress of Constantinople.

KANTAKOUZENOS

(nods)

Anna of Savoy, the late emperor's widow. And her scheming underling Apokaukos. They took my throne. A throne I never wanted!

UMUR

It will be yours. I promise you.

KANTAKOUZENOS

But at what cost?

He looks down at his hands.

KANTAKOUZENOS

My hands shake. I'm suspect of everyone and everything. I am utterly alone.

UMUR

You have me.

Kouzenos glances over at Umur, an unstable grin.

KANTAKOUZENOS

You think me insane.

UMUR

Not insane. Perhaps... paranoid?

KANTAKOUZENOS

Is there a difference?

Umur chuckles at this.

KANTAKOUZENOS

Does my unraveling amuse you?

UMUR

For a pious man, you do have quite a flair for the dramatic.

KANTAKOUZENOS

How would you frame this then,
hmm?

He gazes out the window again, lost in his thoughts.

KANTAKOUZENOS

How many times have I told the widow empress that I loved her husband Andronikos? That I still mourn his passing? That, despite the late emperor's wishes, I did not want the throne, and would gladly wait for their son John to come of age. But alas, none of it mattered.

He spins around, incensed.

KANTAKOUZENOS

That conniving fool Alexios poisoned her against me. My own protégé!

UMUR

Their dishonor will make your victory over them all the more glorious.

Kouzenos paces nervously again.

KANTAKOUZENOS

Yes yes, "glorious". In the meantime, I rot in this castle.

UMUR

Not for long. My forces are preparing to march on Demotika as we speak. Our combined armies will take it back from the usurpers *inshallah*.

KANTAKOUZENOS

You truly live up to your name -- Umur the Lion.

Kouzenos smiles sadly.

KANTAKOUZENOS

You are too good to me, Umur my friend.

His eyes wander, staring into nothing.

KANTAKOUZENOS

Everyone I know has betrayed me. Anna. Alexios. King Dusan shelters me here in his castle, but I suspect he is not above treachery as well.

He turns back to Umur.

KANTAKOUZENOS
You are the only one I trust.

Umur nods.

KANTAKOUZENOS
But even you did not come all this
way out of the goodness of your
heart. You expect something in
return for the aid of your men.

Umur stands up.

UMUR
Ships. And men to defend them.
Whatever you can spare.

KANTAKOUZENOS
You suspect an attack on your home?

UMUR
I am not fully convinced. But my
imam speaks of omens. In the waters.
In the sky. I would be remiss to
ignore it.

KANTAKOUZENOS
Ah yes. The Italian priest. Gianluca
is it?

UMUR
His name is now Ghaffar ibn la'Ahad.

KANTAKOUZENOS
You respect him?

Umur gazes out the window.

UMUR
More than any other.

KANTAKOUZENOS
Then I offer what I have to you.

Umur turns around, puts a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

UMUR
May we both see victory in this life
inshallah, my friend.

KANTAKOUZENOS
(smiles)
I will settle for peace.

EXT. COURTYARD, IMPERIAL PALACE - CONSTANTINOPLE - DAY

Young John runs across the rose gardens with the boundless energy of a nine-year-old boy, the Imperial guard chasing him barely able to catch his breath.

Young John runs behind an apple tree and hides, waiting gleefully to be found.

The guard appears around the corner and playfully grabs at him. Young John giggles as he wriggles free and runs off again. The guard sighs with exasperation.

From the veranda watches Young John's mother and empress of Constantinople, ANNA OF SAVOY, a concerned smile on her face.

ALEXIOS (O.S)
They know you watch.

ALEXIOS steps up behind her, following her gaze at the hide-and-seek game.

ALEXIOS
That is why they tolerate the child.

ANNA
So my boy lives only because I sit
on the throne?

She gives him a steely glare.

ANNA
And if I did not?

ALEXIOS
There are many possible outcomes for
an heir apparent. Slavery is perhaps
the most merciful.

Anna looks back at her boy, running and playing.

ANNA
Are you here to darken this fine
morning, Alexios? Or do you have
something you want to tell me?

ALEXIOS
The boy needs a father. A stable
influence in his life.

ANNA
You are saying I do not provide
balance enough?

ALEXIOS

I'm saying he cannot be raised by palace guards and soldiers. He needs an authority figure.

ANNA

His father is dead. We are in a war with the man he chose as his successor, the one you convinced me is our enemy.

ALEXIOS

Kouzenos was never the man to raise your son. Your late husband entrusted him with too much power. He would have overthrown your son.

ANNA

So you say.

Alexios steps closer.

ALEXIOS

Your Grace, I knew your husband better than anyone. Andronikos did not mean for Kouzenos to rule.

ANNA

You did not know my husband any more than I did.

She glares coldly at him.

ANNA

You stand in the shadows, whispering lies in men's ears.

ALEXIOS

If I am as devious as you say, then why keep me in your court?

ANNA

You know what they say...

She gives him a sly smile.

ANNA

Keep your enemies close.

She turns her gaze back at her son running in the garden.

ANNA

Any news from Sabarrus?

ALEXIOS

He's arrived on the shores of
Smyrna. It should not be long before
he procures the shroud.

ANNA

Good. With Rome soon at our
disposal, Kouzenos will no longer be
a problem. And my son shall be
emperor.

She casts a sinister side glance at Alexios.

ANNA

And no man shall whisper in his ear.

Off Alexios's unsettled look... CUT TO--

EXT. SMYRNA CASTLE -- ANATOLIA - NIGHT

An eerie calm on the castle grounds. Torchlights flicker
sporadically.

Stationed on one of the watchtowers, a TURK SOLDIER watches
the faint city lights in the distance, the half moon overhead
offering little light.

Suddenly the Turk senses movement. He steps curiously to the
battlement wall, peers cautiously over the edge.

A HAND SUDDENLY CLASPS ONTO HIS THROAT in a vice-like grip --
he frantically GASPS FOR AIR, THE GIANT HAND CHOKING the life
out of him--

SABARRUS pulls himself over the top of the wall, his hand
still squeezing the Turk's throat -- with a subtle movement
he SNAPS THE MAN'S NECK -- as easily as a twig--

Sabarrus drops him to the ground and continues down the
battlement, toward the doorway.

INT. GIANLUCA'S CHAMBERS - SAME

Gianluca sits quietly in his study, reading the Qur'an. He
flips a page, focused.

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - SAME

A TURK GUARD walks down a long corridor, doing his nightly
rounds, glancing into the various rooms as he passes.

Sabarrus suddenly slips out from behind a pillar, WRAPS HIS
BRAWNY ARM around the guard's mouth with one hand and SHANKS
HIM REPEATEDLY -- he PULLS OUT THE BLOODY KNIFE and tosses

the dead guard to the floor, moving down the corridor without so much as a glance back.

INT. FARIK'S CHAMBERS - SAME

FARIK is unbuckling his armor, about to turn in for the night. But suddenly stops. Senses something amiss.

INT. CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SAME

Sabarrus quietly skulks into the empty throne room. Surveys the walls and doorways before quickly passing through.

INT. STAIRWELL - SAME

Sabarrus makes his way up the narrow steps, surprisingly silent and agile for a man his size.

INT. GIANLUCA'S CHAMBERS - SAME

Gianluca has set his book aside and is about to turn in.

He steps toward his cabinet, opens it to reveal the SHROUD, gently folded on a shelf. His old tattered satchel hangs on a hook beside it, a symbol of his old life.

VOICE (O.S)

Priest...

Gianluca spins around startled, to find--

SABARRUS -- standing at his doorway.

GIANLUCA

Who are you?

SABARRUS

I am Sabarrus, soldier of the Tenth Legion.

GIANLUCA

The empress has sent you?

Sabarrus nods, steps closer, his pace urgent.

SABARRUS

I am here to take you and your shroud back to Constantinople.

GIANLUCA

Constantinople?

SABARRUS

I will save you from the heathens
who keep you prisoner. But we must
hurry before we are discovered.

GIANLUCA

Save me?

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - SAME

Farik marches down the corridor, spots a crumpled body just ahead. He picks up his pace, crouches down before the bloodied body of the Turk guard.

Suddenly alert, Farik heads off.

INT. GIANLUCA'S CHAMBERS - SAME

Gianluca lets out a frustrated sigh.

GIANLUCA

I'm afraid your empress has
misunderstood.

Sabarrus tilts his head, confused.

GIANLUCA

You cannot save me. I am already
saved.

SABARRUS

I offer you freedom. But we must go.
Now.

GIANLUCA

Allah has freed me. I dwell in his
house now.

Sabarrus backs away, stunned. Suddenly notices the imam robe and *Tuqiyah* cap on his head.

SABARRUS

My God... the heathens have
possessed you.

He steps closer menacingly, starts to draw his sword.

SABARRUS

There is only one punishment for
heretics...

INT. UMUR BEY'S CHAMBERS - SAME

On his canopied bed, Umur stirs fitfully in his sleep.

A sudden pounding on his door bolts him awake. Grumbling, he gets up, in his white bedrobe. The pounding continues.

Umur swings the door open to find Farik standing there, sweaty and out of breath.

UMUR
What is it, Farik?

FARIK
Bey, I apologize for disturbing your slumber.

Umur notes Farik's dishevelled state.

FARIK
Something is wrong...

INT. CASTLE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

UMUR BEY strides down the long corridor, still in his bedrobe, scimitar sword in hand, his usually tied hair now coming down his shoulders in black waves. FARIK, GHAZI, AND A CLUTCH OF SOLDIERS follow behind him.

They stop at the dead guard's body.

Still looking down at the body, Umur points with his sword.

UMUR
Spread out. I want him found.

Farik nods, signals to the other men to disperse.

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - SAME

Umur marches alone down the long hallway, sword clutched tight.

Suddenly he comes to Gianluca's door and stops. His face drops as he looks inside.

INT. GIANLUCA'S CHAMBERS - SAME

Umur runs inside to find--

GIANLUCA -- sprawled on the floor in a POOL OF DARK BLOOD, his white robe stained with crimson.

CLANG-- Umur's sword clatters to the floor. He drops to his knees, gently takes Gianluca's head in his hand.

Gianluca tries to speak, but only blood sputters out from his mouth.

Umur softly shushes him.

UMUR
Don't speak. Only rest.

Umur looks up at the open cabinet -- THE SHROUD AND THE SATCHEL ARE GONE. He understands now.

Farik suddenly appears at the doorway. His jaw slacks as he sees the bloodied Gianluca.

Umur gets up.

UMUR
Summon the physicians and stay with him.

He brushes past Farik and heads out the door.

FARIK
Bey, where are you going?!

But Umur does not stop. Keeps walking. Grim determination on his face.

INT. CASTLE HALL - SAME

Sabarrus moves hurriedly through the dimly lit castle hall, Gianluca's satchel slung across his shoulder, the shroud crudely stuffed inside, the corners of the cloth sticking out from the bag.

He spots a doorway heading toward the castle gates outside. He quickly starts off toward the gate, when suddenly--

A SWORD COMES DOWN inches from his face--

Sabarrus STUMBLES BACK, momentarily caught off guard, barely a moment to regain his footing when HIS ATTACKER LUNGES AGAIN--

Sabarrus slips to one knee, looks up to see--

UMUR BEY -- SCIMITAR BLADE IN HAND, still in his white bedrobe, barefoot, a wild crazed look in his eyes --

Umur YELLS AND SWINGS THE SWORD -- Sabarrus propels himself backward with his legs, gaining enough seconds to DRAW HIS OWN SWORD--

THEIR BLADES CLASH -- Sabarrus plants his feet like tree trunks and PUSHES UMUR'S SCIMITAR with his body weight, sending Umur STUMBLING BACK--

But Umur quickly recovers and LUNGES AGAIN -- they parry back and forth; for a long moment their swordplay is evenly matched, two battle-tested warriors in skilled combat.

Umur LATCHES ONTO the satchel, tries to TUG IT OFF of Sabarrus -- but the big beast SHOVES HIM OFF and SWINGS HIS BLADE in a downward arc, Umur narrowly avoiding the attack--

Sabarrus tries to MAKE A BREAK for the gates again -- but Umur once more LEAPS INTO HIS PATH -- his scimitar BLOCKING the beast's escape--

Enraged, Sabarrus DUCKS BENEATH UMUR'S BLADE and CLASPS ONTO the Turk's throat, tries to CRUSH it--

But with his free hand, Umur SLIPS OUT A DAGGER from his back and DRIVES IT INTO SABARRUS'S LEG -- Sabarrus ROARS and momentarily LETS GO OF UMUR'S THROAT -- then RAMS HIM INTO A WALL OF SPEARS -- the weapons all CLATTER to the ground--

Umur REACHES for one of the fallen spears, but Sabarrus GRABS HIM WITH BOTH HANDS and LIFTS HIM off the ground with unnatural strength--

Umur GRIPS THE KNIFE HANDLE sticking out of Sabarrus's leg, PULLS IT OUT and JAMS IT BACK INTO HIS RIBS -- Sabarrus ROARS AGAIN and drops him--

Umur GRABS A SPEAR--

Slightly weakened from the blade in his ribs, Sabarrus makes a DESPERATE LEAP for Umur--

Using his bare foot, Umur quickly SLIDES A SECOND SPEAR across the floor--

Moving too quickly, Sabarrus STEPS ON THE ROLLING SPEAR AND STUMBLES--

-- AND IMPALES HIMSELF ONTO UMUR'S FIRST SPEAR -- through his chest and out his back--

For the first time since we've met him, Sabarrus's face registers genuine shock. He looks down at the spear in his chest, then looks up to see--

-- Umur GRAB HIS SCIMITAR and swing in one fluid motion -- LOPPING SABARRUS'S HEAD CLEAN OFF--

Sabarrus's head rolls along the floor as his headless corpse crumples in a lifeless heap.

His white bedrobe and his face stained in crimson, Umur stands over Sabarrus's corpse, sword dripping with blood.

He crouches down and yanks the satchel off of Sabarrus's body, the shroud still in tact.

INT. INFIRMARY — LATER THAT NIGHT

Gianluca is laid out on a long table, a couple of physicians standing over him. Farik stands off to the side, watching.

Umur stands in the doorway, bloodied, satchel in hand. A broken man.

The physicians cower as they turn to face Umur.

PHYSICIAN

There is nothing more we can do.

His voice almost trembles.

PHYSICIAN

He is in Allah's hands now.

Umur approaches slowly. Gently takes Gianluca's hand in his. Shows him the satchel.

UMUR

Your shroud is safe, my friend.

Almost gone, Gianluca manages a smile.

GIANLUCA

It was never about the shroud...

He coughs up some blood. Umur fights back tears.

GIANLUCA

It's what it represents...

Weakly he points to Umur's chest.

GIANLUCA

It will never lead you astray...

He lays his head back, his eyes glazed over.

GIANLUCA

Ma'a as-salama, my friend...

His eyes close and his head drops to the side, as his last breath leaves his body.

Umur, still gripping his hand, buries his head in Gianluca's chest and weeps.

EXT. COURTYARD, IMPERIAL PALACE - CONSTANTINOPLE - DAY

Another sunny morning in the Byzantine capital.

Anna sits on the veranda, peacefully watching her son play in the gardens below.

VOICE (O.S)

Empress...

Anna turns to find Alexios and an Imperial guard approach.

The guard places an ornate bronze box on the table in front of her, a small lion engraved into the lid.

ALEXIOS

A gift has arrived for you.

She glances curiously at Alexios.

ALEXIOS

From Umur Bey.

Immediately apprehensive, Anna slowly touches the edges of the box with her graceful fingers.

She lifts the lid open to reveal--

THE HEAD OF SABARRUS -- lifeless eyes staring up at her--

Gritting her jaw in rage, she pushes the box away and gets up, storms off into the palace.

Alexios peers into the box, a shocked expression on his face.

Off Sabarrus's severed head...

EXT. CYPRIOT SHIP - AEGEAN SEA - NIGHT

Haroun leans over the edge of the ship, watching the waters ahead underneath a full moon.

Charny steps beside him, joins his gaze out at the waters.

CHARNY

The bishop has given word.

Haroun looks at him.

CHARNY

Tomorrow we leave for Smyrna.

Charny turns, locks eyes with Haroun. Holds his steely gaze for a beat, then walks off.

Haroun returns his gaze back at the endless sea, his hand nervously gripping the hilt of his sword.

HAROUN

The vengeance of Allah comes for you
at last, Umur Bey...

FADE OUT