

THE KING'S COURT

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FADE IN:

EXT. DUKE'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The moon, full in the sky, casts a heavenly glow on a pair of corpses that lie against the stone wall lining the estate.

A SILHOUETTE prowls along the roof, the moon outlines its lurking form.

INT. DUKE'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A small room, with limited accommodation, but a tall chest by the door. An orange hue, from a few candles, light the room.

Two armed GUARDS drink at a small table. They grumble while they count coins from a small pile.

A faint TAP grabs their attention. They climb to their feet and draw their swords. Suspiciously, they look to the window.

TAP, TAP, TAP.

Guard #1 creeps to the window. He opens it and stares into the emptiness of the night. He glances over his shoulder and shrugs nonchalantly at his partner.

With inhuman speed, a CLOCKED FIGURE flips in from the open window. He tackles Guard #1 and thrusts his dagger deep into his sternum while remaining as silent as the grave.

Guard #2 raises his sword and opens his mouth to yell.

DANTÉS, early 30s, long wavy hair, clean-shaven, athletic build, with gauntleted hands, sends a barrage of metallic NEEDLES into Guard #2, silencing him.

Guard #2 loses his grip on his sword and falls. Dantés rolls and catches him. He sticks his foot out to catch the sword just before it crashes into the floor.

The door flings open. An unsuspecting Guard #3 spots Dantés and his fallen comrades.

Guard #3 unsheathes his sword.

GUARD #3

Hey --

Hypnotized, his PUPILS expand. He freezes in place. Dantés looks over his shoulder.

MELINA, late 20s, long black hair, olive skin awakens from a lying on her side atop the bed.

MELINA

There you stand, corpse filling
hand while I sit here, wet with
desire.

Guard #3 closes the door behind himself as he enters. He kneels at Melina's feet. Melina keeps her eyes on Guard #3.

DANTÉS

Your desires will be met in time,
but how did you find such position
upon your back?

Guard #3 raises a knife to his throat.

MELINA

With a warm smile and a tongue of
silver, any man would dare to
wrestle the moon from the sky.

Guard #3 slits his throat. With grace, Melina sets him on the floor. Dantés sets his victim under the table with less care.

LAUGHTER from the background steals their attention.

Melina springs to her feet and stands in Dantés' shadow. She draws a sai.

MELINA (CONT'D)

Shall we extend our pleasure, or
are we pressed for time?

Melina rubs a sai along Dantés' back. He grabs her hand and shakes his head. Melina sighs.

Dantés shoots NEEDLES at the candles, darkening the room.

The door opens and SLAMS into the wall. Light from the hall outlines SALINA, late 20s, well dressed, long silky hair.

With a tray in hand, she enters casually.

Dantés, on top of the chest by the door, studies her every step like a hungry lion in the pride lands.

He descends to the floor, soundless. He creeps behind Salina, he mimics each step with muted, yet trained precision.

Salina stops. She checks the doorway. Dantés crouches low and bends just out of her peripheral vision.

Salina huffs and continues to the bed. She stumbles.

She stares down at her feet.

Guard #1, with a cup in hand, lies motionless on the floor.

SALINA

Even the hardest of men can be
defeated by drink.

Salina notices the other guards with empty cups and laughs.
She strolls to the bed and sets the tray on the night stand.

Melina lies in bed with her back turned, eyes open wide and
her hand on her sai.

SALINA (CONT'D)

Yet, they still sneak a whore into
my husband's house...

A fire lights in Melina's eyes.

Salina turns to leave. Dantés turns with her, staying out of
her line of sight.

Melina rises from the bed. She raises her sai. Dantés grabs
her wrist, puts a hand on her mouth and shakes his head.

Salina exits.

DANTÉS

You slip from reason.

Melina grabs Dantés and pulls him in close.

MELINA

Have I?

She thrusts her body into him. Melina kisses Dantés. She
pulls back and bites his lower lip.

Entranced by her, Dantés undresses her with his eyes. Melina
smirks and escapes into the hall.

Dantés shakes his head and sighs.

INT. DUKE'S RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

ROYALTY bicker back and forth.

Dantés, lurks beside a wall, observes, then creeps down the
hall, keeping his presence hidden.

INT. DUKE'S RESIDENCE - STUDY - NIGHT

Bookshelves form giant columns.

ISHMAEL, 30s, sits at his desk. He eats a Mediterranean Sweet rolls from a platter. He reads from a ledger.

Dantés steps through a curtain into the huge open hearth, dagger in hand.

Dantés sets his dagger upon Ishmael's throat and his hand over his mouth. Ishmael's eyes grow wide with horror.

DANTÉS

All the coin in the world will not
keep treasonous blood from painting
stone.

Ishmael shakes his head. Dantés throws Ishmael from the chair and stabs him in the heart. Life fades from Ishmael's eyes.

Dantés wipes his blade clean on Ishmael's shirt. His eyes glide over to the platter of rolls.

SALINA (O.S.)

Ishmael, your bed has need of you.

Dantés whips his head to the curtain, down the hall --

Salina enters. She stands alone and rubs her eyes.

SALINA (CONT'D)

Ishmael?

Salina's foot bumps into Ishmael, she glances down.

SALINA (CONT'D)

Ishmael!

Salina drops to her knees, her hands fall to Ishmael's chest.

She holds up her hands. Blood paints them. Her sobs break like thunder.

Dantés sits on the ground, on opposite side of a bookshelf. He takes in her agony with deep reverence.

He escapes with his anonymity intact.

EXT. DUKE'S RESIDENCE - BALCONY - NIGHT

Dantés tears off a bite of the roll.

His eyes drift to his hands, he glances at the small yin-yang tattoo set in a feudal crest by his thumb.

EXT. DUKE'S RESIDENCE - ROOF - NIGHT

SOMBRA, 20s, throws back the hood of her cloak, revealing seductive eyes and death white skin.

She studies Dantés as he escapes from the residence. A twisted smile crosses her lips.

INT. DANTÉS' RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY

SUPER: SPANISH KINGDOM OF GRANADA 1327

Dantés slumbers next to Melina who snores.

A KNOCK pounds the door. Dantés, dagger in hand, jolts awake.

EXT. DANTÉS' PORCH - DAY

A liveried MESSENGER, female, stands on the porch. The door opens, Dantés stands in the doorway and rubs his eyes.

MESSENGER

His Majesty requests your presence.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S CHAMBERS - DAY

King LORENZO, mid 30s, tall, muscular, grooms his beard as he admires himself in the mirror.

A golden necklace hangs around his neck with an emblem, a cross on one side, a Yin-Yang on the other.

Prince RAMIRO, late 20s, slim build, blond hair and pale blue eyes, mocks Lorenzo with laughter.

RAMIRO

I have been absent many months and
you lecture me on 'true' love?

Ramiro's laugh shakes the heavens.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Please! True love is
indistinguishable from The Plague.

LORENZO

The Plague...

RAMIRO

Yes, both cause hallucinations and are dangerous to society. One more so than the other...

LORENZO

Father must be turning in his grave at the sound of your stupidity.

RAMIRO

Dead men hold little relevance in current affairs.

LORENZO

Does the marriage rejection to the princess of Castile pain you so?

Ramiro shakes his head in disagreement.

RAMIRO

Just pushed me in a new direction.

LORENZO

Your schemes in the dark have not gone beneath notice. Collecting property, establishing power you --

A KNOCK thumps on the door.

RAMIRO

Your condescension is appreciated, but no less motivating.

Lorenzo shakes his head. Ramiro storms to the door and opens it. Messenger does a curtsy. Dantés gives a slight bow.

Ramiro exits, they enter. Messenger escorts Dantés to the center of the room; she does a low curtsy.

MESSENGER

Your Majesty, may I present, Fernando Dantés to you.

Dantés bows low. Lorenzo nods.

Messenger glides toward the door. Dantés extends his arm to hinder her path. He surrenders his daggers to her.

She accepts them, then exits.

LORENZO

The cost of loyalty is high, is it not, Dantés?

DANTÉS

My lord?

LORENZO

I was thinking of Ramiro and... pay
it no mind, it is a trivial matter.

Silence.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

You do not have to relinquish your
daggers when you enter my chambers.

DANTÉS

My liege, there is no reason to
keep them on my person.

LORENZO

Some things never change...

DANTÉS

No, they just grow older and
hopefully less foolish.

They both laugh and share an embrace.

LORENZO

Come, we must honor those that
paved the path before us.

EXT. CASTLE - MARKET - DAY

Dantés and Lorenzo enter.

FLORIN, early 30s, stocky build, dark hair, shops with NÍNA,
early teens, long hair, pale skin, big eyes.

Nína measures a dress against her frame.

She locks eyes with Dantés. Her smile captures him, he stops
and lags behind Lorenzo. Dantés bows low.

Nína fails to hide her cheek to cheek smile.

Dantés gives a discrete nod to Florin. Florin returns the
gesture. Florin pickpockets a man who passes. He gives the
coin purse to the DRESS MAKER.

TYDUS, late 20s, pale skin, slim, but toned build, lifts his
goblet in the air and finishes his wine.

Ty Dus tosses the cup on the ground, he enters a brothel.

Dantés shakes his head.

EXT. ROYAL GRAVEYARD - DAY

Lorenzo and Dantés stand in front of a series of graves with their heads bowed, hands folded in prayer.

LORENZO
The greats are always taken before
their time...

INSERT - GRAVES

"KING LÉON, QUEEN SOPHIA, PAULO DANTÉS, ISABELLA DANTÉS"

BACK TO SCENE

Lorenzo lifts his head, he grabs his necklace's emblem.

DANTÉS
My lord!

Dantés stretches over Lorenzo and snatches an arrow from the air just before it strikes him.

Dantés shifts his attention to the wall to --

A cloaked ARCHER upon the wall. He loads another arrow.

LORENZO
What is happening --

Dantés snatches a dagger from Lorenzo's belt. He pushes past Lorenzo and sprints to Archer.

Archer lets his arrow fly; Dantés DEFLECTS it. Archer hops down the opposite side of the wall.

Dantés runs to a thick tree. He leaps, plants a foot onto the tree and vaults over the wall.

EXT. GRANADA - STREET - DAY

Archer KNOCKS a few people to the ground as he scurries by. Dantés hurdles over the fallen in pursuit.

Archer pulls a wagon into the path.

Dantés SLIDES under it. Dantés shoots a barrage of NEEDLES at Archer. Archer cuts around a corner, unharmed.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

MERCHANTS line the walls.

Dantés turns the corner. An arrow SOARS through the air, He sidesteps, the arrow passes by his face.

A crowd gathers between Archer and Dantés.

Dantés dashes up a wall, he launches a line of NEEDLES. They thrash Archer in his back. Archer plunges to the ground.

Dantés, dagger in hand, advances upon Archer.

DANTÉS

Choose your words with sense and
you may live.

Archer freezes. Dantés presses his boot to his head.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Silence doesn't meet my request.

Dantés glances over his shoulder.

BELTRÁN, mid 20s, clean shaven, enjoys a meal with KATRINA (early 20s, long hair, pregnant) and FERNANDO (10).

Beltrán reaches into his cloak. Dantés waves him off discreetly. He nods and returns his attention to his family.

Dantés flips Archer over, the hilt of a knife protrudes from Archer's chest. Dantés scans the crowd, eyes fall upon him.

Dantés pulls his hood over his head, he vanishes.

EXT. ROYAL GRAVE YARD - DAY

Lorenzo stands by the graves. Dantés enters.

LORENZO

Glad that business is behind us.

DANTÉS

Matters of state security should be
taken more seriously.

LORENZO

Here we stand, does that cover
needed ground?

Dantés scowls. His eyes shift to Salina's as she passes entrance of the graveyard. His eyes fall to the dirt.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

You still carry the shame of what you have done?

DANTÉS

Ishmael never raised a hand against you nor did he aid those known to stand against you.

LORENZO

Speak plainly, I'm not in the mood for mystery or obscured purpose.

DANTÉS

My hands claimed an innocent life. He fell for base desires.

Lorenzo glares at Dantés. Dantés bows.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Apologies, I lose myself in the heat of the moment.

LORENZO

Yes, you do, but your tongue carries knowledge.

Dantés lifts his head.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Allow me the opportunity to address the grievous injury that my order has caused. I want you to lead the negotiations with Castile.

DANTÉS

Has my service been unsatisfactory? Do I no longer serve a purpose?

LORENZO

You mistake intent. Any brute can swing steel. I need a man, strong of empathy, to make a treaty with a man who would rather be my enemy.

DANTÉS

But the prince...

LORENZO

The apathetic prince is more taken with pride, coin and women. He'll not suffer more than a scratch...

Lorenzo puts a hand on Dantés' shoulder.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Should you accept, success will no longer be rewarded with hands slick with blood.

DANTÉS
My only desire is to serve you and the people of this kingdom. If that be with words, then so be it.

LORENZO
Gratitude.

A weight is lifted off Lorenzo' shoulders.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
I will announce your new station at the assembly tomorrow. For now, our presence is required elsewhere.

INT. CASTLE - ANTECHAMBER - DAY

A circular room with no accommodations. A TESTEE stands in the center of the room. Guards flank him.

Lorenzo and Dantés enter. All eyes turn on them.

LORENZO
Proceed.

GUARD #1
Your Highness.

Lorenzo and Dantés stand in the corner.

LORENZO
I am grateful for you. The last Testee went mad after they were found to be less than expected.

Dantés conjures a needle, he twirls it among his fingers.

DANTÉS
Who would have thought that the light from a falling star could change a man's fate...

Testee fixes his eyes straight ahead.

GUARD #2
Do you swear up until the pain of death to protect his majesty, if found worthy?

TESTEE

I do solemnly swear.

Testee lifts his hand. Guard #1 PRICKS his hand with a small dagger. Guard #1 smears red blood on a piece of paper.

Guard #1 shakes his head.

GUARD #1

Negative.

LORENZO

Thank you for indulging such a silly spectacle.

Testee gives a slight bow, exits.

Lorenzo nods. Guard #2 shuffles to the door, opens it. Beltrán enters, he slides to the center of the room.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

All that stands before your brother now is formality.

GUARD #2

Do you swear up until --

LORENZO

Get on with it.

Guard #2 nods.

Beltrán raises his hand. Guard #1 pricks his hand with the dagger, smears the blood on a piece of paper.

The blood smears BLUE.

Guard #2 turns to Lorenzo, he nods in affirmation.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Get him marked.

INT. CASTLE - HALLWAY - DAY

Lorenzo and Dantés enter.

LORENZO

I stand with empty hands, something I must address before the meeting.

Lorenzo exits.

Messenger approaches, Dantés collects his daggers.

Dantés' NEEDLES manifest, they point to an obscure hallway.
Ramiro, shrouded in darkness, stands lurking.

RAMIRO
Spare me a moment, Assassin.

EXT. CASTLE - INNER COURTYARD - DAY

A statue basks in the sun. Ramiro ambles into its shadow, he nibbles on a Mediterranean Sweet Roll.

Dantés enters. He inspects his surroundings. His hand drifts inside his cloak.

DANTÉS
Darkness cannot shroud ill intent.

Dantés spins, he throws a dagger into the darkness at Sombra. Steel CLASHES against steel.

RAMIRO
You cannot overcome one above your station with brute force alone.

Sombra slinks to Dantés, she hands him his dagger. He places his hand on its hilt. Dantés and Sombra measure each other.

He accepts the dagger and sheathes it. Sombra fades into obscurity. Dantés studies her movements.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Try to stay in the moment.

Dantés brings his narrowed eyes to Ramiro. They fall upon the roll Ramiro nibbles on.

Dantés wipes the scowl from his face, he slinks to Ramiro and gives a slight bow.

Ramiro, between bites, hands Dantés a sealed letter.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
In your wildest fantasy, did you suspect you would work for me?

Dantés furrows his brow.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
I needed Ishmael removed to claim his property. Much less personal than what the king set his eyes to.

Dantés cuts Ramiro with his eyes, he TEARS open the letter. His eyes flare open.

DANTÉS

This, is an order to kill the king?

RAMIRO

As an assassin, that is your duty,
or am I mistaken?

DANTÉS

This must be a --

RAMIRO

When hunting such lavish game, one
must be armed with the proper tool.

Dantés presses Ramiro against the statue. Ramiro drops the roll. Dantés plants a dagger to Ramiro's throat.

A knife appears on Dantés' throat. Sombra's eyes blaze behind Dantés. Ramiro shakes his head discreetly.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

He still has a role to play.

Dantés scowls. Blood runs down the blade at his throat. Sombra doesn't budge, Ramiro shrugs.

Ramiro reaches into his shirt, Dantés stops him. He reaches into Ramiro's pocket and pulls out a similar letter.

Dantés opens it.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

That letter, which I have another,
states that you sent an assassin
after His Majesty this day.

Dantés presses Ramiro into the statue with more force.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

You're observant, the first was
written by a foreign hand.

Silence.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Take it to the king, if you must.
He will see an unknown script,
painting you a traitor.

Ramiro touches the tip of Dantés' dagger.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
We know where that leads...

Dantés releases Ramiro. Sombra lowers her blade. Dantés storms to the door.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
The king will fall.

Dantés plants his feet and stops in the archway.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
What remains uncertain is whether
or not you fall with him, Assassin.

Dantés exits. A devious smile spreads across Ramiro's face.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S COURT MEETING CHAMBER - DAY

A round table rests in the middle.

Melina, Beltrán and Florin occupy the table. Seven marble statues rest on pedestals around the perimeter.

A parchment is pinned on the wall beside the door.

INSERT - PARCHMENT - THE CODE OF LORENZO

- The Taking Of Innocent Life Is Punishable By Death
- Fighting Among Court Members Is Forbidden
- Assignments Can Only Be Given By The Royal Family
- Failure to Stay Anonymous Will Result In Your Execution
- This Court Is Limited To Proven Magic Users Only

BACK TO SCENE

Dantés enters. He connects with Beltrán.

Beltrán presses his palms together, Dantés returns the gesture and both give a slight bow.

DANTÉS
Have you visited our parents?

BELTRÁN

Time is best spent with those yet
of this world. Yet, my son carries
his practice sword with pride...

Ashamed, Dantés nods.

He takes his seat next to Melina. He produces a vial with
dark liquid.

Melina puts a hand on Dantés' thigh. A wrist blade creeps
from under her sleeve and points to his belly.

Dantés holds a dagger to Melina's throat.

DANTÉS

We can both die right now if it
pleases you, Eloy.

Melina MORPHS into ELOY, 30s, bald, thick beard.

ELOY

As sharp as ever, old friend.

Eloy rises and takes another seat.

DANTÉS

You use that term rather loosely...

Melina enters. She takes her seat beside Dantés. She huffs
and snatches the vial and drinks its contents.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Imagine if your mother and sister
acted with such disregard for --

Lorenzo, with a scroll in hand, enters.

Everyone rises to their feet.

LORENZO

You may take your seats.

All, but Lorenzo, sit.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

First, I would like to introduce
our newest member, Beltrán.

Beltrán stands, he pulls his shirt outward and reveals a yin-
yang tattoo on his neck.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Like all of you, talent courses
through his veins.

All verify the tattoo.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Now, time is a luxury afforded only
to the dead; so I'll be brief.

Lorenzo unravels the scroll, a map of the city of Guadix. He points to the map as he speaks.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Here, in the western district,
Ramiro's scouts have located a Safe
House that the Outlaws utilize.

Dantés narrows his brow. Melina catches the gesture.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
I have yet to find their
benefactor, but in time --

A KNOCK thunders against the door.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
You may enter.

Messenger enters with a tray of goblets and a pitcher. Lorenzo accepts a chalice. She fills it with red wine.

She fills a goblet for each member. She exits.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Ride out for the glory of the
kingdom. Be there by nightfall and
as always, keep to the code!

Dantés, Florin, Melina and Beltrán raise their drinks in a toast. Eloy leaves his grail on the table.

DANTÉS
To the code!

Dantés, Beltrán, Melina and Florin sip their wine. A KNOCK raps on the door.

LORENZO
Enter.

Messenger enters, does a quick curtsy, hands Lorenzo a note, exits. Lorenzo reads the scribe.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
 Hmm... Ramiro indicates that Dantés
 can handle this alone...

DANTÉS
 I... request Melina's assistance.

LORENZO
 Apologies, but your desire is
 denied. I have a task set for
 Melina's unique talents.

Melina smiles at Dantés.

All exit except Dantés and Lorenzo. Dantés finds his feet.

DANTÉS
 My lord, we must break words.

LORENZO
 Shatter them quickly, or you will
 find yourself speaking to my ghost.

DANTÉS
 This may be a hard truth to --

The door of the chamber SLAMS against the wall. A Royal
 Guard, VICTOR, 30s, enters. He leans over, pants.

VICTOR
 Pardon the interruption, my lord.

LORENZO
 Find your breath, then tell me what
 spouts this haste?

VICTOR
 A crowd has gathered at the Puga
 Estate. A noble killed a commoner,
 the crowd roars for blood!

Lorenzo puts a hand on Dantés' shoulder.

LORENZO
 We shall address this matter later
 and raise a cup to your victory!

Lorenzo exits with Victor in tow.

EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS - STABLE - DAY

Dantés pulls his horse, RAUL, from the stable.

DANTÉS

You enjoy a hard earned sleep?

The steed neighs.

He mounts the beast, SNAPS the reigns, gallops from the castle with haste.

EXT. GUADIX - ROAD - DUSK

A two story taupe Safe House. A tarp shade cloaks vendor's stand in front of the house.

A pair of GUARDS stand watch.

Dantés rides Raul towards the Safe House. Dantés pulls his hood low over his forehead.

The Guards spot him, load their bows.

Dantés sends a barrage of NEEDLES at them. His needles ring true, the guards plummet to the ground.

Dantés rises in his saddle to a crouch. He snatches his two daggers from their sheathes, draw them to his chest.

DANTÉS

Raul, now!

Raul PLANTS his hoofs in ground.

Dantés soars from the saddle, he CRASHES into the front door of the Safe House.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - ENTRY FOYER - DAY

Dantés burst through the door, he SMASHES into a Guard and knocks him unconscious. Dantés rolls on top of the door.

From the roll, Dantés lands a vicious kick on a Guard's chest, he flies into a table and DEMOLISHES it.

Dantés sends a volley of NEEDLES behind him, through his cloak, they stop a charging Guard in his tracks.

Dantés spins, he BLOCKS a sword attack with his daggers. The force knocks Dantés backwards.

Dantés rolls with the blow, he stops on a knee.

The Guard takes a mighty swing, Dantés parries the blow. With Guard open wide, he sends a dagger to his gut.

Guard plummets to the ground. Dantés studies the area.

Silence.

He sheathes his daggers and escapes down the hall.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Dantés slinks to a door, puts his hand on the door handle.
Metal RINGS in the background.

Dantés whips around, a WARRIOR swings a sword his way. Dantés catches Warrior's sword hand.

Warrior pushes Dantés against the wall. Dantés reaches for his dagger, Warrior stops him.

Dantés stomps Warrior's foot, Warrior groans. Dantés snatches his dagger, plunges it into Warrior's heart.

Dantés puts a hand over Warrior's mouth and sets him on the floor with ease.

Dantés checks both sides of the hall. Alone, he snatches his other dagger, steps to the door, KICKS it open.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Daggers in hand, Dantés strolls inside. LEADER (30s) stares out the window, back to Dantés.

DANTÉS

You knew this day was coming.

LEADER

Did you?

Leader turns, he has a Mediterranean Sweet roll in hand. Dantés dashes forward, tackles him and presses a dagger to his throat.

LEADER (CONT'D)

Ramiro sent you, did he not?

Dantés leans back with wide open eyes.

DANTÉS

Speak, and avoid riddles.

Two NEEDLES hover over Leader's eyes.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

I'm not beyond testing your words
against the influence of pain.

LEADER

Ramiro paid me to destroy the crops
last year! Now, here you stand...

DANTÉS

What prompts this madness?

LEADER

I cannot say, but here you are,
helping him get what he wants, or
standing clear of his path...

Dantés looks away. Leader's hand slides inside his shirt.

Dantés snaps his attention back to Leader, he puts force
behind his dagger.

LEADER (CONT'D)

Mercy...

DANTÉS

Mercy? Thousands starved, where was
your sentiment then?

Dantés executes Leader. He climbs to his feet, sheathes his
daggers and WHISTLES loudly.

He darts to the window and leaps outside.

EXT. GUADIX - SAFE HOUSE - DAY

The sun sets in the distance.

Dantés bounces off the tarp and onto the ground. Raul gallops
beside him. He mounts the beast and rides.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

The door SLAMS against the wall. Lorenzo jolts awake.

Sombra, shrouded by a cloak, stands in the doorway.

EXT. CASTLE - GATE - NIGHT

Dantés gallops inside. He dismounts, sprints to the castle.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Lorenzo sits in a chair. Sombra stands besides him with knife to his throat.

INT. CASTLE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Pockets of candlelight illuminate the hallway. Dantés rounds the corner, he dashes down the hall to the king's door.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

The door POUNDS against the wall. Dantés rolls inside. Daggers in hand, he inspects the room.

Salina lies in bed, Lorenzo slouches in his chair.

Dantés rises to his feet, bows.

DANTÉS

Your Majesty, please forgive my intrusion, but this could wait no longer.

Silence.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

My lord?

Dantés struts to Lorenzo, he puts his hand on Lorenzo's throat. Blood spills from his wound.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Lorenzo, Lorenzo!

Lorenzo looks up, he locks eyes with Dantés.

He drapes the Necklace of Rule around Dantés' neck. Dantés' eyes open wide.

He puts his hand on the back of Dantés' head, he pulls him in close. Lorenzo leans into Dantés' ear.

LORENZO

Fly...

Lorenzo's hand falls limp to his side. Dantés shakes him.

DANTÉS

Lorenzo! Lorenzo!

Dantés weeps. FOOTSTEPS echo in the hallway.

Dantés darts to the bed. He snatches the bedsheet from under Salina. She stirs awake.

Salina's eyes focus on Dantés' hands.

Dantés studies his hand, shakes his head.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
Milady, I --

Salina screams.

Dantés hops on the bed, he covers Salina's mouth. Blood smears over her lips and cheeks.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
This is not as I would have it.

FOOTSTEPS thunder in the background.

Dantés ties one end of the sheet to a bedpost, he grips the other tight. He locks eyes with Salina.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
I will move heaven and earth to --

Guards burst into the room. Dantés spurts for the window. He leaps through it and SHATTERS the glass.

EXT. CASTLE - WALL - NIGHT

Glass surrounds Dantés as he swings into the night. On his return, he soars toward a bedroom window.

INT. CASTLE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dantés CRASHES through the window and startles a COUPLE making love in bed.

Dantés brushes glass off his cloak and clears his throat.

DANTÉS
As you were.

He raises his hood and exits.

INT. CASTLE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dantés sprints down a corridor. A TALL GUARD and JORGE (20s) inhibit his path.

DANTÉS

I have not the time nor desire to
play with fodder like you --

Jorge and Tall Guard draw their swords.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Forgive my hands, they slip from
reason when cornered by fools.

Dantés dashes ahead.

A sword bears down on Dantés, he slides under it, in between
the Tall Guard's legs.

The letter slips from Dantés' pocket.

Dantés springs to his feet, he SMASHES Tall Guard's head into
the wall. Tall Guard drops, unconscious.

Jorge leaps into action. Dantés catches Jorge's hands, uses
the momentum to flip him onto his back.

Dantés puts Jorge into a sleeper hold.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Chase dreams, not blood this night.

Jorge passes out. Dantés releases him and raises his hood.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

You could be a hero, if you would
but open your eyes.

EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS - STABLE - NIGHT

Raul eats hay with the other horses. Dantés dashes and mounts
him. Raul neighs. Dantés rides into the night.

Victor and an entourage of Guards surge from the castle.

VICTOR

After him!

Dantés exits the gate. Victor, and several Guards, mount
their horses and give chase.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Salina sobs in bed.

Ramiro enters, he shifts his eyes from Lorenzo to the Guards.

RAMIRO
Why do I gaze upon your faces?

Silence.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
After him!

The Guards storm out of the room. Ramiro turns to Lorenzo.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Why does he lie absent breath?

Salina dashes from the bed and into his arms. She chokes back tears as she speaks.

SALINA
Dantés, he... he --

RAMIRO
You have lost much, my queen.

Ramiro draws a knife.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
But not everything.

Ramiro stabs Salina, she gasps.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Give the dead my regards.

Ramiro drops Salina. He cleans his blade and sheathes it.

Ramiro searches Lorenzo's corpse. Panic washes over Ramiro, he throws Lorenzo on the floor.

Royal Guards and Eloy enter.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
He's taken it!

ROYAL GUARD #1
My lord?

RAMIRO
The Necklace of Rule!

Eloy grins.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Coward, he will pay for all the damage he has done. Does anyone else know of this?

ROYAL GUARD #1
No, but --

RAMIRO
Good.

ROYAL GUARD #1
Good?

RAMIRO
The kingdom does not need another reason to fret. The king slipped from this world in his sleep.

ELOY
Yes, Your Majesty.... The king.

The Royal Guards and Eloy kneel before Ramiro. They put their fists over their hearts.

INT. CASTLE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tall Guard and Jorge gain consciousness.

TALL GUARD
You alive?

Jorge pats himself.

JORGE
Somewhat...

The Tall Guard spots the letter, picks it up, reads it. His eyes flare open.

TALL GUARD
Jorge, read this.

Jorge looks at the letter.

JORGE
Interesting, what does it say?

EXT. DANTÉS' RESIDENCE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

A pair of Royal Guards exit the house. They stand on the front porch, Melina leans against the doorway.

MELINA
Satisfied? I have not seen the man since daylight...

ROYAL GUARD #1
We will continue our search
elsewhere, my lady.

Royal Guards bow and leave. Melina closes the door.

INT. DANTÉS' RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Melina enters. She removes her cloak, it falls to the floor.

A hand covers her mouth. She grabs the person's wrist, throws them over her shoulder, onto the bed. In a flash, she has her sai at her intruder's heart.

MELINA
Your boldness hastens your death.

Melina throws back the intruder's hood.

MELINA (CONT'D)
Dantés?

Melina drops her sai, kisses him. Her hands fall to the necklace, she studies it, her eyes grow wide with alarm.

DANTÉS
The king... is no more.

MELINA
What?

DANTÉS
When I arrived, the king was slain.
The prince sent men, but I --

MELINA
How did you avoid detection?

DANTÉS
Melina, this is me...

Melina gives a seductive glance.

MELINA
Indeed.

Melina kisses Dantés. Dantés caresses her body. He rolls on top of her. He kisses her neck, then stops.

DANTÉS
I should not have come...

MELINA

Words... are not the best use of
your tongue.

Melina kisses Dantés. They hurry out of their clothes.

MELINA'S THIGH

Dantés' hand brushes up her thigh, over her yin-yang tattoo.

DANTÉS

Wait...

He stops as they are nearly naked. They lock eyes.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

If my hands were the cause of...

Melina puts her finger on Dantés' lips.

She kisses Dantés. Dantés pulls back, takes a step towards the door. Melina grabs his wrist.

MELINA

If Ramiro moves to take your life.

She pulls Dantés close, his ear lies beside her lips.

MELINA (CONT'D)

Then only God can stop me from
having you this night.

Dantés kisses Melina on her neck, removes her clothes. He kisses her chest, works his way down to her navel.

He plants his lips between her thighs.

Melina seizes the sheets, her MOANS grow loud. Dantés works his way back up, kisses her with deep passion.

She rolls on top of Dantés, they make passionate love.

INT. DANTÉS' RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY

Light filters through the bedroom window, Dantés awakens. Melina, in sheer night attire, snores next to him.

Soundless, Dantés rolls out of bed.

He puts on his pants, throws his cloak about his shoulders. He saunters to the bed and kneels beside Melina.

DANTÉS

I have known hell, a place where
life holds no value....

Dantés leans in, he kisses Melina on her forehead.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

I pray this path does not lead
toward that abyss...

Dantés climbs to his feet, he takes a step and Melina grabs his hand. He turns, they locks eyes.

MELINA

I would not have it so...

DANTÉS

The king offered me a diplomatic
position before he met his end...

Melina's eyes flare open.

MELINA

You promised we would marry when
death became a faded memory...

DANTÉS

Ramiro snatched that end from
deserving hands...

MELINA

Keep your feet firmly rooted.
Together, we can --

Dantés places a finger on Melina's lips and shakes his head.

MELINA (CONT'D)

But, with you gone...

Melina caresses her thigh.

MELINA (CONT'D)

Who will keep night's chill at bay?

Dantés puts his hand on her other thigh, rubs the length of it. Melina makes deep eye contact and smirks.

DANTÉS

I impatiently await for the taste
of your lips again.

Melina gives a feisty smile. He takes her hand, brings it to his lips, then kisses the back of her hand. Her smile fades.

Melina puts her fingers on the edge of Dantés' mouth, she forces a smile across his lips. She giggles.

Dantés shambles to the window. He stands there for a moment, turns to Melina and drinks her beauty with his eyes.

A tear falls from her eye. Dantés climbs through the window.

Wood SMACKS against stone in the background. Thunderous FOOTSTEPS echo in the hall.

The bedroom door CRASHES against the wall. Royal Guards flood into the room.

Melina, jumps to her feet. Her hands find her sai.

MELINA

Find yourselves removed, or find
yourselves heartless!

Victor steps in front of the Royal Guards.

VICTOR

You are summoned.

INT. CASTLE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

The nobility and trade masters fill the room.

Ramiro sits on the throne. The court HERALD stands beside Ramiro with the crown in his hands.

Melina, Eloy, Florin and Beltrán watch from a balcony above.

HERALD

King Lorenzo ruled his people with
dignity, love and humility.

Silence.

HERALD (CONT'D)

Now, with the passing of the king,
comes the end of an era, but opens
the doors to a new one.

Herald turns to Ramiro.

HERALD (CONT'D)

With the grace of God, may he rule
his people well.

Herald crowns Ramiro.

HERALD (CONT'D)
Long live the king!

CROWD
Long live the king! Long live the
king! Long live the king!

Melina, Eloy, Florin and Beltrán exit.

EXT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - PORCH - ÓRGIVA - DAY

Dantés BANGS on the door. He cuts his eyes from one side to the other, no one gives him a second thought.

He tucks the Necklace of Rule into his shirt.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Are you mad? You knock with the
intent to seize the place!

Dantés RAPS on the door harder. The door swings opens.

ANTONIO, early 40s, short hair, tall, muscular, menacing eyes, blocks the doorway. He studies Dantés.

DANTÉS
Is this the Cruz Residence, house
of Catalina?

ANTONIO
No, it's --

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
It is, who calls?

A timid girl, CATALINA, early 20s, fair skin, long hair, hazy eyes, flounces next to Antonio.

She pats Antonio's arm. She locks her arm around his elbow. Her line of sight is just off center of Dantés.

Dantés bows.

DANTÉS
I answer to Dantés, I am a member
of The King's Court.

Catalina aligns her line of sight as he speaks.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
King Lorenzo told me to come here
if ever I am in need...

Dantés peers into Catalina's eyes.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
You're blind?

CATALINA
I'm Granadan as well, but you did not state it aloud.

Antonio furrows his brow.

ANTONIO
One would think that Lorenzo would select from better stock.

Dantés glares at Antonio, returns his gaze to Catalina.

DANTÉS
How remiss of me, I meant no disrespect, my lady. I just... I just... have nowhere to go...

CATALINA
You know my --
(clears throat)
My king?

ANTONIO
He must have fallen on tough times to give this such high purpose.

DANTÉS
Your tongue leads you down a path of misery.
(to Catalina)
Will you grant me entry? There is much to discuss.

CATALINA
Certainly, my servant, Antonio, will show you to your quarters.

Dantés enters, Antonio shuts the door behind him.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - DAY

Antonio escorts Dantés.

ANTONIO
What brings you here?

Silence.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Dantés?

DANTÉS

All open mouths don't get fed.
Yours will, on my time, not yours.

Antonio grunts.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S COURT MEETING CHAMBER - DAY

Melina, Eloy, Florin and Beltrán wait in their seats and speak among themselves.

Ramiro enters, all fall silent.

RAMIRO

Greetings, Assassins.

Silence.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Recent events have saddened my kingdom, but they have also spurred us, the valiant, to action.

Melina, Florin and Beltrán leer at one another.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

It is our duty to bring justice to those that would dare to shake our unshakable resolve.

Melina, Florin and Beltrán give discreet nods.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Fernando Dantés is an enemy of this kingdom. I commission you to bring the weight of justice on his head!

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Dantés enters a modest bedroom with Antonio in tow.

Antonio's hand slides inside his shirt, out comes a small pickaxe with a curved blade. He swings at Dantés' neck.

Dantés, dagger in hand, spins and --

INT. CASTLE - KING'S COURT MEETING CHAMBER - DAY

Eloy grins. Melina's hand slides inside her cloak.

RAMIRO

Who longs for hero renown?

Eloy stands with a stern visage.

ELOY

Opportunity waits for no man. Where
should I begin?

Ramiro scratches his chin. A wicked smile crosses his lips.

RAMIRO

He isn't foolish enough to stay
within the city, but he would
remain close enough to strike as
the serpent he is...

Ramiro scratches his chin.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Start in Órgiva...

Eloy bows.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Be sure to bring back my jewelry.

Eloy smirks, then exits.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

With this matter settled, I set my
sights to Castile.

FLORIN

The Kingdom of Castile, my lord?

RAMIRO

Yes, their princess will learn the
cost of rejecting noble blood.

Ramiro heads to the door.

FLORIN

My lord, our army pales in
comparison to --

RAMIRO

Then I will go into construction,
with the peasantry as my mortar.

Silence.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
But first, a remnant of my
brother's past must be addressed.

Ramiro approaches the door, opens it, stops and stares at
"The Code of Lorenzo".

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Florin, I expect you at my throne.

Ramiro tears the parchment from the wall, then exits.

BELTRÁN
The change in the wind pushes us
toward unfavorable ports.

Melina leaps from her seat. She snatches her sai from its
sheath and dashes to the door.

Florin hops to his feet, he grabs her. She spins him around,
SLAMS him into the wall. A marble statue beside them sways.

BELTRÁN (CONT'D)
Your hand strikes to appease the
wound inflicted upon your heart...

The statue falls from the stand, it SHATTERS on the floor.

BELTRÁN (CONT'D)
Absent thought of its cost...

Melina points her sai at Beltrán.

MELINA
There you sit with your tail
between your legs as your brother
is condemned to death!

BELTRÁN
Properly cloaked death is never
seen before it strikes.

MELINA
I tire of your fucking riddles!

BELTRÁN
Taking the stage before the
appointed hour invites calamity.

Beltrán exits.

Melina turns her attention to Florin, raises a sai to his throat. He lifts his hands in defense.

FLORIN
Patience, Melina. Ramiro's dealings
lead him to his ruin.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Dantés BLOCKS Antonio's strike.

ANTONIO
Ah, you are more than I suspected.

DANTÉS
Have you lost your mind?

ANTONIO
Hardly, only heart.

DANTÉS
I took you as a mere servant --

Antonio draws a second pickaxe. Dantés retrieves his second dagger. Antonio swings, Dantés IMPEDES the attack.

ANTONIO
A man can serve more than one
purpose, my friend.

Dantés pushes Antonio back.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
The same as his words.

Dantés BUMPS his shin into the leg of the bed. Antonio attacks, Dantés BLOCKS.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
If I speculate that you will hurt
her, if I even hallucinate that you
will so much as step on her toes...

Dantés attacks, Antonio parries.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
I will end you.

Antonio sweeps Dantés' feet from under him. Dantés CRASHES to the floor.

DANTÉS
You speak as if it will be easy.

Dantés raises his hand, NEEDLES materialize.

Antonio holds up his index and middle finger, waves them through the air; Dantés' needles EVAPORATE.

ANTONIO
Easier yet!

Antonio kicks a dagger from Dantés' hand.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Farewell, Dantés.

Antonio brings his pickaxe down and --

CATALINA (O.S.)
Is everything to your liking?

Antonio stops his attack short of its mark.

Catalina stands in the doorway with a hand against its frame. Antonio and Dantés stare at her.

ANTONIO
Blanket the fires in your mind, my lady.

CATALINA
I thought I heard...

ANTONIO
Dantés here tripped and his daggers banged against each other.

CATALINA
Surely, Dantés, a man of the court would know proper footing.

Catalina giggles as she saunters away.

DANTÉS
I have never fought one such as you.

Dantés climbs to his feet.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
You should be in the court!

Antonio mocks him with laughter.

ANTONIO
 How much I would pay for your
 youth... but I would not bid a coin
 for your wits.

Silence.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
 You think he would put his
 strongest in the castle?

Antonio mocks Dantés with laughter.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
 He requested his best to protect
 that which is truly important.

Antonio turns his back on Dantés.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
 I am above the court. Only I am
 able to command these hands.

Antonio exit.

INT. CASTLE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Ramiro, with a scroll in hand, enters.

Florin, at the window, turns to meet Ramiro. Florin bows.

RAMIRO
 You a gambling man, Assassin? Rumor
 is that dice is your game...

FLORIN
 The dead cannot be resurrected.

RAMIRO
 You willing to wager that?

FLORIN
 What end do you seek?

RAMIRO
 Your unequivocal cooperation.

FLORIN
 You have my cooperation --

RAMIRO
 But not unvarnished.

Ramiro raises the parchment.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
This deed grants me ownership of
your property. Do I have your
cooperation now, Assassin?

Florin takes a deep breath, he exhales.

FLORIN
Possessions, can be obtained again.

RAMIRO
How about we raise the stakes?
(to the door)
Sombra...

Sombra enters, she drags Nína in tow. Tear lines run down
Nína's cheeks. Florin's eyes grow wide.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Does this prompt you to be more
accommodating, Assassin?

Florin draws a throwing knife.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
You think that is wise?

Sombra swings Nína in front of her.

NÍNA
Florin --

Sombra presses a knife against Nína's throat.

FLORIN
Kings do not threaten children --

RAMIRO
No, kings do not receive advice
from men in your station.

Florin cuts his attention between the knife at Nína's throat
and Ramiro.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
It was a shame what befell her
father, but, to my benefit, his
sacrifice bred this situation.

Ramiro shakes his head.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
It's a pity what loyalty costs
these days...

Florin glances at his knife.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Perhaps a little more incentive is
in order.

Sombra locks eyes with Florin, his PUPILS dilate.

FLORIN
What madness is this?

Florin creeps toward Nína. The knife shakes in his hand.

RAMIRO
Resist all you want, but no one is
beyond Sombra's influence.

Florin flounders to Nína, he holds the knife to her eye.
Tears run down Nína's face.

NÍNA
Florin... please...

Florin's eyes well up, he bites his lip.

RAMIRO
Assassin, now is the time to make a
critical decision.

Florin's knife inches closer to Nína's eye.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Refrain from action, then this girl
will have to browse for a new eye
in the marketplace.

NÍNA
Florin...

Florin sighs.

FLORIN
My hands are at your will...

Ramiro nods to Sombra, she breaks eye contact with Florin.

Florin's eyes return to normal, he catches his breath. He
takes a few steps from Nína, sheathes his knives.

Nína takes a step toward Florin, Sombra yanks her back.

FLORIN (CONT'D)

This is how I am to be repaid for
my service?

RAMIRO

Consider this another beaming
opportunity to express your
unflinching loyalty.

Florin storms to the door.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Currency is a precious resource.

Florin stops at the doorway.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

So I will turn your estate into a
brothel if you fail. And...

Ramiro saunters to Nina, puts his thumb and index finger on
her chin, raises her chin and forces intimate eye contact.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

This lovely virgin gem will be my
brothel's main course, if you come
back with empty hands.

Florin's hatred seeps from his eyes.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Be sure to return what Dantés wears
around his neck.

Florin exits. Sombra makes her way to a corridor.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Keep an eye on them.

Sombra stops.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

But keep your distance. An animal
is most dangerous when cornered.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Catalina, with her hand on the wall, glides down the
candlelit hallway. Her hand slides against the door frame,

She squares herself to the room, opens the door. Light
filters inside, it reveals Dantés in deep slumber.

Catalina takes a step inside.

ANTONIO
My lady?

She freezes.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
What need can be satisfied at this
end of the residence?

CATALINA
Oh, I... lost my way.

Antonio slides her way, he takes hold of her wrist.

ANTONIO
This way, my lady.

Catalina peeks over her shoulder as Antonio leads her away.

INT. CASTLE - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

At a window, Ramiro admires the moon. Tall Guard enters.

TALL GUARD
My lord.

Ramiro turns. Tall Guard bows.

TALL GUARD (CONT'D)
Our search efforts have been in
vain your --

RAMIRO
Double your efforts! There has to
be a witness to his whereabouts.

TALL GUARD
Yes, my lord.

Ramiro reverts back to the window.

TALL GUARD (CONT'D)
My lord, there is a separate matter
I would like to discuss.

Ramiro swivels to face Tall Guard, he scowls.

TALL GUARD (CONT'D)
On the night of Dantés' escape, I
found this...

Tall Guard pulls out the letter.

RAMIRO
Anyone else read it?

Ramiro collects the letter; he scans it.

TALL GUARD
My partner cannot read!

Tall Guard laughs, Ramiro feigns a chuckle. Ramiro pivots to a nearby torch.

RAMIRO
I lay plans to perfection and yet
the gods move to piss on them.
(then)
Sombra.

Sombra rises THROUGH the floor, stabs Tall Guard in the back. Ramiro sets the letter on fire.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Dangerous things like this cannot
be allowed to exist, you agree?

Tall Guard SMASHES against the floor. Ramiro drops the burning letter by Tall Guard's face.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Orange sunlight illuminates the room. Catalina enters with a cup of water. She ambles to the bed.

Dantés sleeps on his back. Catalina pats the air until her hand finds the night stand. She sets the cup upon it.

She finds the bed with her hands.

Catalina takes her hand to Dantés' face; she draws it back. Again, she takes her hand to his face.

Dantés' eyes pop open.

Dantés grabs Catalina's wrist, flips her onto the bed. He climbs on top of her, presses his forearm against her throat.

Dantés points his index and middle finger at her hazy eyes. Two NEEDLES protrude from his fingers.

CATALINA
Good morning. You going to kill me?

Dantés shakes his head. The needles DISPEL, he lifts his forearm, rolls off Catalina.

DANTÉS
Apologies, my lady. Sneaking up on
me is un --

CATALINA
Unwise?

Dantés opens his mouth to speak, then closes it.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
Would you be so kind and lead me to
the door? With our little tumble
there, I lost my position...

Catalina offers her hand, Dantés takes it.

He leads her to the door. Catalina feels for the doorway. She peers over her shoulder at Dantés.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
Meet me in the kitchen. I prefer to
exchange words over a warm meal.

Catalina makes her way down the hall.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

A square table, large stove and a few counters decorate the unpretentious kitchen. Sunlight shines through the windows.

Antonio stands in the corner, nibbles on a piece of bread. Catalina sits behind a halfway finished plate of food.

Dantés enters. He gives her a slight bow, grunts. He looks to Antonio, who dismisses him.

DANTÉS
Good morning, my lady.

CATALINA
Now you resort to using your words?

Antonio lowers his bread, he glares at Dantés.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
Please...

Catalina gestures to an empty seat, but is off target. Dantés takes the seat behind a plate of food.

ANTONIO
State your purpose.

Catalina raises her cup to her lips. Dantés' eyes fall to the table. Catalina lowers the cup from her lips.

CATALINA
Dantés?

DANTÉS
It weighs on my heart, but our king
is no longer of this world...

Catalina's eyes open wide. Antonio lowers the bread from his mouth and averts his eyes to the floor.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
A lesser man, Ramiro, has ascended
to the throne and I... have no
fealty to the man.

Catalina's hands shake. She returns the cup to the table. Her eyes drop to her plate.

CATALINA
I see...

DANTÉS
My lady?

Antonio places his hand inside his shirt.

Catalina covers her face with her hands. She bursts into tears. Dantés leans back in his chair, eyes wide.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
My lady, we all weep for our king,
but he was --

CATALINA
He was my father!

DANTÉS
Your what?

Catalina gets up from the table, darts down the hall.

ANTONIO
Words fall from your mouth like
shit from a pig's ass!

Antonio chases after Catalina.

INT. CATALINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The spacious room has few accommodations. Dantés enters.

Catalina, with Antonio, who sits by her side, places a hand on her shoulder, kneel at her bed.

Dantés slides towards them.

Antonio snatches his pickaxe and turns to Dantés.

ANTONIO

Place heel firmly upon ground!

Dantés snatches his dagger from its sheath.

He stops his advance.

DANTÉS

My sincerest condolences...

Dantés grabs the emblem of the Necklace of Rule.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

My lady, this means that you are --

ANTONIO

Your duty was to protect the king!
Prove yourself of fucking worth!

Dantés sheathes his dagger and stomps to the door.

CATALINA

Dantés...

Dantés stops.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

Please, my tears, make them stop...

Silence.

ANTONIO

Find yourself far removed.

DANTÉS

I am not prepared to invade the
castle --

Antonio glares at Dantés.

Dantés exits.

INT. CASTLE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Ramiro sits on the throne. Victor, with Beltrán in tow, enter. He waves, Victor exits.

RAMIRO

I respect you, Assassin... As much
as a king can respect someone of
your station.

Beltrán stands unimpressed.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

But, you tried to outwit me and
that was your downfall.
(to the hallway)
Sombra.

Sombra pushes Katrina into the Throne Room, she stumbles, but does not fall. Beltrán's eyes flare open.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Family of the court must get
permission before any exodus.

Sombra stands behind Katrina, puts a knife to her belly, one to her throat.

Beltrán SINKS through the floor, he REAPPEARS behind where Sombra stood, but Sombra is gone. Beltrán looks to Ramiro, Ramiro points to the ceiling.

Beltrán looks up. Sombra hangs from the ceiling, upsidedown, with Katrina. Beltrán takes a step towards Ramiro.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Continue and your wife makes a mess
on my floor.

Silence.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

You should look out the window.

With fire in his eyes, Beltrán storms to the window.

BELTRÁN

I see an unsuspecting countryside.

RAMIRO

Look to the sky.

EXT. CASTLE - UPPER WALL - DAY

Beltrán stares up.

Fernando, tied to a poll and gagged, hangs over the roof of the castle.

INT. CASTLE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Beltrán turns to Ramiro with narrowed eyes.

RAMIRO

Your son is unscathed. Let's hope the weather holds steady.

BELTRÁN

You play with fire --

RAMIRO

Then let me extinguish such flames. Do as I say, or we see how well your family fairs with heights.

Katrina opens her mouth to speak. Sombra NICKS Katrina in the neck. Blood drips down her throat.

BELTRÁN

Still your hand!

RAMIRO

You can have your brother, or your family. Both are beyond your reach.

Beltrán cuts his eyes back and forth from Sombra to Ramiro. He exhales deeply, drops his eyes to the floor.

BELTRÁN

You... have your retainer.

RAMIRO

Your brother will understand.

(then)

I believe you have places to be...

Katrina opens her mouth to speak. Sombra pokes her with her knife. Katrina closes her mouth.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Assassin.

Beltrán considers Ramiro.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Bring back any jewelry the man
wears, the rest is of no concern.

Beltrán DISAPPEARS.

EXT. CASTLE - OUTER WALL - NIGHT

Dantés scales the outer wall of the castle. At the ledge, he surveys both sides, clear. He climbs over.

The door to the walkway opens. Dantés leaps from the wall, grips the top of the stone, hangs over the ledge.

The Royal Guard inspects the area, strolls past Dantés. Dantés climbs the wall, enters the castle.

INT. CASTLE - KING'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Dantés enters the empty room.

DANTÉS
(whispers)
That would be overly bold to sleep
in a dead man's bed.

INT. CASTLE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dantés enters, he slinks to the bed. A Man and a Woman sleep. Dantés shakes Man.

DANTÉS
Where is he?

Dantés eyes jump to a platter of Mediterranean Sweet Rolls that rest on the night stand.

MAN
(yells)
Help, guards!

FOOTSTEPS echo in the background. Dantés darts to the door.

INT. CASTLE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dantés enters, he locks eyes with Jorge.

JORGE
It's you?

DANTÉS

Yes, the bringer of dreams.

Dantés draws a dagger, Jorge KNOCKS it out of his hand.
Dantés STRIKES, he renders Jorge unconscious.

Shadows of an entourage gather down the hall.

Dantés spots his dagger, reaches for it; he retracts his hand. An arrow SLAPS his dagger out of reach.

Dantés glares at the guards in the hall. He escapes.

INT. CASTLE - LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dantés closes the door. A few torches line the walls and illuminate the room. FOOTSTEPS outside the door fade away.

FLORIN (O.S.)

Hello, Dantés...

Dantés, dagger in hand, spins. Florin, half naked with his hand behind his back, greets him.

FLORIN (CONT'D)

You bid for my death, old friend?

Florin reveals his hand, a throwing knife glimmers.

DANTÉS

Not this night.

Dantés sheathes his dagger. Florin pockets his knife.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

You reside within castle walls?

FLORIN

Much has changed...

DANTÉS

The evidence lies in your sheets.

Florin glances back to the BLONDE, asleep, on his bed.

FLORIN

No, well yes, she's a new affair.
Of more pressing concern, Ramiro
contracts your death.

DANTÉS

This is one trait I am pleased to
share with the rat.

FLORIN
You move against him?

Florin makes his way to the door, pulls Dantés along.

FLORIN (CONT'D)
Let us move quickly, and conclude
this foul business.

DANTÉS
You spill honey in my ears --

KNOCKS thunder on the door.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
But my intent is no longer shrouded
in darkness...

Florin's eyes plummet to the floor.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
I must leave this place.

FLORIN
I know a means...

EXT. CASTLE - BALCONY - NIGHT

Dantés and Florin study the distance to the ground.

DANTÉS
This does not hold much promise...

FLORIN
Dantés, you can only buy from what
the market has in stock.

Dantés cuts his eyes at Florin. KNOCKS thunder against the door harder and steal their attention.

ROYAL GUARD (O.S.)
Florin, open this door, now!

FLORIN
You in the mood to buy yet?

Dantés studies the wall. He puts his hand on a hairline fracture in the stone.

The fracture runs halfway down the structure.

Dantés unsheathes his dagger.

FLORIN (CONT'D)
 What madness has sprung from your
 fevered brow?

Dantés smirks.

DANTÉS
 In these most troubling of times,
 loyalty is hard to come by.

Dantés puts a hand on Florin's shoulder.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
 Thank you for yours.

Florin looks away.

Dantés puts a hand on the balcony. He prepares to jump, but
 Florin grabs his arm.

FLORIN
 From this point on, be prepared...

DANTÉS
 Keep a sharp eye on the clouds.

Dantés hops over the balcony, he GUTS his dagger into the
 wall. He descends towards the ground.

EXT. CASTLE - WALL - NIGHT

Dantés' blade SCRAPS against the wall. SPARKS jump about.

He plants his feet against the wall, his speed decreases. An
 arrow WHIZZES past.

Dantés looks up, an archer loads another arrow.

Dantés spots the stable. He plants his feet into the wall,
 springs from the wall to the stable.

EXT. CASTLE GROUND - STABLE - NIGHT

Dantés CRASHES through the wooden ceiling.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Dantés descends through the air, POUNDS through a support
 beam, CRASHES into a horse; it NEIGHS and THRASHES about.

Dantés LANDS in a stack of hay. He grunts as he staggers to his feet.

DANTÉS
Fuck the gods...

He shakes his head, CRACKS his back. He spots a bucket of white paint under a table.

Dantés smirks, drops a few coins on the table, grabs the paint, exits.

EXT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - PORCH - DAY

Dantés surveys the area. He raises his paint covered hand and bangs on the door.

Antonio swings the door open. He stares at Dantés, grunts at his ruffled appearance.

ANTONIO
You assault my eyes... Why are your hands covered in paint?

DANTÉS
A man can be more than one thing.

Dantés pushes past Antonio.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - DAY

Dantés shuffles to Catalina's bedroom, stops, stares at the door. He raises his hand to knock on it --

Antonio shoves Dantés along.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Dantés enters. He trudges to the bed, falls on it, face first and blacks out.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Catalina eases into the room. She saunters deeper inside, a floor board CREEKS. Dantés jolts awake, YAWNS.

CATALINA
Sorry, did I wake you?

DANTÉS

Yes... no! Do not concern yourself.

CATALINA

Come to the kitchen. There are things we must discuss.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

Catalina waits at the table. Dantés, in fresh clothes, enters. He joins Catalina at the table.

CATALINA

I apologize for my outburst yesterday. I... I...

DANTÉS

Apologize for nothing.

Silence.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

You're the one who deserves an apology. You have it, coupled with my condolences.

CATALINA

Gratitude.

DANTÉS

My lady, forgive my boldness, but why are you not in the castle?

CATALINA

Long ago... Ramiro, sent me away for being a shame on the family.

Silence.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

My crime was being born before my father was married...

DANTÉS

Ah... How much do you know about your father's court?

CATALINA

I know your role in this.

DANTÉS

My role?

CATALINA

Life and death, who are you to make such judgments?

DANTÉS

I served His Majesty as the embodiment of his will. Such judgments were not mine to make.

CATALINA

So you act absent thought?

Silence.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

I have never met a man such as you.

Catalina holds her hand up to Dantés' face.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

May I?

Dantés leans into her hands.

Catalina slides her hand down his face. Her finger tips graze his lips; she smiles.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

I'm not sure of what I should expect, but you do not feel like a... I sense... something else...

DANTÉS

Deception is as lethal as a sword.

CATALINA

For some yes, but in your case... I find you pleasantly lacking.

DANTÉS

Last night, I attempted to claim vengeance, but my hands were unable to deliver. But, my efforts were not without reward.

CATALINA

What reward did you claim?

DANTÉS

Without someone to take the throne, the aristocracy would claw for power, which could lead to war.

Dantés grabs Catalina's hand, places it on the emblem of the Necklace of Rule.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

To a commoner, this represents a noble flaunting their wealth. To those of a higher purpose, this...

Catalina rubs her hands about the emblem.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Affirms your place in this world.

Catalina yanks her hand back.

CATALINA

I do not want it!

Dantés leans back in his seat with wide eyes.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

I am many things, but I am no creator of law, negotiator with kings and no enforcer of taxes!

DANTÉS

Ramiro is a plague --

CATALINA

In exchange for your quarters, you will tend to my needs.

Catalina extends her hand. Dantés stares at it, shakes it.

DANTÉS

I will find a way to help you accept your destiny...

CATALINA

Get to the market before the vendors leave. You will find coin on the counter.

Catalina points behind Dantés, he spins, spots the coin purse. He ambles to the coin purse, opens it.

INSERT - NOTE

"I HAVE HAD MORE OF YOU THAN I CAN STOMACH. TAKE THE MONEY AND FALL FAR FROM MY PRESENCE."

BACK TO SCENE

Dantés chuckles.

CATALINA

Dantés?

DANTÉS

Apologies, I will move as the wind.

EXT. GRANADA - CITY SQUARE - DAY

Ramiro, with Sombra by his side, stands on a wooden platform. A loud crowd of PEASANTS (males ages 15-30) in dirty rags, gather. Ramiro gestures for silence.

Soldiers and archers surround the peasantry.

RAMIRO

I stand before you, to present you
with a grand opportunity.

Silence.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Join my army, become soldiers,
smiths and be rewarded with coin
and laurels and...

The crowd grows passive.

Ramiro gives a dismissive wave. The archers load their bows,
FIRE upon the peasants. Screams erupt from the crowd.

A score of them drop to the dirt.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Allow me to make this simple for
the simple. Join them.
(points to the fallen)
Or join me.

The peasants kneel.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Much improved.

EXT. ÓRGIVA - MARKET - DAY

The orange sun illuminates the Market. Indistinctive chatter
and the exchange of commodities take place. Dantés strolls
along with a small bag over his shoulder.

Sombra, with her hood up, studies his movements in seclusion.

Tydus sits with a PROSTITUTE on his lap and a cup of wine in hand. His sleeveless shirt shows his toned arms.

Dantés passes a bench. On the bench sits a WELL DRESSED MAN, 20s. He takes special interest in Dantés.

Dantés drops his bag. His dagger jumps into his hand, as he rushes Well Dressed Man.

Two wrist blades IMPEDE Dantés' attack. Well Dressed Man looks up, smirks at the fire in Dantés' eyes.

WELL DRESSED MAN

(Eloy's voice)

What gave me away?

DANTÉS

You smell of blood.

The crowd ERUPTS into panic. Eloy kicks Dantés in the belly, Dantés rolls backwards, stops on a knee.

The Prostitute on Tydus' lap tries to get up, but he forces her back to his lap.

TYDUS

What's wrong, my love? It is only
two fools fighting to the death.

Tydus takes another sip of his wine and watches the bout.

Dantés sends a BARRAGE OF NEEDLES at Eloy; Eloy BLOCKS them. Eloy SHAPE SHIFTS and slips into the crowd.

Dantés climbs to his feet, examines the crowd. He spots a MAN standing by the Blacksmith's Stand.

Dantés charges the Man and stabs him. Shock coats the Man's face as he stares into Dantés' eyes. Dantés peers at the reflection in a hanging sword.

The reflection of a CHARGING MAN catches Dantés' eye.

Dantés puts his hand behind his back, under his cloak, and sends a BARRAGE OF NEEDLES through his cloak. The needles PUNCTURE the Charging Man's chest.

Dantés spins, reveals his dagger was in between the Man's arm and rib cage. The Charging Man SHAPE SHIFTS into Eloy. Dantés stabs Eloy in his abdomen.

Eloy eyes the wound with disbelief, collapses to the ground. Dantés kneels beside Eloy, rolls him on his back.

ELOY
How did it feel? Taking life of
your own free will.

DANTÉS
Self-preservation hardly counts as
free will...

ELOY
One must start somewhere.

DANTÉS
There has been no love between us,
but this is not the end I
envisioned for you...

Sombra, in the background, slips into the shadows.

Eloy puts his bloody hand on the side of Dantés' face.

ELOY
This is only the beginning, Dantés.

Eloy's hand falls from Dantés' cheek and leaves a streak of blood behind. Dantés takes a moment to collect himself.

He surveys the area and finds his bag, gathers it.

Dantés strolls to the Baker's Stand, plops some coins on it, stuffs some rolls into his bag.

Dantés goes to the Man and places the coin purse in his hand.

DANTÉS
I apologize for earlier. I hope
this is enough to make amends.

Dantés takes a step away, but before he gets too far, he looks over his shoulder at the Man.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
Please see to it that this man
receives a proper burial.

Dantés leaves.

Tyodus finishes his wine, tosses the cup aside. He pushes Prostitute from his lap.

He finds his feet and follows Dantés at a safe distance.

INT. CASTLE - RAMIRO'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Ramiro sits at his desk, reviews parchments.

RAMIRO
Any news from Eloy?

Ramiro looks to Sombra, who stands at his desk. She hands him a scroll. Ramiro unravels it, reads over it, chuckles.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
The fool fell short of his own
delusional expectations!

Ramiro sets the scroll on his desk.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Find anything useful?

Sombra shakes her head.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Get to it. Melina must act in a way
that pleases me.

Sombra nods, exits.

EXT. GRANADA - STREET - DAY

Florin meets with Antonio, concealed in a hooded cloak.

FLORIN
Truth coats his words.

Antonio grunts, he takes a step away. Florin grabs him by his arm, Antonio snaps in Florin's direction.

FLORIN (CONT'D)
The cost of information... is the
cost of information.

ANTONIO
Goddamn pirate...

FLORIN
Nonsense, I simply love the weight
of coin in my hand.

Antonio drops some coins in Florin's hand. With a smirk, Florin bounces them in his hand and pockets the bounty.

Antonio disappears. Beltrán emerges from the crowd.

FLORIN (CONT'D)
Can one life be traded for another?

BELTRÁN
In my lonely bed, the elusive
answer has pried sleep away from
weary eyes...

Florin and Beltrán freeze. Beltrán smirks.

BELTRÁN (CONT'D)
I extend my praise. It has been
more years than I can count since
someone has evaded my detection.

Sombra, under a hooded cloak, stands with a dagger pressed to
each of their spines.

FLORIN
You aim to relay words that our
movements are being restricted?

Silence.

BELTRÁN
We have not forgot our station --

FLORIN
Or it's cost...

BELTRÁN
Our minds are set to purpose.

Beltrán glances over his shoulder into Sombra's eyes.

BELTRÁN (CONT'D)
We move to the desired end.

Sombra measures them for a moment, disappears into the crowd.
Florin takes a deep breath.

FLORIN
Women are dangerous enough, but
that one...

Florin stares into the clouds --

EXT. GRANADA - BUILDING - DAY

A white rectangle with two pillars on each side and a
Crescent Moon on the side.

EXT. GRANADA - STREET - DAY

Beltrán smiles.

BELTRÁN

The cornered beast uses memories
from days long past...

FLORIN

When the moon is among us, what do
you think he will encounter?

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

Dantés writes a letter at the table. Catalina, with her hand
on the doorway, enters.

Dantés lifts his eyes from the page, sets his feathered pen
on the table, his eyes drink her beauty.

CATALINA

Dantés?

DANTÉS

Present, my lady.

Catalina drifts to the table, sits opposite Dantés. She pats
the table, her hand falls to the paper.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Apologies...

Dantés retracts the paper. Catalina stops him. Dantés stares
into her hazy eyes.

CATALINA

What is it?

DANTÉS

A correspondence.

Catalina's eyes light up.

CATALINA

To...

DANTÉS

Someone of unparalleled importance.

CATALINA

What does it say?

Dantés pockets the letter. Catalina places her hand on his.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
If the thought of lofty ears
frighten you...

Catalina rises to her feet, steps around the table to Dantés' side. She traces her hand up his arm to his face.

She leans into his ear.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Then say it intimately.

Dantés turns, inches away from her full lips.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
What inspires your hesitation?

DANTÉS
I... I --

ANTONIO (O.S.)
I underestimated you.

Antonio enters.

Catalina stands erect, she slides her hands to Dantés' shoulders. Antonio stares at her with suspicious eyes.

His gaze lurks to Dantés.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
A lesser man would have taken the
coin and had himself removed.

DANTÉS
Your coin was not enough to satisfy
my desire.

ANTONIO
But, it was enough to get by.

Antonio approaches Dantés.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Your unsuspecting words fell upon a
delicate flower.

Dantés rises to his feet.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Even so, mine should not escape my
lips absent thought.

Antonio offers his hand. Dantés clasps Antonio's forearm.

DANTÉS

Your words are well received. Does steel accompany them?

ANTONIO

Do not mistake intent. I only deem you worthy of trust, nothing more.

DANTÉS

Progress, I suppose...

Catalina puts her hand on Dantés back, slides it to his shoulder. Antonio glances at her fingertips.

CATALINA

I am glad that bit of unpleasantness is behind us!

ANTONIO

It is beneath heel, but not yet --

A KNOCK thunders against the door.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

You travel heavy?

Dantés shakes his head. Antonio unsheathes his pickaxe, glides to the door.

TYDUS (O.S.)

Within these walls is a man that I would embrace as a fucking brother!

Antonio glares at Dantés.

DANTÉS

I do not keep such rough company.

Antonio opens the door, he hides behind it.

Tydus (with an empty arrow quiver on his back, bow in hand) enters with his fingers around a cup of wine.

He spots Dantés, raises his cup hand to Dantés.

TYDUS

You there, man of fucking worth --

Antonio emerges from behind the door, he SMASHES Tydus against the wall, KNOCKS the cup from his hand.

Wine paints the floor.

ANTONIO

State your purpose, or find
yourself gone from this world.

TYDUS

Gratitude... that cheap wine tasted
of piss! But, it was still wine...

ANTONIO

Find words for my question.

Tydus glances at Dantés.

TYDUS

You harbor a man that has committed
an offense against the king. An
offense worthy of death!

Antonio glares at Dantés.

ANTONIO

You killed the king?

Catalina's hand fall from Dantés' shoulder.

DANTÉS

I loved the king as a brother! My
only crime was my tardiness to
prevent his death.

(then, to Tydus)

How did you come by this?

TYDUS

The man --

(to Antonio)

You like your hands upon me?

Antonio releases Tydus, sheathes his pickaxe.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

I recognized the man you sent to
the afterlife. I too hold issue
with the man they call king --

FLASHBACK - INT. CASTLE - BANQUET HALL - DAY

Tydus (with an empty arrow quiver on his back, his bow in
hand) stands erect in the center of the room.

Eloy enters. With steps heavy with purpose, he glares at
Tydus as he passes. Tydus gives him a cheerful wave.

Ramiro enters. He sits on the throne.

RAMIRO

Break words and do so with sense,
or forever be silent.

TYDUS

King Lorenzo owes me money, he is
no more, you owe me money.

RAMIRO

The cock on you!

TYDUS

My words pale in comparison to --

RAMIRO

How much did he owe?

TYDUS

One hundred gold, fifty silver.

RAMIRO

How did my foolish brother accrue
such a ridiculous bounty?

TYDUS

His business follows him to the
grave. I only seek payment for
remembered actions.

RAMIRO

Well, that presents a problem...

Royal Guards fill the room. Tydus reaches into his quiver, an
arrow APPEARS in his hand. He loads his bow and aims at
Ramiro.

TYDUS

Mind your business, or the king
will find his mind upon the stone.

RAMIRO

Your hands are talented...

TYDUS

Not like the rest of me.

Royal Guards draw their weapons. Ramiro raises his hand.

Tydus keeps his aim on Ramiro, he backpedals to an obscure
hallway, glances over his shoulder, the way is clear.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

I have no time for such petty things! Come at me and prove that you do not value your lives.

Tydus wraps his bow around his shoulder. A Royal Guard advances, swings his sword at Tydus. Tydus stops the sword by CLAPPING his palms on both sides of the blade.

DANTÉS (O.S.)

Wait a moment...

Tydus flips the man, takes hold of his sword.

Tydus PARRIES an attack, STABS a guard in the belly.

Tydus rolls, escaping a sword slash. He swings his sword, SNAPPING the blade of another sword.

ANTONIO (O.S.)

This smells of piss and shit! He strokes his own cock!

Tydus throws his sword into a guard's chest. Tydus runs, jumps onto the guard's chest, flips backwards (bringing the sword with him) and lands on the ground.

DANTÉS (O.S.)

His soft hands are set to the task.

A Royal Guard charges. Tydus crouches low, flips the man over his back, KICKS him and sends him THROUGH a window.

CATALINA (O.S.)

I suspect he uses both hands!

Tydus throws the sword and cuts the chandelier from the ceiling. It CRASHES into three Royal Guards.

Tydus grabs his bow, loads an arrow into it, aims at Ramiro.

TYDUS

You will regret this.

RAMIRO

Doubt fills me to the brim...

Tydus escapes down a vacant hall.

BACK TO:

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

Tydus smiles from cheek to cheek.

DANTÉS

To hasten understanding, which
parts are meant to be fact?

ANTONIO

His lips rattle with the thunder of
false noise.

TYDUS

Believe what you wish, that is the
choice every free man must make of
his own accord.

Silence.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

But know that the truth lingers in
there... somewhere.

Antonio shakes his head.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

Fact is, here I stand...

Tydus glances at his cup.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

Thirsty...

ANTONIO

You come here, after a man has
tried to --

Antonio points to Dantés.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Kill him?

TYDUS

Good decisions tend to lead to
predictable outcomes. Rashness
shakes up the shit of a simple day.

ANTONIO

What do people call you, so I may
know what to say when you're ripped
from this world?

TYDUS

Apologies... I'd leave you to weep
with the other women.

Antonio slides a hand to his pickaxe.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

When the name Tydus falls from
mouth, I may or may not answer...
(to Catalina)
Depends on whose lips part with
such sweet song.

Antonio grabs Tydus.

DANTÉS

This fool lives dangerously.

ANTONIO

I've seen your like before, they
cannot be trusted!

TYDUS

Like a farmer, I spread my seed far
and wide at the anointed hour.
(to Catalina)
I simply plow different fields.

Antonio presses Tydus hard against the wall.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

My ambition rests in the pursuit of
simple pleasures. I am the only man
you can trust!

ANTONIO

I have a query to make, even so...

Antonio drags Tydus to the door.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I cannot allow this shit stew to
stay within these walls.

Antonio stops in the doorway, glares at Dantés. Antonio exits
with Tydus, SLAMS the door shut.

TYDUS (O.S.)

Who would have thought an old man
could carry such strength!

Dantés faces Catalina with hopeful eyes.

DANTÉS

As much as I would like to
celebrate this minor victory, I
have business in Granada.

Dantés takes a few steps toward the door.

CATALINA

Dantés, I...

Dantés regards her.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

I wish to feel the earth beneath my
feet, the sun on my face...

DANTÉS

As you wish.

Catalina's face lights up.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

But at night...

Catalina furrows her eyebrows.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

We shall do more than walk.

EXT. ÓRGIVA - MARKET - NIGHT

The moon illuminates the area.

Dantés and Catalina sit at a table. She keeps her arms
crossed. Couples gather in the Market Center.

CATALINA

So, we have walked...

Dantés smiles.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

What scheme have you been --

Music BLARES in the background. Couples dance and spin about.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

This is --

Dantés takes Catalina's hand, leads her to an open spot.

Dantés spins Catalina, she moves stiff, timid, afraid.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
Oh, this is not for me...

DANTÉS
Do as the music demands.

Catalina smiles, sways her hips to the rhythm of the music.

She gains comfort, pulls Dantés in close. She places her hands to his face, keeps his eyes on her.

They spin, rock and sway as one into the night.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dantés lays Catalina on her bed, tucks her in. The Necklace of Rule dangles from his neck. He stares down at its emblem.

DANTÉS
Perhaps, action can spur action...

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dantés enters. A cloaked figure prowls from behind him. Dantés spins, SLAMS the figure into the wall.

Dantés' dagger jumps to his hand, it FLASHES in the torch light. He presses it against the intruder's throat.

Dantés pulls back their hood.

DANTÉS
Melina?

He drops his dagger, he kisses her with deep passion.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
You should not have come --

MELINA
Who's the blind whore?

DANTÉS
She is not a --

Melina scowls.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
She answers to Catalina. She is the daughter of Lorenzo.

Dantés steps down the hall. Melina accompanies him. Dantés pushes her against the wall.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

No...

MELINA

No?

DANTÉS

In the event that I fail, your hands must be clean of this.

Melina opens her mouth to speak. Dantés puts his finger on Melina's lips, shakes his head.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

I will not be alone.

Melina lowers his hand, kisses Dantés. She takes his hand to her thigh, uses his hand to caress it and her breasts.

Dantés leans in for a kiss. Melina smirks, escapes down the hall. Dantés exhales, collects his dagger, exits.

EXT. GRANADA - STREET - NIGHT

Dantés, with his hood pulled low, prowls along the street. A tavern rests between two taller buildings.

A cloaked figure trails Dantés in the background.

INT. ABANDONED TAVERN - ENTRY FOYER - NIGHT

A thick coat of dust clings to the bar and the floor.

Dantés enters, he shuts the door with trained gentleness.

FLORIN (O.S.)

Hello, Dantés...

Dantés, dagger in hand, spins.

Florin, with a cup in hand, sits at a lone table under a hole in the ceiling. Moonlight filters in.

Debris, from the hole, falls, it crashes into his shoulder.

Florin twirls a throwing knife on the table. Several chalices lie about on the floor.

Dantés studies the area, he sheaths his dagger, joins Florin.

DANTÉS
Gratitude, for meeting me --

FLORIN
Much has changed...

DANTÉS
You only drink during the best, or
worst of times...

Florin finishes his wine. He tosses the cup aside.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
What's your next move?

Florin cuts his eyes at Dantés.

Dantés jumps to his feet, he makes his way to the door. At the door, Dantés reaches for the door handle.

The handle glistens. Dantés retracts his hand.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
You poisoned it?

Dantés regards Florin.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
Much has changed... Is this how you
would meet your end, old friend?

Florin snatches a few throwing knives from his cloak.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
So be it.

Dantés unsheathes his dagger, NEEDLES materialize around him.

GOLDEN PARTICLES float past Dantés' eyes. Dantés covers his nose and mouth. His needles VANISH.

FLORIN
How long can you fight absent air?

Florin rushes Dantés, he throws two knives at Dantés. Two knives jump into Florin's hands.

Florin slashes at Dantés, Dantés rolls forward to a crouch.

Crouching, Dantés slashes at Florin's ankles. Florin hops, sends a boot to Dantés' face.

Dantés takes the hit, rolls backwards to a kneeling position.

Florin springs on him, cuts down at Dantés.

Dantés BLOCKS the knives with his dagger.

Dantés climbs to his feet. Florin knees him in the gut.
Dantés exhales, he takes a breath and gags.

Florin stabs at him, Dantés rolls out of the way.

Dantés finds his feet. He plummets to a knee, covers his
mouth as he vomits blood. Blood seeps between his fingers.

FLORIN (CONT'D)
Nína is grateful for your
sacrifice.

Florin charges, he slashes at Dantés.

DARK ENERGY rises from the floor, it IMPEDES Florin's attack.
Beltrán forms from the black mist.

FLORIN (CONT'D)
Beltrán?

Florin's golden poison EVAPORATES.

BELTRÁN
I stand among fools who would run
in desert heat!

FLORIN
Beltrán, if we do not --

Beltrán sweeps Florin's feet from under him and pummels him
in the chest. Florin curls into the fetal position.

BELTRÁN
To think that I would choose which
family is more important...

Dantés coughs, he wipes the blood from his mouth.

DANTÉS
Gratitude, for --

Beltrán roundhouse kicks Dantés in the chest. Dantés smashes
to the floor, dust cumulates in the air.

BELTRÁN
A court divided...

Beltrán points his short sword at Florin.

BELTRÁN (CONT'D)

Just because we have been driven to
a ledge, does that mean our only
option is to dive for the clouds?

Beltrán points his sword at Dantés.

BELTRÁN (CONT'D)

You visit father's grave; yet, you
did not know the man.

In the background, the front door CRASHES against the stone
wall. Melina, cloaked, a sai in each hand, enters.

Her eyes pop open in alarm. Beltrán glances at his sword. He
connects eyes with Melina.

BELTRÁN (CONT'D)

Still your hand --

Beltrán's PUPILS dilate, he freezes. Florin rises to his
feet, he lunges for Dantés.

Beltrán steps into his path and takes the knife in the belly.

DANTÉS

No!

Dantés climbs to a knee, he hunches over, vomits blood.

Melina rushes into the fray. Beltrán grabs Florin's wrist,
holds him in place.

Melina plunges her sai into Florin's spine. Together, Florin
and Beltrán crash to the floor.

Dantés sears Melina with his gaze.

BELTRÁN (O.S.)

Dantés...

Dantés crawls to Beltrán, he takes Beltrán's hand. Tears brim
in Dantés' eyes.

BELTRÁN (CONT'D)

Do not let them fall...

Beltrán's hand grows limp, Dantés let's go, it falls to the
floor. Dantés collapses beside Beltrán.

MELINA

Dantés!

Melina rushes to his side, she comforts him.

FLORIN (O.S.)
My friend...

Dantés and Melina turn their attention to Florin. Melina dashes to him, she thrusts a sai at his throat.

DANTÉS
Hold...

Melina stops inches from Florin's throat. Florin ignores her, he raises his fist in the air.

FLORIN
Be prepared...

Florin's fist drops, Lantana berries scatter to the floor.

Dantés points to the berries, he falls unconscious.

Melina gathers the dispersed berries. She takes them into her mouth, she chews them up.

She opens Dantés' mouth, puts her lips to his. She leans back, lifts his head, massages his throat.

Dantés' eyes flare open. Relief washes over Melina.

MELINA
Forgive me... I'm so sorry...

Dantés covers his face as he weeps. Melina, at a loss for words, places her hand on his arm.

DANTÉS
This ends tonight.

Tears trek down Dantés' face. He struggles to rise to a sitting position. Melina helps him to his feet.

Dantés takes a step, he stumbles, Melina catches him.

MELINA
Not this night...

EXT. GRANADA - STREET - NIGHT

Dantés, with his arm around Melina, wobbles outside. Tydus, with a poster in his hand, makes his way to them.

TYDUS
Did this beauty's loving leave you
in this sorry state?

Dantés glares at Tydus.

TYDUS (CONT'D)
Feast your eyes on this.

Tydus hands Dantés the poster.

INSERT - POSTER

A poster in Dantés' likeness.

BACK TO SCENE

Dantés drops the poster, he reaches for his dagger. Melina snatches her sai.

Tydus grabs Dantés' wrist and locks eyes with him.

TYDUS
I pursue one debt at a time.

Silence.

TYDUS (CONT'D)
Keep to the shadows, honor like
mine is scarce.

MELINA
You know not who you speak with.
Attend to the men inside.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Catalina sits at the table. The door BURSTS open. Tydus leads as Melina helps a semi-conscious Dantés inside.

CATALINA
Antonio?

TYDUS
A more attractive man stands before
you.

CATALINA
Dantés?

Melina scowls. Tydus eyes Dantés with disgust.

TYDUS
Your eyes must be broken...
Apologies...

MELINA

We need aid!

Catalina rushes to Melina. She feels for Dantés, Melina grabs her sai. She pauses as she notices Catalina's eyes.

CATALINA

This way.

Catalina leads them down the hall.

EXT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Catalina, with a pail in hand, steps to the rushing water of a creek. She drops to her knees, fills the pail with water.

MELINA (O.S.)

What is the nature of your
interests in Dantés?

Catalina freezes.

CATALINA

I... he's my father's --

MELINA

Allow me to make this as clear as
the air between us.

Melina, sai in hand, steps to Catalina. She pokes the tip of her sai to Catalina's forehead, traces down her nose, her lips. She stops at the bottom of her chin.

Melina lifts Catalina's chin.

MELINA (CONT'D)

Do not overreach.

Melina dips a cloth in the water, then leaves.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dantés, with a damp cloth on his forehead, sleeps on the bed. Melina, with endearing eyes, places her hand on his cheek.

She makes her way to the door, stops, glances back at Dantés.

Tydus puts a hand on Melina's arm. With sharp eyes, she snaps in his direction.

TYDUS

Your departure is a disgrace.

Melina slaps Tydus' arm away.

MELINA

My prolonged absence will draw
unwarranted attention.

Catalina, with a bucket of water, makes her way to the room.
She feels for the doorway, finds Melina's arm, she hesitates.

Melina grabs Catalina's hand, places a short sword and a
throwing knife in it.

Catalina rubs her hand along the steel of the blades.

CATALINA

What are these things?

MELINA

Mementos...

Melina vanishes.

Catalina turns to Tydus, he licks his lips.

CATALINA

If Antonio were to discover you...

TYDUS

I need not the problems that
accompany the brute... I go to
more... accommodating flesh.

INT. CASTLE - RAMIRO'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Ramiro and Victor study a map of The Kingdom of Castile. He
points to the map as he speaks.

RAMIRO

It will be a double envelopment.
Our peasant force will advance
here, serve as a distraction.

VICTOR

Taking most of the casualties...

RAMIRO

When can they move?

VICTOR

For the best possible outcome... A
month, at the earliest --

RAMIRO

In two weeks, be prepared to --

Sombra stands in the doorway, scroll in hand.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Leave us.

Victor bows, exits.

Ramiro motions Sombra inside. She approaches the desk. She hands Ramiro the scroll. He unravels and reads it.

Ramiro sets the scroll on the desk. He climbs to his feet, steps beside Sombra, kisses her on the back of her neck.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Lie on the bed.

Sombra lies on the bed. Ramiro struts to the bed, takes off her clothes. He disrobes.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

Consider yourself privileged that a king will make love to you.

Ramiro climbs on top of Sombra, kisses her.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Catalina, with her back to Dantés, sits on the edge of the bed. Dantés stirs awake, stares at Catalina's back.

He rises, groans, Catalina turns, places her hands on his shoulders and guides him back down.

DANTÉS

I feel myself slipping into hell...

Dantés sobs. Catalina finds his arm, slides her hand down to his hand, holds it firm.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Where life can be so easily cast into the wind.

Catalina squeezes his fingers.

CATALINA

They lived protecting that which held all import.

DANTÉS

They died because these hands
failed them...

Catalina digs into her pockets, takes out a short sword and a
throwing knife.

CATALINA

She had these on her person two
nights past...

Catalina hands Dantés the weapons. He accepts them, rubs his
fingertips along the steel of each.

Dantés rises from the bed. Moonlight reflects off the knife.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

Dantés...

Dantés exits.

EXT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

The rushing water of the creek fills the night air. The
throwing knife and the short sword stick up from the ground.

Dantés, with a cup of wine, sits on a large rock, glues his
eyes to the tattoo on his hand.

He raises his cup to the moon.

DANTÉS

To the code...

Dantés lowers his goblet, he clears his throat.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

To the court.

EXT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - PORCH - NIGHT

Dantés opens the door. Catalina, with a bucket in hand,
stands in the doorway.

His eyes fall upon her shapely legs.

CATALINA

Dantés?

DANTÉS

My lady.

Catalina offers her hand.

CATALINA
I wish to wash away the sorrow of
recent events.

INT. BATHHOUSE - NIGHT

Dantés sets a red hot stone, into the water; the water
SIZZLES. Catalina dips her toe into the water, smiles.

CATALINA
Delightful.

DANTÉS
If you need anything.

Dantés turns around. Catalina's clothes hit the ground. She
steps into the water and sits.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
Can I lay trust in you?

CATALINA
You know the answer.

Dantés returns to the tub, turns his back to Catalina, sits,
closes his eyes.

Antonio, with an apple in hand, stands in the doorway.

DANTÉS
Long, long ago, King Lorenzo asked
me to kill a man named Ishmael.

Dantés exhales.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
He told me that the man aided the
Outlaws. That was all I needed to
know and without hesitation...

Antonio leaves.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
When the king married Salina, I
knew the bitter truth of it.

Catalina puts her hand on the back of Dantés' arm.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

In light of this, I have made it my
life's ambition to save someone
free of fault.

Catalina smiles.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

One life does not equal another,
but on my path to redemption, this
would be a good place to start.

Dantés collects Catalina's clothes and climbs to his feet.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

I will gather your robe.

CATALINA

At your convenience, please acquire
my lavender scented oil.

DANTÉS

Lavender? That is a rare scent in
these parts...

Silence.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

As you request, my lady.

INT. BATHHOUSE - NIGHT

Dantés, in the Lotus position, sits with his back to
Catalina. Her robe rests atop his lap.

A large vial rests on the edge of the stone tub. Catalina
runs a damp cloth across her shoulders.

Catalina climbs to her feet. Her wet hair sticks to her back.

Catalina climbs out of the water, stands behind Dantés. She
turns her back to him. Dantés rises to his feet, drapes the
robe about her shoulders.

CATALINA

Gratitude.

Catalina offers her hand, Dantés takes it.

EXT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

At the foot of the house, Dantés takes a high step onto the porch. Catalina slams her shin into the step and falls.

CATALINA

Ah!

Dantés catches her before she hits the porch.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

It's minor, I was more frightened
than anything --

Dantés scoops her up in his arms.

DANTÉS

The first action we take, after an
offense, will have the greatest
impact on the offended.

Dantés sniffs, smiles. Catalina blushes. He carries her inside the house.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - CATALINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dantés carries Catalina to her bed, lays her down.

DANTÉS

May you sleep famously tonight.

Dantés turns to leave, Catalina grabs his wrist. Dantés turns, she pulls him to the bed.

Catalina kisses him, Dantés freezes. He leans back, gazes into her hazy eyes.

His lips smother hers, he matches her intensity.

Catalina opens her robe, puts his hand on her shapely thighs. Dantés kisses Catalina on her neck.

Dantés pulls back, stares at Catalina. He looks to the side for a moment, gets up, heads to the door.

CATALINA

Dantés... wait! I...

Dantés stops in the doorway.

DANTÉS

Sleep well... my lady.

Dantés exits.

Catalina crosses her legs, rubs her calf against her shin and bangs her head against the pillow.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

Morning light pierces through the windows. Dantés sits at the table with Catalina. They eat in silence.

ANTONIO (O.S.)
I bring news.

Antonio enters.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
The king will inspect his army at the Academy. We take him upon his return to the castle.

DANTÉS
You look disappointed...

ANTONIO
This truth makes it a little harder to justify killing you.

DANTÉS
News well received.

Dantés climbs to his feet. He and Antonio head to the door.

CATALINA
Dantés...

Dantés and Antonio face Catalina.

DANTÉS
My lady?

Silence.

ANTONIO
Find comfort, my lady. I won't allow him to bring misfortune upon himself.

Dantés and Antonio exit.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - ROAD - DAY

A forest occupies the background.

Dantés, Tydus and Antonio crouch low in the field as a caravan passes.

The king's large coach rolls in the middle of the cluster of coaches and horsemen.

DANTÉS

Ready?

Tydus reaches into his empty arrow quiver, an arrow MATERIALIZES in his hand.

TYDUS

Hopefully the irritation in my loins won't interfere with my aim.

DANTÉS

(to Antonio)

Make sure the fool is not ferried off to the afterlife before his time.

Antonio gives a blank stare, Dantés smirks.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

By the way, who was your man inside the castle?

ANTONIO

A member of the court, Florin.

Silence.

Dantés slips from sight.

Tydus lets his arrow fly, it STRIKES a Guard. The Guard falls from his horse.

Tydus loosens another shot, another Guard meets the same end.

Archers load their bows, shoot in Tydus' direction.

Tydus and Antonio flee. The horsemen give chase.

Dantés emerges from opposite side of the road. Dagger in hand, he lurks to the wagon.

INT. KING'S COACH - DAY

Dantés, dagger raised, slips inside. His steel falls to his side as his eyes become colored with shock. He stands alone.

He spots several glass vials, same as the one he handed Melina earlier, on a crate. Dantés leans closer...

INSERT - VIALS

The vials read "DESPAIR".

BACK TO SCENE

Dantés kicks the vials, they shatter.

RAMIRO (O.S.)
Tell me, Assassin.

Dantés freezes, grips his lone dagger tight.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - ROAD - DAY

Two cloaked figures on horseback stand among a score of archers. Dantés steps out from the coach.

Ramiro throws back his hood.

RAMIRO
What happens next?

Ramiro raises his hand. The archers draw their arrows. An arrow STRIKES a bow, this forces that archer to turn and release his arrow into a fellow archer.

Ramiro snaps his head, finds Tydus, empty bow in hand, at the edge of the forest.

EDGE OF THE FOREST

Tydus smiles at his shot. Antonio, hidden behind a tree, wears a sour visage.

TYDUS
Your eyes give you away, but I do not fancy cock.

Antonio's demeanor shifts.

ANTONIO
Your mother should have strangled you with your birth cords.

TYDUS

My absence would leave many women
with a desert between their thighs.

The two disappear into the forest.

ROAD

The remaining archers release their arrows.

Dantés hits the ground unharmed. He scrambles to a lone
horse, mounts it, rides into the forest.

Sombra throws back her hood, gives chase towards Dantés.

RAMIRO

Hold.

Sombra stops, turns to Ramiro.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

We have more in store for him.

EXT. GRANADA - MARKET - DUSK

Melina, cloaked, approaches a MERCHANT. She gives a quick
smile, retrieves an empty vial from her pocket.

Scared, Merchant shakes his head. Melina furrows her brow.
Merchant's eyes widen, he looks beyond Melina.

She turns. Victor, accompanied by Sombra, approach.

Melina's hand soars inside her cloak. Merchant sets a sword
against the back of Melina's neck.

Victor and Sombra draw their weapons.

Melina's hand falls to her side.

VICTOR

You are summoned.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Catalina waits at the table. Dantés enters.

CATALINA

Good evening, Dantés.

Dantés slugs past her.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

Is that you, Dantés?

Antonio BURST through the door, pickaxe in hand. He trolls over to Dantés, swings his pickaxe at Dantés.

Dantés BLOCKS the attack, LOCKS steel with Antonio.

DANTÉS

What madness has seized your mind?

Catalina runs to the far corner of the kitchen, huddles in a ball in the corner.

ANTONIO

Florin is late...

Silence.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Your silence confirms the truth.

Tydus enters, he sprints towards the brawl.

TYDUS (O.S.)

Stop you mad --

Antonio kicks Tydus in the belly, Tydus flies over the table. Antonio knees Dantés in the ribs, flips him onto the floor.

Antonio SLAMS his foot into Dantés' hand. Dantés loses his grip on his dagger.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

Fuck! I was going to say 'fuck'...

Tydus stands with a loaded bow.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

Our escape went unnoticed --

ANTONIO

I allowed the thought of brighter days to cloud my judgement.

Antonio stares back at Tydus.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Never again.

Antonio waves his hand, Tydus' arrow VANISHES.

TYDUS

The hell?

ANTONIO

Be patient, your time expires soon,
but first...

Antonio turns to Dantés. Catalina lays on top of Dantés. She turns, locks eyes with Antonio. His eyes grow wide.

Antonio drops his pickaxe, it crashes on the floor. He lifts his boot from Dantés' hand.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I cannot trust those who kill their
own. Fall from sight.

Antonio trudges to the hallway, stops.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Take the filth with you.

Antonio escapes down the hallway. Dantés slides from under Catalina, gathers the pickaxe, heads to the door.

CATALINA

Dantés, wait!

Dantés exits, Tydus follows.

INT. CASTLE - RAMIRO'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Ramiro sits on the throne as he reads a scroll.

Sombra escorts Melina to him. Ramiro rises to his feet, he SLAMS the scroll on an arm of the throne.

RAMIRO

This court has not lived up to its
reputation. So many failures make
me wonder...

Melina narrows her eyes. She slides a hand to her sai.

Sombra pokes Melina in the back with a blade. Melina glances over her shoulder.

MELINA

How did she...

Ramiro takes out a vial from his pocket.

RAMIRO

I suspended the production of
this...

(MORE)

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
inconsequential medicine and I
confiscated the rest from your
mother's residence.

Fire ignites in Melina's eyes.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Without this, your eye sight goes
first, correct?

Silence.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
How long before you and the ones
you love turn into senseless
cabbage? Days, weeks...

Ramiro shatters the vial on the floor.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Your life is not your own.

Melina stares at Ramiro with death in her eyes.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
You're filled with doubt?

Ramiro creeps up to Melina. He forces his hand down the front
of her pants.

Melina moans in pain, she leans back.

Sombra puts her blade on Melina's throat.

Ramiro puts his fingers inside Melina's mouth. Smiling, he
tosses Dantés' dagger to the door.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Fall from sight.

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

Tydus, with a smile from cheek to cheek and a cup of wine in
hand, gropes Prostitute #1 on his lap. Dantés sits beside
him, a cup occupies his hand.

Tydus stares at the back of Prostitute #2. She turns, locks
eyes with Tydus. She smiles with rotten teeth. Tydus gags.

TYDUS
Looked better in my imagination...

Tydus regards Prostitute #1. His eyes fall to her breasts.

PROSTITUTE #1

I'm up here.

She lifts Tydus' head.

TYDUS

You are down there as well.

Tydus snatches Dantés' cup, takes it to his nose, swirls it, sniffs. He leans back in disgust.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

Bad form...

Tydus hands the cup back to Dantés.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

I bring you here for much needed distraction and you drink fucking piss from a river?

DANTÉS

I don't despise its taste, unlike this other taste that lingers...

TYDUS

Your words sour mood, which is set to sow seed into women that do not hold reputation.

Tydus kisses Prostitute #1, she giggles.

DANTÉS

I long for the embrace that is beyond coin's simple influence...

Dantés drops a few coins on the bar, finds his feet.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

I cannot say that it was an honor.

Dantés offers his hand to Tydus. Tydus grabs Dantés forearm.

TYDUS

Where do you go?

DANTÉS

My last hope...

Dantés throws his hood up, exits.

EXT. FOREST - ROAD - NIGHT

Melina stands in the middle of the road. Her breath drifts in the cool air. Melina glances over her shoulder.

Sombra watches from the background. She fades from sight.

Dantés approaches. He and Melina stare at each other with long faces, defeat clings to their eyes.

DANTÉS

Forgive me, for leaving --

Melina tosses Dantés his dagger. He catches it, stares at the steel for a moment.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Join me, he has taken too much from deserving hands. He must --

POV: Melina's vision grows blurry, returns to normal.

MELINA

I fear that I would be a burden to your cause...

DANTÉS

Absent you, I am nothing but flesh clinging to hollow bones...

Dantés drops to his knees, lifts his daggers to his throat.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

I pray you will know peace.

Melina raises her hand in protest.

MELINA

Stop!

Dantés' PUPILS dilate, he lowers his dagger.

MELINA (CONT'D)

I would not have you so easily from this world.

DANTÉS

Why? Why would you --

MELINA

To win means to lose and to lose means to die.

Dantés climbs into a fighting stance.

DANTÉS

Goddamn it -- Don't do this!

Melina draws her sais.

MELINA

Let's see whose blade is sharper.

Melina charges Dantés, jabs a sai at him. Dantés LOCKS his dagger with it.

FLASHBACK - EXT. DANTÉS' RESIDENCE - PORCH - DAY

Dantés and Melina kiss.

BACK TO SCENE

Dantés and Melina's attack each other relentlessly. Their blades LOCK. Tears cloud their eyes.

Dantés throws Melina over his shoulder.

Dantés SLAMS Melina on the ground. Melina rolls sideways, jumps to her feet.

Melina lands a vicious kick to Dantés' midsection.

FLASHBACK - INT. DANTÉS' RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dantés kisses Melina's navel, kisses down to her waist.

BACK TO SCENE

Dantés rolls backwards, stops on one knee. Melina and Dantés pant hard for air.

POV: Melina goes blind for a brief moment.

DANTÉS

Please... release me...

The two charge each other. Dantés sends his dagger to Melina's throat. She DEFLECTS his attack.

Dantés aims his hand at her belly, NEEDLES materialize.

FLASHBACK - INT. DANTÉS' RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dantés and Melina make love.

BACK TO SCENE

Melina swats his wrist away at the last moment, needles SOAR into the night away from her.

She sweeps Dantés' feet from under him. He lands on his back, loses grip on his daggers.

Melina sends her sai to Dantés' heart, stops her blade inches above his chest. Her sai shakes in her hand.

DANTÉS

We have our answer...

Moisture collects in Melina's eyes, she shakes her head. Her tears fall upon Dantés.

His PUPILS return to normal.

MELINA

Collect steel, harden resolve...

DANTÉS

I will be waiting on the shores of the afterlife.

Dantés kisses her hand.

MELINA

You send me to a world absent sun.

Melina raises her sai, flips it in her hand, points the tip at her chest. Dantés' eyes flare open.

MELINA (CONT'D)

No other hand will touch me again.

Melina sai crashes toward her heart. Dantés catches her hand inches from her chest.

An arrow WHIZZES through the air, PIERCES Melina's chest. Melina gasps, loses hold of her sai.

Dantés POV: Upside down, spots Tydus, empty bow in hand.

Taken by madness, Dantés rolls over, grabs a dagger and Melina's sai.

He springs to his feet, yells as he charges Tydus.

Tydus loads his bow.

TYDUS

Ungrateful shit!

Tydus loosens his arrow, Dantés DEFLECTS it.

MELINA (O.S.)

Dantés...

Dantés stops, drops his weapons. The arrow in Tydus' hand VANISHES. Dantés turns to see Melina on her knees.

MELINA (CONT'D)

I would feel your warmth one last time before I...

Dantés dashes to her side, drops to his knees. With eyes full of tears, he embraces Melina, kisses her.

DANTÉS

Why, why would you do this?

MELINA

My family has already slipped from this world, my senses are fading...

Silence.

MELINA (CONT'D)

What better way to get you to do what needs to be done?

DANTÉS

Not like this... Not like this...

Dantés shakes his head. Melina places her hand on his cheek.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Will you be my wife? Even if for just a moment?

MELINA

I've always been your wife, even if we were to foolish to realize it...

Melina grips Dantés' hand tight.

MELINA (CONT'D)

After all the grief has passed and the tears subside...

Melina wipes away Dantés' tears.

MELINA (CONT'D)

You will learn to smile again.

DANTÉS
Smile? A smile will never again
cross my lips.

MELINA
I would not have it so...

Melina's smile fades, her hand drops from his cheek.

DANTÉS
Melina... Melina?

Dantés shakes her gently, her death sinks in. Dantés hugs her
and brings her face to his chest.

He scoops her up in his arms. He shambles towards Tydus.

TYDUS
Choice was removed from hand...

Dantés lumbers past Tydus.

INT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dantés carries Melina inside.

CATALINA
Dantés?

Dantés collapses to his knees, Catalina joins him. Catalina
hands fall upon Melina's face.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
Who is this? They feel cold...

Dantés lies Melina on the floor, snatches his dagger from
it's sheath, the metal RINGS. Catalina's eyes flare open.

Dantés dashes to the door.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
Stop!

Dantés plants his feet firm on the floor, his hands shake.

DANTÉS
You're right...

EXT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Melina lies on a bed of wood.

Dantés stands next to Catalina, who carries a torch. Tydus stands in the background.

Dantés approaches Melina.

CATALINA

No one deserves this sadness...

Dantés kisses Melina on her forehead. He looks down at her sais, pockets one.

Dantés shuffles to Catalina, grabs the torch from her. He sets the wood on fire.

Dantés grabs the Necklace of Rule, stares at it.

DANTÉS

Lorenzo once asked me about the cost of loyalty? I now know what he was referring to.

Dantés stares at Melina.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

I'm trapped by the irony of my existence. Here lies the reply for the one time my hands were used to save a life.

Catalina opens her mouth to speak, but words do not form.

Tydus skulks to Dantés.

TYDUS

Dantés, I...

Dantés stares at his daggers.

ANTONIO (O.S.)

Are you going to carry that hatred with you for the rest of your days?

Antonio approaches, stands beside Dantés.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

And meet your woman with a scowl upon your lips in the afterlife?

Dantés lowers his head. Antonio puts a hand on Dantés shoulder. Dantés looks to Tydus.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Once... I held a woman with mirrored intent.

Dantés turns his gaze to Antonio.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
The taste of her lips filling you
with hope, the want to make a life
of meaning...

Silence.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
I know your heart well...

DANTÉS
She personified a vision of God's
grace. What became of her?

Silence.

ANTONIO
She fell, to men who stand as
Ramiro stands...

Dantés glances at Tydus. Antonio extends his hand. Dantés clasps Antonio's forearm.

DANTÉS
Gratitude.

ANTONIO
Move thoughts from unfortunate past
and take cause beyond your own.
Only then will you become truly
dangerous.

Antonio leaves.

Dantés meets Tydus with his eyes. Dantés extends his hand. Tydus clasps Dantés' forearm.

TYDUS
Had we shared a cup, your gesture
would be better received.

DANTÉS
We make due with what is present.

TYDUS
Such is the rumor. You will have to
excuse me. My hands have been empty
for far too long.

Tydus leaves.

Dantés steals another look at Catalina. He locks his arm with hers, they leave together.

INT. CASTLE - RAMIRO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ramiro sits at his table and enjoys a platter of fruit. Sombra, with a scroll in hand, enters.

RAMIRO

That better be something I want to hear.

Sombra hands Ramiro the scroll. He unravels and reads it.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)

The King's Court is no more, but my army is ready. Tomorrow, darkness shall serve as a cloak as the peasants march on Castile.

INT. CATALINA RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A fire crackles in the stove. Catalina sits at the table with Antonio. She taps her fingers against the table.

Dantés, armed with Melina's sai on his waist, Beltrán's short sword on his back, enters. He throws his cloak on.

Dantés slides to the counter, locks eyes with Antonio. Dantés fills his pocket with Lantana berries.

ANTONIO

I take my leave. I go to make arrangements for Catalina, in the event that the impossible happens.

Antonio exits.

DANTÉS

I thought of several different lines for this moment...

Catalina turns his way.

CATALINA

Which did you settle on?

Silence.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

I see...

Dantés bows low, grunts and stands erect. He stares at his hands as he speaks.

DANTÉS

Finally, these hands are my own and
as such, they move for a cause that
is just. Goodbye, my lady.

Dantés turns, treks toward the door. A few steps from the door, Catalina rushes in front of him. She plants her back against the door and holds her arms out in protest.

Dantés glares at her.

Catalina shakes her head. She puts her hands on his chest, feels for his weapons, unsheathes a dagger.

Her hands shake as she points it at Dantés.

He bats the dagger to the side. Catalina raises the dagger, aims at his chest. She pants heavily.

Dantés eyes Catalina, the dagger. He steps into the blade. Blood runs down the dagger.

The blood touches Catalina's fingertips.

She drops the dagger; it bounces about on the floor.

Catalina pounds the side of her fist into Dantés' chest as her eyes well up with tears.

Dantés ignores her strikes as he embraces her. She hits him a few more times.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

A beautiful thing... Your heart no
longer carries the chill of
winter's night...

Catalina wraps her arms around Dantés. He eyes the door.

CATALINA

I fear I may never see you again...

Catalina lays her hands on Dantés' face. She lowers his gaze to her. Her lip quivers.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

Just once... I would like to feel
you before you go.

Catalina guides her hand inside his cloak, slowly removes his daggers. She drops them to the floor.

She slides his cloak over his shoulders, unfastens his shirt, both fall to the floor.

Catalina places her hands on his lower abdomen, then up to his pectorals. Her hands glide up his neck, his chin.

She rest her fingertips on his lips.

Catalina steps around Dantés, puts her ear on his back. She feels his HEARTBEAT, listens to his BREATHS.

She takes her hands to his lower abdomen, embraces him.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

Let it go, Dantés...

Catalina shakes her head.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

Please, just let it...

Dantés places his hands on top of Catalina's hands.

She hugs him tighter. Dantés raises Catalina's hands to his lips. He kisses them with care.

DANTÉS

The next time these hands meet,
they will be yours to command.

Dantés turns, drapes the Neck of Rule around Catalina's neck. She traces her fingers around the necklace.

CATALINA

Return, be my eyes, and you shall
have your queen.

Dantés kisses her on her forehead. Tears fall from her eyes. He grabs his clothes and puts them on.

He collects his daggers and sheathes them. Catalina grabs Dantés' hand.

CATALINA (CONT'D)

Give Ramiro my regards...

DANTÉS

Yes, Your Majesty.

Dantés gazes at Catalina, he exits. Catalina puts her hand on the door, falls to her knees and weeps.

EXT. CATALINA RESIDENCE - ON THE PORCH - NIGHT

Dantés puts the back of his head against the door. Catalina's CRIES penetrate the door.

Dantés flounders away with his eyes shut.

EXT. CATALINA'S RESIDENCE - STABLE - NIGHT

Dantés, with a stern visage, approaches a lone horse. He rubs the beast's coat.

Antonio and Tydus, guide their mounts beside Dantés.

DANTÉS

Ramiro believes he can force people
to do as he pleases.

Dantés retrieves Antonio's pickaxe and hands it to him.
Dantés mounts his steed.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Let us expose that fatal error and
show Ramiro what people are capable
of when heart and mind are set to
clear purpose.

ANTONIO

It seems that the days of
unquestioning obedience have ended.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - ROAD - DAY

Horse legs scurry along the dirt road. Their hooves beat on the ground with malice. Dantés and Tydus ride hard.

A group of SOLDIERS organize down the road. They turn and point at Dantés and Tydus.

SOLDIER

Riders!

An arrow PIERCES a Soldier's chest, he drops from his mount. Arrow after arrow follow as several more HIT their marks.

Soldiers loose their arrows at Dantés and Tydus.

Several arrows STRIKE Dantés' horse. His horse WHINES, he crashes to the ground. Dantés flies through the air.

Dantés SMASHES against the ground, rolls upon impact. His daggers soar to his palms.

Soldiers surround him. Dantés cuts several down. Another soldier stands over Dantés, his sword set to attack.

A pickaxe PLUNGES into his back.

Antonio dives off his horse, TACKLES a Soldier. Antonio slices him with unreal speed, moves to the next.

Blood coated steel flashes in the sunlight as Dantés and Antonio move integrally.

As lethal beasts, they rip through a score of Soldiers, butchering them with reckless abandon.

Dantés pulls his dagger from a corpse, another Soldier sneaks up behind Dantés.

An arrow GASHES through the Soldier's neck; he falls beside Dantés. Dantés looks to Tydus.

DANTÉS

Gratitude --

TYDUS

Pocket it!

A group of Soldiers gather down the road. Dantés and Antonio sprint toward them.

Arrows, from their backs, fell several Soldiers.

Arrows fly at Dantés and Antonio. Dantés dives, Antonio slides under the others.

Dantés rolls, launches a BARRAGE OF NEEDLES at the Soldiers; several fall.

Antonio slides, cuts through the shins of two Soldiers. He rolls backwards, SLAMS his pickaxes into their bellies.

An arrow from Tydus claims another Soldier.

Dantés dodges, cuts down another Soldier. A wounded Soldier grunts, he crawls away, but not far.

Dantés grabs him by the collar, brings him to his knees.

SOLDIER

You are too late --

Dantés PLUNGES his dagger into the man, throws him to the ground. Antonio and Tydus gather on Dantés.

TYDUS
That was thrilling.

DANTÉS
We move on the Academy.

ANTONIO
You move boldly.

TYDUS
You know more soldiers reside
within its walls?

DANTÉS
More soldiers to recruit to our
cause. We cannot be the only ones
wronged by this king.

ANTONIO
Perhaps...

Dantés commandeers a lone horse. Antonio and Tydus mount
their horses.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Dantés, you think it wise?

EXT. ACADEMY OF THE MILITARY ARTS - TRAINING GROUNDS - NIGHT
A score of Soldiers, with their weapons drawn, surround them.

DANTÉS
Truth be told, I had my doubts...

Antonio and Dantés draw their weapons. Tydus loads his bow
with three arrows.

TYDUS
This is me.

Dantés and Antonio stare at Tydus.

TYDUS (CONT'D)
Fly, before I gain fucking sense!

Dantés nods, darts for the gate.

ANTONIO
Only my hands are allowed to claim
your life.

Tydus lets loose his arrows, three Soldiers collapse.

TYDUS

You and other women will be left
unsatisfied I'm afraid...

Antonio smirks. He dashes to join Dantés.

Three Soldiers stand in their way.

Dantés sends a BARRAGE OF NEEDLES at two, Antonio throws his
pickaxe at another.

Dantés sprints by, Antonio retrieves his pickaxe without
breaking pace.

They pass the gate.

An arrow SNAPS the gate rope, the gate crashes closed.

TYDUS (CONT'D)

I haven't had enough wine for this.

Tydus lets his arrows fly.

EXT. CASTLE - OUTER COURTYARD - NIGHT

Dantés and Antonio sneak into the courtyard. They dart behind
a stack of hay.

A garrison of troops pass and leave the castle grounds.

Dantés and Antonio approach the castle door.

SCREAMS fill the silence. Dantés and Antonio, weapons in
hand, look to the sky.

A boy SMASHES into the ground. Dantés and Antonio replace
their weapons in their sheaths.

Dantés drops to a knee, turns the body over. Fernando's eyes
glare at him. His practice sword lies beside him.

ANTONIO

Does the boy hold meaning?

Dantés POUNDS the ground with his fist. He leaps to his feet,
opens the castle door. Dantés sprints inside.

Antonio holds up a hand in protest.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Dantés, wait!

INT. CASTLE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dantés leads with Antonio to his back.

FOOTSTEPS echo in the background. Dantés and Antonio stop in a corridor. Soldiers surround them on both sides.

ANTONIO

This is as far as we go.

Dantés turns to Antonio.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I do not repeat myself.

Dantés nods, escapes down another hallway. Antonio unsheathes his pickaxes.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Who shall be the first to taste
their own blood?

Soldiers charge Antonio, he cuts down many. Jorge enters the fray, BLOCKS Antonio's attack. They steal LOCKS.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Ah! A man who presents a challenge!

INT. CASTLE - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

A body rests in the center of the room. Deeper into the room, chains bind a gagged Nína.

Dantés, daggers to palm, enters. He scans the hall. He slinks to the body, kneels, meets Nína's eyes.

Dantés bows low. He gives Nína a reassuring smile.

INT. CASTLE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Corpses litter the hallway.

Antonio STRIKES Jorge with a vicious kick. Jorge CRASHES into the wall, slumps to the floor, limp, weak.

Antonio sheathes his pickaxes.

ANTONIO

You fight well; I stand impressed.

JORGE

Go ahead, finish it you scum...

ANTONIO
Another time.

Antonio dashes down the hall.

INT. CASTLE - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Dantés turns his attention to the body. He turns the body over -- Katrina.

Tears flood from his eyes. He brushes her hair from her face.

Antonio enters, studies the room.

Dantés looks his way. Antonio's wears a stern visage.

Antonio tenses up, a sword sticks THROUGH his chest. He collapses to the floor, face-first. No one is there.

DANTÉS
Anton --

Dantés grimaces in pain. He rolls forward, a bloody sword APPEARS out of the floor.

Dantés grabs the back of his leg, blood drips from his hand. He TEARS the sleeve off his shirt, ties it around his leg.

He gags, THROWS-UP blood. Dantés digs in his pocket, eats a handful of Lantana berries.

A BARRAGE OF NEEDLES fly from the far wall, Dantés uses his NEEDLES to DEFLECT them.

DARK ENERGY forms as Sombra ASCENDS through the floor, a ninjato and a small knife in her hands.

Dantés struggles to his feet, glances at Antonio, scowls.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
I hope death satisfies you.

Sombra smiles, charges Dantés. She lunges with her ninjato.

Before their steel meets, she slips through the floor. Dantés' eyes flare open.

She pops up behind Dantés, SHAPE SHIFTS into Melina.

Dantés turns, dagger leading, he stops his blade at Sombra's -- Melina's -- neck.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Melina --

Sombra puts her hand on the side of Dantés' face, smiles, STABS him in the belly.

Sombra SHAPE SHIFTS into her original appearance, DISAPPEARS through the floor. Dantés falls to a knee, holds his belly.

Ramiro speaks as he enters.

RAMIRO

Oh Sombra, have you finished preparing the...

Dantés locks eyes with Ramiro; Ramiro freezes. Dantés jumps to his feet, Ramiro flees. Dantés gives chase.

A JINGLE of glass grabs Dantés' attention.

He peeks over his shoulder, sees the chandelier above Nína. Dantés cuts between Nína and to the hallway --

The chandelier falls.

Dantés sprints, he dives at Nína. The chain holding her SNAPS. They roll in unison.

The chandelier CRASHES into the floor.

Dantés and Nína stop. Dantés kneels over Nína.

Several NEEDLES pound Dantés in the back. He grunts.

NÍNA

Are you --

DANTÉS

Fly!

Nína flees.

Sombra RESURRECTS from the floor, knees Dantés in the face.

Dantés swings his dagger at her, she kicks his dagger from his hand; it SLIDES across the floor.

Dantés uses his other dagger, Sombra stomps his hand, pins it to the ground.

Dantés looks up at Sombra. She makes eye contact, his PUPILS dilate. Sombra unpins Dantés.

His dagger flies to his throat. Sombra smiles at her victory.

EXT. ACADEMY OF THE MILITARY ARTS - TRAINING GROUND - NIGHT

A sword swings at Tydus. He rolls backwards to a crouch.

An arrow PIERCES him in the back of the shoulder.

He spins, looses an arrow, another soldier falls. He pulls the arrow from his shoulder, fires it at another soldier.

Victor, steel set to lethal purpose, storms toward Tydus.

Tydus shoots two rapid shots, HITS two archers on the wall. Tydus loads another arrow, spins, Victor slices down at him.

Tydus raises his bow, Victor splits it in half.

Victor KICKS Tydus; he lands on his back. Victor STABS Tydus in the right shoulder; Tydus hollers.

VICTOR

You are nothing without your bow!

Victor retracts his sword, lunges it towards Tydus' belly --

INT. CASTLE - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Sombra takes a knee in front of Dantés, places her fingertips on his chin, lifts his gaze.

SOMBRA

You are no longer required.

Sombra leans into Dantés' ear.

SOMBRA (CONT'D)

Long live the king.

Dantés' PUPILS return to normal.

He looks beyond Sombra, locks eyes with Antonio, who raises his hand. Antonio's hand and face drop to the stone.

EXT. ACADEMY OF THE MILITARY ARTS - TRAINING GROUNDS - NIGHT

Tydus grabs his arrow, DEFLECTS Victor's sword. It lands in the dirt beside Tydus.

Tydus STABS Victor in the leg with the arrow. Victor screams, falls to a knee beside Tydus.

Tydus THRUST the arrow into Victor's chest. Victor collapses to the ground.

INT. CASTLE - BANQUET HALL

Sombra puts her hand on Dantés' cheek, smiles. Dantés clasps his fingers around Melina's sai.

DANTÉS
Maybe one day, for one king...

Dantés PLUNGES the sai into Sombra's heart; she gasps.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
But not this king.

Sombra topples to the floor. Dantés shuffles to her side, retrieves the sai, wipes clean.

He gazes at Sombra with respect. He closes her eyes.

With a hand on his belly, Dantés stumbles to Antonio. Dantés kneels beside him, turns him over, holds Antonio's head up.

ANTONIO
Dantés...

Dantés nods.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
If Ramiro never removed Catalina's mother out of the castle, they would have been foreign to me...

Clarity hits Dantés.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
I am grateful for that... But his delivery was foul.

Antonio chokes on his blood.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
End this, your heart's desire will be waiting by the river...

Antonio expires. Dantés closes Antonio's eyes.

He pockets one of Antonio's pickaxes.

Dantés, under the influence of pain, rises to his feet. The fire of purpose burns bright in his eyes.

INT. CASTLE - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Ramiro makes his way from the throne to the doorway.

RAMIRO
Sombra, have you finished
exterminating the pest --

A bloody hand on the wooden frame of the doorway. Dantés turns the corner, locks eyes with Ramiro.

Shock paints Ramiro's face. Ramiro turns and flees.

Dantés sends a BARRAGE OF NEEDLES into Ramiro's legs. Ramiro CRASHES to the floor.

Ramiro turns, crawls backwards.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Wait, Dantés, let me explain...

Ramiro crawls towards the throne. Dantés pursues him.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Ishmael, was not helping the
Outlaws. He served the people!

Dantés narrows his eyes, fingers wrapped around his dagger, track Ramiro step for step.

RAMIRO (CONT'D)
Besides, Sombra is the one that
killed the king --

DANTÉS
We are but tools left in the hand
of our masters.

Blood drips from Dantés' wound. He drags his wounded leg.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
I am here to reprimand the master.

RAMIRO
You cannot kill a king, that makes
you a traitor!

DANTÉS
So be it.

Ramiro makes it to the foot of the throne. He picks himself up, sits on the throne.

RAMIRO
He had you kill an innocent man so
that he could marry his wife --

DANTÉS

We often fall short of the
potential within our hearts.
Despite his shortcomings...

Dantés steps to the throne. Ramiro eyes the dagger.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

He was my king, and my friend.

Dantés plunges his dagger into Ramiro's heart.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Catalina sends her regards.

Dantés executes a lethal roundhouse kick on Ramiro. Ramiro
flies out of the throne as the chair tumbles over.

Dantés crumples to the floor, takes a deep breath, stares at
Ramiro. Dantés staggers to the throne, picks it up, sits.

A platter of Mediterranean Spring Rolls rest on a pedestal
beside the throne.

Dantés grunts, grabs a roll, takes a bite, shakes his head.

A door CREEKS open. Nína timidly peeks inside. She enters,
stares at Dantés with fearful eyes.

Dantés gives an inviting smile. Nína stands motionless.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Did they harm you?

Nína shakes her head, tears form in her eyes. Dantés smirks.
Nína breaks into a full sprint.

She dives into Dantés, squeezes the life from him. Dantés
gives a whispered grunt.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

You're safe now.

(then)

I need your assistance...

Dantés shows her a dagger. Nína stares with wide eyes.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)

Heat this on that...

Dantés points to a torch on the wall. Relief hits Nína.

Nína takes the dagger, dashes to the torch. She places it in
the fire until it turns bright red.

She sprints to Dantés, hands Dantés the blade. He places the dagger on his belly; it SIZZLES. He clenches his fist.

Jorge, with his hand on the back of his head, enters. He prowls toward Dantés and Nína.

He draws his sword, points it at Dantés. Nína stands in front of the sword and holds her arms out in protest.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
Step aside, Nína...

Nína peeks over her shoulder at Dantés.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
All will be as it should be.

Nína faces Dantés, tears run down her face.

Dantés wipes away the tears. He puts his hand on her cheek.

Nína snatches his dagger. She turns, points it at Jorge.

Jorge SMACKS the dagger from her hands. Nína turns, buries her face in Dantés' chest. Dantés embraces her.

Jorge pulls her from Dantés.

Nína holds onto his cloak for life.

Jorge pries Nína away. Jorge throws her to the ground. Nína gets up, pounds Jorge with her fist.

Jorge pushes Nína, she crashes to the floor, hard. She lies unconscious. Dantés rises, Jorge kicks him into the throne.

Jorge places the tip of his sword on Dantés' chest.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
Absent proper rule, Granada will
fall into calamity. Or, you can be
the hero that prevented the
darkness...

JORGE
How will I know --

DANTÉS
Their birthright will be around
their neck.

JORGE
A bold claim. Why should I
entertain the words of a traitor?

Dantés holds his belly as he groans.

DANTÉS
Pain limits creativity.

Jorge shakes his head.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
Choice lies within your hands...

Jorge gets leverage, he grits his teeth...

He exhales, sheathes his sword. Dantés struggles to his feet.
Nína rushes to his side.

JORGE
One question.

Dantés stops.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Why didn't you kill me, on the
night of your escape?

DANTÉS
Some men are obstacles...

Dantés glance at Ramiro.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
Others are targets.

Jorge exits with Dantés and Nína in tow.

INT. CASTLE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jorge, Dantés and Nína enter.

Tydus, with a vase in his hand, enters. He takes the vase to
his lips, streaks of red wine drip down his mouth.

Dantés shakes his head. Jorge's hand slides to his sword.

DANTÉS
You finally procured your coin?

Tydus smiles, produces a coin purse.

TYDUS
That and...

Tydus, replaces the coin purse in his pocket, taps his hip,
coins JIGGLE against each other.

TYDUS (CONT'D)
Plus interest.

Tydus taps the other side of his hip, coins CLAP together.

TYDUS (CONT'D)
For my pain and suffering.

Tydus taps his breast pocket, coins KNOCK once more. Tydus opens his mouth to speak.

Dantés holds his hand up to silence him.

DANTÉS
The point is made.

JORGE
You robbed the treasury?

Tydus shrugs his shoulders. Jorge puts a hand on his sword.

TYDUS
Your actions are derived from a
commoner's perspective.

Jorge draws his sword a bit, Dantés stops him before he makes too much progress.

Tydus gives a smug smile.

TYDUS (CONT'D)
I'm off to do something foolish.

Tydus grasps Dantés' forearm. Together, they shake. Tydus heads for the exit, stops at a corridor.

TYDUS (CONT'D)
Tell the brute he will have to wait
another day...

Dantés retrieves Antonio's pickaxe. Dantés throws it to Tydus. Tydus catches it, studies it.

DANTÉS
Try and make him wait...

Tydus takes a swig of wine, smiles, exits. Dantés exits with Nína and Jorge. A blood trail follows Dantés.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAWN

The sound of rushing water whirls in the background.

Catalina sulks at the table over a bowl of soup. She rubs her fingers around the Necklace of Rule.

A KNOCK beats on the door. Catalina springs to the door.

NÍNA (O.S.)
Catalina, daughter of the king?

CATALINA
Who calls?

NÍNA (O.S.)
Nína Santos, Dantés sent me...

Catalina sighs. She opens the door, looks just above Nína. Nína does a curtsy, her dress RUFFLES.

Catalina adjusts her line of sight.

CATALINA
Pleased to make your acquaintance,
Nína. Come in, take a seat.

Nína scurries by Catalina. Catalina starts to close the door, a hand stops her. Catalina gazes with concern.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
Who calls?

DANTÉS (O.S.)
A man no longer bound by the chains
of guilt.

Dantés emerges from around the corner. Catalina smiles from cheek to cheek; her eyes fill with tears.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
I am looking for a woman who has
impeccable vision.

Catalina blushes. Dantés tumbles to the floor. Catalina drops to her knees, her hands fall to his belly.

CATALINA
Is this... are you bleeding?

Catalina finds Dantés' face, puts Dantés' head in her lap as Dantés rolls over to his back.

Dantés reaches up, puts his hand on her cheek. Catalina covers his hand with hers.

DANTÉS
You're Granadan...

Catalina chuckles. Dantés' visage grows stern. Catalina takes her free hand to his face.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
If desire alone led to reality,
then you would have your eyes.

Catalina leans in and kisses Dantés. The Necklace of Rule falls from inside her shirt.

He places his hand on her heart.

DANTÉS (CONT'D)
This feeling... use it, let it be
the force behind everything you do.

Dantés' hand crashes to the floor.

CATALINA
Dantés... Dantés?

Catalina collapses on Dantés and weeps. Nína smothers her. Nína's sobs hum low.

A floor board SQUEAKS.

CATALINA (CONT'D)
Who comes?

Jorge stands still, he spots the Necklace of Rule.

He steps to Catalina, draws his sword, sticks it in the floor, rest his hands upon the hilt and kneels.

JORGE
Long live the queen.

FADE OUT.