

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

by

William Monahan

*"What does it profit a man
To gain the whole world
And lose his immortal soul?"*

FADE UP ON:

RAVENS in stripped trees. Frost clings to hedges, and low fog lies on the November fields of France. A season of mud and snow.

TITLE:

"FRANCE, 1186"

Sustain the image of smoking fields and then (with the sound of PICK AND SPADE...)

EXT. A CROSSROADS. DAWN

OPEN CLOSE on the most medieval face you've ever seen: a pale, injured, vengeful face, capable of a routine mask of piety: a priest. With a dirty fingernail the priest flicks out part of a frozen worm from a winter apple.

We are at an intersection of two lanes of near-frozen mud in hedgerow country. Two GRAVEDIGGERS, a cold PRIEST, a BODY, at a country crossroads overlooked by a Celtic cross.

ON SOUND, as the PRIEST contemplates his meal (he wants better and is sure he deserves it) we hear...

The PICK and SPADE at work, digging the grave at the exact center of the crossroads.

FRANCOIS (cs)

I am Francois,
(as SPADE digs into
the nearly frozen
ground)
to my dismay
(throws earth)
Conceived and born in the usual
way...Son of man, yet by the way,
not of him my mother say...

PRIEST

(beyond cold in thin
and ragged wool)
Shut up and dig.

Chewing his distasteful apple he stares at: A small body, wrapped in something like burlap, lying on the frozen ground. Where the wrapping is parted we see a pitiful white face and open eyes upon which snowflakes fall. A rope-scarred neck. A woman: a suicide. A silver CRUCIFIX around her neck.

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CONTINUED:

The priest, eyeing the crucifix in an ecstasy of greed is for a moment unable to eat his apple. Then he eats.

The GRAVEDIGGERS are in rags, dirty, coughing, destined to die before forty --but men as we are. FRANCOIS is cleverer than his condition, saturnine, and watching for his opportunity in life long after he should have stopped looking. His right ear is mutilated.

FRANCOIS

(dangerously clever)

Denied the cross for suicide, the suicide is then buried at the center of a cross.

(leans on his pick,

like a scholar)

Show me the logic.

(a noticeable beat)

Father.

PRIEST

What would you know of Logic?

FRANCOIS

(the rising, and
vindicative, Common
Man)

I have ears, Father. Though one is notched because I love justice.

PRIEST

Thieving.

(thieving, he puts
the dead woman's
CRUCIFIX around his
own neck.)

Dig.

FRANCOIS (a man who will come into his own, has vowed it), digs. The PRIEST suddenly (as RAVENS erupt from trees beyond a frozen field) looks in the direction away from the sunrise.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

(as the GRAVEDIGGERS,
ceasing to dig, also
stare)

Horses.

(softly, querulously,
and as if there's an
opportunity in it)

Knights.

Straightens his clothes. Medievally speaking, the boss is coming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A PARTY OF MOUNTED KNIGHTS AND MEN-AT-ARMS (at first glimpsed beyond a birch grove) come along the road. They are cloaked, cowled. The colors of their clothes are the only color in the day. The KNIGHTS ride mares, but ready-saddled DESTRIERS are led behind the party, which also is accompanied by a CART carrying tents, armor, supplies. A SQUIRE rides before, in rich, dirty velvet (later recognizable as the livery of IBELIN.) The SQUIRE, who has a dirty cold, and is none too happy at the French weather, comes up, on a muddy palfrey, and looks at the gravediggers, the body. The PRIEST bows low. THE SQUIRE looks at the scene. It is no business of his. A suicide being buried at a crossroads? Normal.

SQUIRE

(flatly, no conceit)

Clear the road.

THE SQUIRE, staring at the PRIEST, says nothing. As the sound of horses draw nearer the PRIEST and the GRAVEDIGGERS back out of the road and bow, giving the road to:

THE TRAVELLERS.

A scowling, huge, German knight (ODO), a worldly and scholarly HOSPITALIER, an ENGLISH SERGEANT (not a knight but mounted to fight as one despite inferior, leather armor), a fantastical Turkish mercenary (FIRUZ) and two MOUNTED GENOESE CROSSBOWMEN in leather armor. The principal of the party is GODFREY OF IBELIN. GODFREY is what in those days might pass for a vital sixty, battle-scarred. He wears beneath his cloak (as do his knights) armor modified by use in the desert, padded and quilted in the Saracen manner. GODFREY is a man riding into his past. He seems to remember the crossroads, the countryside--but not with any joy. He seems a man weary of life as he has lived it, with a heavy responsibility or obligation on his mind.

The PRIEST (standing, head bowed, with the gravediggers as the knights pass) is in a frenzy of curiosity but does not dare look up as GODFREY passes.

THE HOOVES OF DESTRIERS, PALFREYS, MULES, pass by the small body and the just-finished grave. FIRUZ stops and takes in: the crossroads. The winter country. His Middle Eastern face is deadpan, but curious.

PRIEST stays with eyes averted until the riders (and their creaking cart) have passed.

FRANCOIS

(to other
gravedigger)

Crusaders.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANCOIS (CONT'D)

(a beat)

I can smell the blood and spices.

(resentfully

beginning to dig)

I can smell the opportunity.

The second GRAVEDIGGER knows what he means, but does not agree about "opportunity". Where he is now is where he will die. He digs. *

PRIEST *

(staring after
riders, in a frenzy
of curiosity and
perhaps opportunism)

Dig.

THE SQUIRE, who has turned back, reins in. He tosses a coin. *

SQUIRE *

For this burial, from my lord. And
a mass for the soul. *

The priest bows greasily but he has other uses for the coin. *

EXT. BEYOND THE CROSSROADS. CONTINUOUS

GODFREY, riding, stares around at the wintry countryside of his youth. His face is intelligent, lined, grave, scarred: he has seen the world to its very end and now he has returned to where he was born. He sees: AN ORCHARD. It smokes with frost. (Perhaps there is a particularly memorable tree). *

GODFREY'S POV:

BALIAN'S HOUSE. A prosperous, strong thatched farm with a workshop building (a FORGE); but it is still. No smoke rises from the chimneys.

A grubby APPRENTICE (his job, of which he is certainly incapable, to defend the farm in its owners absence) stares out at the passing knights from behind a hedge. The HOSPITALLER looks curiously at Godfrey, who is staring towards the forge. *

HOSPITALLER *

You know this place, my lord?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GODFREY
(looks around at
country...then at
the ORCHARD)
I know all of it.

He spurs on. The TRAVELLERS continue towards...

THE LOCAL CASTLE. It is a motte-and-bailey affair, only just advanced enough to have a keep of stone. It stands, wreathed in the smoke of its fires, on a hill above a village coming awake.

EXT. THE CROSSROADS. CONTINUOUS

The PRIEST is staring after the knights with interest, fear, speculation. On one level he is just a provincial who burns to deliver news of travellers. The workmen begin to throw the body into the finished grave.

PRIEST
(almost having
forgotten himself,
given the excitement
of the travellers)
You've forgotten.

An AXE falls to the frozen ground. The GRAVEDIGGERS look at each other.

FRANCOIS
(looking for humanity
in the priest, but
not expecting to see
it)
Father. She was your brother's
wife.

PRIEST
Cut off her head.
(hurries away)
And return the axe!

The PRIEST hurries after the KNIGHTS. Crude shoes in the freezing mud. White ambitious face.

EXT. THE VILLAGE. LATER THAT MORNING

A church is being built, things being dragged through the mud, swayed up to the scaffolding. The local Bishop, a fat, shrewd politician (but fundamentally a decent man), anxiously watches the progress of the church, the PRIEST with him, walking, past a stonemasons yard, both priests holding up their skirts from the mud.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

6.

BISHOP
Your brother. You have spoken to
him?

PRIEST
(mock-concerned)
He is insane with grief, my lord,
and still arrested.

BISHOP
The burial was...

PRIEST
Yes.

BISHOP
Yet you did not mutilate the
person.

PRIEST
(lying piously)
No.

BISHOP
A law can go too far.
(chewing a thumbnail
and looking at the
construction)
It can go too far. I ask myself
"Would Jesus do it thusly?" There
is so little done in Christendom of
which Christ would be capable. One
day we must look into it.
(to practicals,
walking)
You must release your brother. I
cannot do without him.

PRIEST
My brother, my lord Bishop, is
insane. Madmen must be confined.

BISHOP
Your brother is as mad as I am. He
grieves.
(the PRIEST'S plan is
history)
Without your brother I have no
ironwork. Without iron bracings I
have no church. Let him out.
(as PRIEST, thwarted,
submits to this,
the BISHOP digs in
his robes)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Give him this

(a chinking, fat,

PURSE)

and tell him...that he is at ...the

very center of my prayers.

PRIEST is unhappy, but takes the PURSE, and complies. He goes off down the muddy street. Turning a corner, he quickly shakes out half the money into his own purse. Then more than half.

EXT. THE YARD OF THE FORGE. DISCONTINUOUS (SUNLIT, A DREAM)

A splendid rooster, Chanticleer, taking a dust-bath. A woman's BARE FEET move through the farmyard.

The face of the woman we have seen dead. She is alive, smiling. She is moving along a complicated hencoop, gathering eggs, smiling back at her observer...

BALIAN, in sunlight, on the best day of his life. Face dripping. He is at the trough, washing.

EGGS are laid in a bed of grasses. The WIFE looks back at her observer (Balian), walks through a door, and disappears.

INT. A TOWN LOCKUP. DAY

BALIAN awakes in reality and in dirty straw. He sits up. He is no more than thirty as it was in those days. Nothing in his face except the fact that he has again remembered his wife is dead. Balian is no peasant. He is a master craftsman, a blacksmith and artificer: if there were a middle class (one that anyone mentioned, anyway), he'd have been a member of it. He is watched by two sympathetic GUARDS in the ratty livery of the local Lord. What has woken Balian? The PRIEST has come in. The PRIEST has no fear of Balian: he has been tormenting him for years, and knows him as an easy target: a man who will never strike back.

PRIEST

You are to be released if you will go back to work.

(no reaction)

The Bishop conceives that he needs you.

(whispers, holding Balian's shoulder)

He will protect you for a while...but then? What is there for you here? Take the cross.

(a beat, then brightly)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIEST (CONT'D)

There may in fact be
opportunity....

(as Balian says
nothing)

Release him. Yet only mind you to
work.

He goes, a man off on his business. BALIAN remains sitting
in the straw. He stares at the open DOOR (direct to the
open snowy world) as if not knowing what to do with such a
thing as a door. The door ajar (rhyming with the dream).

OLD GUARD

On your feet. This is not heaven.
It is the world and there are
troubles in it. Do yourself no
injury. Other men are always good
for that.

BALIAN nods, and does stand. He has always stood on his
feet and manages to do so now.

EXT. BALIAN'S HOUSE AND FORGE. LATER

Balian's home is a prosperous place, prosperous as a
commoner could get in those days. A solid farm, (chickens,
a byte of cows) a forge. The BOY watches as Balian wanders
on, enters his forge. The CHANTICLEER of the dream watches
from his own domain.

INT. BALIAN'S FORGE. CONTINUOUS

BALIAN stares up at a particular, crosslike, juncture of
beams. A CUT ROPE dangles from the crossbeams. BALIAN looks
around at what remains of his life. A shop where horses are
shod, weapons are made-and finely. Balian is a man of
talent: we understand him on that level. There are signs of
silversmithing, of swordmaking; he makes armor. Things made
or half-made fill the shop. The forge has not been allowed
to go out entirely: He begins to pump the bellows: the
forge begins to glow. BALIAN pumps and pumps the bellows.

EXT. BALIAN'S PROPERTY. NIGHT

Night has fallen, and the forge glows in the darkness. We
hear Balian hammering and hammering, and, above the forge,
we see the lighted castle on the hill.

INT. THE GREAT HALL OF THE CASTLE. NIGHT

MUSIC. The travellers from the Holy Land are dining with
Godfrey's elder brother, GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER (who
stayed poor while his brother became a baron in the Holy
Land), employing their knives. GODFREY is self-absorbed,
thinking, eating reflectively.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The HOSPITALLER carries the conversation with the LOCAL LORD. GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER is attended by his mendacious, cynical, and worthless SON, who is drinking as if his guts are on fire.

GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER
And what of Jerusalem?

HOSPITALLER
(suavely)
Imperilled, my lord.

GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER
It has stood against the Saracen
for almost a hundred year.

HOSPITALLER
The Saracens...
(a beat)
have someone...
(another suave beat)
new.
(He holds up a silver
wine-cup, and to
change the subject)
Very fine.

LORD'S SON
(always, one way or
another, picking a
fight)
You mean, Hospitaller, it is very
fine for such a poor place?

ODO, the German knight, looks up at, with relish, a potential enemy. Odo loves an enemy. The HOSPITALLER is suave.

HOSPITALLER
I mean that it is very fine.

GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER
You do not drink from it. A knight
should be a knight, a monk a monk,
that is what I say.
(the Hospitaller,
both a knight and a
monk, mildly ignores
this)
But I am old fashioned. As for the
cup, I have an artificer.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER (CONT'D)

Or did have his services till I was told I must have a new church, the previous one not being pleasing to God for some reason I do not understand.

(The BISHOP smiles indulgently, eating copiously)

And now, further, he has a dead wife and I cannot get knife made nor a horse shod.

GODFREY

(distracted, staring away)

Which son of the blacksmith of my time is the blacksmith now?

GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER

The eldest. Balian.

(as GODFREY, registering a significance, resumes eating)

A child died. The woman fell into a melancholy. She would not listen to reason. She killed herself.

(disinterested, worldly)

It occurs.

GODFREY, listening, drinking wine, has something in his face: a past sin, and a determination to set it right before death closes on him. He moves to a window and parts the ragged hangings to look down into the valley.

GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER (CONT'D)

(drunk and bitter)

It is six and twenty years since my brother took the cross, and now he returns a lord of foreign parts and Christ's kingdom, an actual Baron of Jerusalem. How is that for the fate of a younger brother?

Bitterly, in his rude hall in his rude castle (as KNIGHTS drink to GODFREY), he drinks, and says to his SON (who leans towards him):

GODFREY'S ELDER BROTHER (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

With no heir it comes to me and thus to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LORD'S SON
(a sadistic fop, a
raper of goose-
girls)

Then I thank my stars for my uncle.

GODFREY'S POV:

We see the lights of the village and in the distance the lights of the forge. Perhaps even at this distance we can see the glow of the forge. SNOW is falling.

SNOW blows into the room. Godfrey, cold, reflective, coughing slightly, drops the drapery.

INT. THE SLEEPING LOFT. DAWN

Balian, waking from a dream, sits up in his wifeless bed in the darkened loft. He sits up. Breaks ice in a stone bowl. Goes on.

EXT. BALIAN'S FORGE. LATER THAT MORNING

SMOKE RISES.

ANGLE-IRON plunged to cool in a barrel of water. Then thrown with a clang with others on a heap.

LATER

BALIAN emerges from the forge, and throws ironwork (angle-irons, simple braces, presumably for the building church) into a cart. He looks up (startled) and sees:

GODFREY'S SQUIRE, cloaked against the cold, sitting a palfrey. The SQUIRE still has an evil cold: it's worse.

SQUIRE
You are the blacksmith?
(BALIAN nods)
Balian the eldest son of the Balian
that was.
(Balian nods and the
Squire continues
lawyerishly)
Not the eldest surviving, but the
eldest in fact.

BALIAN nods.

SQUIRE (CONT'D)
(simply, as he turns
his horse)
Remain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The SQUIRE, after another strange, direct look at Balian, rides off.

INT. BALIAN'S FORGE. LATER

BALIAN is eating coarse brown bread, and staring at the BOY. The two eat together silently. On SOUND we hear horses. Through UNSHUTTERED WINDOWS we see: KNIGHTS and PRIEST enter the yard, the party passing through that frame. BALIAN, gesturing, "stay here", puts down his meal.

EXT. THE YARD. CONTINUOUS

BALIAN walks out into the light. The entire party stares at him. The Knights, the English Sergeant, Firuz, the two Crossbowmen, and Godfrey.

PRIEST

(pointing)
That is the man.

ODO, riding, ducking low in the saddle, peers into the forge as if (characteristically) looking for stealables. (ODO is unaware that there is any subtlety in the situation).

ODO

You make blades.

(BALIAN nods)

You are an armorer. An artificer.
According to your lord, and this priest.

(surveying property
larcenously)

One of the few on our journey worth
more alive than dead.

ENGLISH SERGEANT

Or any journey.

TRAVELLERS laugh. BALIAN looks expressionlessly at them.

ODO

(looks at house)
Have you a woman?

PRIEST

(intervening,
dismounting)
He does not. Yet the matter of
women does dangle about the place.

He kicks at his small donkey, riding around the yard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOSPITALLER

(reprimanding the
priest with a
glance)

By asking about a woman he means
that we need to eat and will pay.

(a beat)

I heard the story, above. You have
my sympathy and blessings and your
wife's soul is today the object of
my prayers.

BALIAN, recognizing the habit, goes to his knees. The
HOSPITALLER blesses him. GODFREY watches through the
spitting snow.

PRIEST

(to GODFREY,
privately)

The blacksmith, my lord, has been
implored to take the cross yet will
not go...

GODFREY

Shut up.

BALIAN

(to nearer knights,
Hospitalier and Odo)

There is a boy in the house. He can
give you something.

ODO

Are you too good to shoe a horse?

BALIAN

(a Christian with his
limits)

Not when paid.

ODO appreciates the balls of this.

HOSPITALLER

We need the horses shod. All. And
food can you provide it for my Lord
did not leave his brother on good
terms. You will be paid.

BALIAN nods at this saintly man. The HOSPITALLER is a
warrior, a doctor, and an ordained priest.

EXT. THE FARMYARD. LATER

The TRAVELLERS are lolling in the thin sunlight, eating chicken beneath a tree. The hungry PRIEST has not been invited to eat but is still attempting to ingratiate himself...and get his brother out of the country.

PRIEST

I am positive that he has made great engines for sieges. He has made petraries, to cast the largest stones...mangonels and catapults...he works finely in silver...

ODO

(eating)

Shut up.

GODFREY OF IBELIN, however, has been listening interestedly, his back against a stone wall, a cup of wine in his hand. The CUP shakes slightly. GODFREY, of all things, is nervous. He is looking across the road at

The ORCHARD. The distinctive tree. GODFREY walks part way into the field.

The HOSPITALLER seems to understand what Godfrey is thinking: and well he should, because he is Godfrey's confessor.

GODFREY

Do you still as my confessor advise what you advised upon the road?

HOSPITALLER

I do, my lord. But I take no credit for your contrition. I am merely its observer.

(concerned for the shivering Godfrey)

It is warm by the forge.

INT. THE FORGE. LATER

BALIAN, assisted by the Italian Crossbowmen and the ENGLISH SERGEANT, is shoeing a DESTRIER. The huge war horse has had to be roped against the side of the stall. BALIAN finishes, steps back.

BALIAN

The others will be easier.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Crossbowmen attend to the (frightening but manageable) warhorse as Balian goes off to do something. The PRIEST, disinvited from the meal, wiping at his nose, enters the forge.

PRIEST

(hissing)

You were bluff with them. "Not when paid". Who do you think you are?

(BALIAN has never
thought he is
anybody)

You make armor. Do not behave like a man who wears it. An ability with metal does not protect you as much as you think. I do not understand why God gave you talent.

BALIAN

For God's purposes. As I understand the world.

PRIEST

(looks up at the
rafters.)

It was here. From this beam? Or that one.

(BALIAN says nothing,
continuing to sort
his tools)

Have you been to the crossroads, brother?

(BALIAN continues to
work.)

The village does not want you. When the old lord is dead they will drive you out. When the bishop is dead, it is certain.

BALIAN

And who takes my property?

PRIEST

The Church...

BALIAN

You.

PRIEST

I am the church. Here.

ODO has wandered into the forge, eating an apple. With him, FIRUZ, fascinated by the workshop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN

This priest interferes with the
work for my lord.

ODO grabs the PRIEST by the scruff of the neck and hurls
him into the yard. Chickens scatter. GODFREY and the
HOSPITALLER are walking towards the door.

PRIEST

Do you believe in God?

ODO

(eating apple)

Sword-makers.

(a good judge of men,

to BALIAN, as

GODFREY and the

HOSPITALLER enter)

Have you been at war?

BALIAN nods.

ODO (CONT'D)

(coming close and
menacing)

Are you a despicable archer who
puts crossbolts into his betters
and then runs away?

GODFREY's own "despicable archers" smile. They like nothing
so much as "putting crossbolts" into their betters.

BALIAN

I have fought a horse, as a
sergeant.

ODO

(feeling. which is to
say, bashing,
Balian's arm)

Fight me with staves.

(as Balian smiles
"no")

Not a good idea, a "sergeant".

ENGLISH SERGEANT

Being one, messire, I can only
agree.

GODFREY grins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ODO

Put a man on a horse and he gets ideas about other people's property. I speak absolutely from experience.

BALIAN says nothing. GODFREY sits on a stool near the fire. The HOSPITALLER inspects wares: a good sword, a good knife.

ODO (CONT'D)

(coming close, to
intimidate)

Against whom and for whom did you fight.

BALIAN

For one Lord against another, on a point which cannot be remembered and which, possibly, had no significance to begin.

The PRIEST listens outraged.

HOSPITALLER

He does have ideas.

ODO

(close to Balian)

There is better game now. One God against another. The pay is proportionate.

The KNIGHTS laugh. ODO menaces BALIAN with sword.

ODO (CONT'D)

(the point at
Balian's throat)

We can use an armorer. A man can make his way in the East.

PRIEST

(piously
opportunistic,
through window)

I have been telling him that.

BALIAN

I have no interest.

GODFREY stands.

GODFREY

Leave me with this man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The room is empty in one second as if Godfrey's voice was a starter's gun. The TRAVELLERS and the PRIEST all wander outside, looking back. GODFREY takes up the good sword just put down by ODO.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

("sighting" the
blade)

In these times a man should think
upon the East.

Godfrey, we note again, is nervous.

BALIAN

I shall think upon what my Lord
likes.

GODFREY

There are knights in the East who
were not knights before. In the
east he who had not a house is the
master of a city.

(puts down sword)

You have lost your wife.

(concealing extreme
interest)

Were there children?

BALIAN

Not alive, my Lord. Which as God
pleased was the reason...for...

GODFREY

(glances up at the
beams)

God has made us men, and we must
suffer all.

(then looks out at
the country,
nostalgically)

It was twenty seven years ago this
month of November when I was last
in this country and at this place.

BALIAN, looking up at Godfrey, knows instantly what may be
meant. GODFREY looks up at the rafters. Wind. Pigeons under
the thatched eaves.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

I knew your father. I give him that
name. I knew your mother. To some
extent against her objections, yet
I was the lord's brother and she
had no choice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Balian freezes, staring down at his hands. Then he looks up at Godfrey.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

(as they stare at
each other)

Men go to Jerusalem to expiate. I
have come from there to do the
same. Some say Jerusalem is the
very center of the world for
contrition: for myself, I call it
here.

(a beat)

I ask your forgiveness.

Outside the windows, SNOW magically begins to fall hard.
BALIAN turns to the forge, pumps the bellows, in chaos.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

If-

BALIAN

(firmly)

No.

GODFREY, a complicated look in his face, nods, resignedly,
and starts to go.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

I have one thing to ask. My life
and house are not secure here. I
have enemies.

GODFREY

An enemy is the easiest thing to
manage. Far easier than horses,
war, or women. He kills you, or you
kill him.

BALIAN

No. Take the boy.

GODFREY

(hope in this)

Is he yours?

BALIAN

No. An orphan.

GODFREY

(disappointed in
this)

I can use an armorer.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

GODFREY (CONT'D)

If I cannot bring to Jerusalem
French knights nor even men at arms
I can at least bring a good
armorier. I will not bring you by
compulsion, mind.

BALIAN

(clinging to what he
knows of the world)
My place--

GODFREY

What made it your place is dead.

BALIAN

--is here.

GODFREY

(disappointed)
Will you take money? I am in debt
to the Temple and I am old. If you
would have anything of me take now
what you can.

BALIAN

I thank you but no.

GODFREY, not one to press the point further, nods.

GODFREY

Then I have seen you, and you have
seen me, and that is that. God
protect you.

GODFREY goes out from the forge.

EXT. THE TRACK BY THE FORGE. LATER

The KNIGHTS ride out. The BOY is with them, mounted on a
baggage-horse. GODFREY lingers

GODFREY

It is easy to find Jerusalem. You
come to where the men speak
Italian, and then continue until
they speak something else. We go by
Messina. Goodbye.

GODFREY spurs after his party.

INT. THE FORGE. NIGHT

BALIAN has been working late...and now he is staring at the
fire, drinking from a stone jug. He is drunk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's had quite a day, for a blacksmith. He gets up and staggers into the the yard to piss. He looks up at

THE STARS he knows. As if they are now meaningless. He puzzles at them.

BALIAN, drunk, moves towards the line of trees, off through the falling snow.

EXT. CROSSROADS . NIGHT. SNOWING

The burial crossroads. BALIAN is on his knees, staring at the earth. It is frozen and his wife is beneath it. As he sobers up, sounds O.S: and

(BALIAN'S POV)

the PRIEST comes along, with BOYS (the exact boys who have been tormenting Balian) and FRANCOIS carrying bundles of fuel (evidently tithed to the church), and torches.

BALIAN stands. The burden-carriers walk on, crossing themselves, in semi-respectful silence (though one of the BOYS laughs, and is swatted by Francois). BALIAN and his brother are left looking at each other. The PRIEST (gesturing "walk on" to FRANCOIS and the BOYS, who do walk on, staring back through the snow) baltens sadistically on his brother's sorrow.

PRIEST

They would have taken you. Away from all this. I arranged it.

(crouching by Balian)

Her grave was here. Or was it there. I am afraid I cannot tell you the exact location.

(BALIAN stares at the ground)

You never fight back. Do you think you are Jesus Christ?

(BALIAN simply looks at him, snowflakes in his lashes.)

You go about your business so sober. Owing no man. So correct in your tithes, and duties. To what end? I think that you conceive yourself without sin.

BALIAN

I think that what matters to you is that others have thought it. And that you do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIEST

(with relish)

Not any more. Sin is a disease
which does transfer to those who
touch it.

BALIAN, after a look at his brother that says that his
brother, simply, does not exist, walks back towards his
lighted forge. The PRIEST thinks it might be better to
follow the boys, but follows him across the moonlit field.
The PRIEST's rag-bound feet and clogs crunch in the snow.
The PRIEST decides that tonight is the night: he follows
vindictively.

INT. THE FORGE. NIGHT

The PRIEST presses his advantage. He lurks in the doorway.
The room is lit like hell. A sword smokes, white-hot, in
the coals of the forge.

BALIAN

I have dreamt of Christ. Of late I
dream of Christ in his agony. What
do you make of it?

PRIEST

What I make of everything. You must
take the cross.

BALIAN

(more a question than
a statement)

And you take my property, though
property you renounced.

PRIEST

I take my father's property.

(BALIAN goes back to
work, pounding the
sword-blade, as the
priest says with
hatred:)

Everything you have is the result
of a whore's lie to a simpleton.
God knows who your father was. She
was my mother but I call her what
she was. And now another whore has
hanged herself. For God's sake,
leave. I swear that you will have
no peace. No peace. I am your
personal devil so long as you stay.

BALIAN has nothing to say to this. The PRIEST presses in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIEST (CONT'D)

No man ever needed a new world more. Imagine your sin and pain erased. All.

BALIAN

If I wanted absolution I could buy it.

PRIEST

(a trump, played with relish)

Not for your wife.

BALIAN looks up slowly in the firelight.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

Some go to the war against the Saracen, "brother", for the sake of their own sins. Yet if you take the cross you may relieve the condition of those already in hell. I put it delicately. She was a suicide. She is in hell.

(turns smiling)

Though what she does there without a head...

BALIAN, the hot metal smoking in his hand, drives the white-hot sword, slowly, through the PRIEST's chest, and carries him back onto the live coals of the open forge. The PRIEST, still alive, looks up in wonder for a long beat, bursts explosively into flame. Then he burns black, the hot metal of the sword glowing in the shape of a cross above his body. BALIAN, his hand burnt, staggers back from the burning corpse. As the priest's clothes burn away BALIAN sees through the fire:

His wife's crucifix. He grabs it out of the fire, jerking at the cross until the chain breaks from the burning dead man..

EXT. BALIAN'S HOUSE AND FORGE. NIGHT

The BALIAN, with a torch, dressed for travel, lights his house and forge afire. He lights the house, the forge, the barn. He kicks down the rails of the cow-pen, the pig pen, and the animals go free.

He stares at the burning buildings. He mounts, favoring his burnt hand. The CRUCIFIX is around his neck. He turns his horse and sees:

FRANCOIS

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCOIS

Take me.

BALIAN, speechless with pain, merely rides away.

FRANCOIS (CONT'D)

Take me, for God's sake!

EXT. A ROAD IN ITALY . DAY

GODFREY and his knights are riding. The HOSPITALLER is reading from a BREVIARY and ODO is asleep in the saddle. The BOY is riding in the cart. *

GODFREY reins in, and so does the party. *

GODFREY'S POV: *

BALIAN sits his mare atop a small hill. He rides down. BALIAN is hollow-eyed, exhausted in the saddle, his burnt hand wrapped. He wears a "sergeant's" coat of mail. A sword-hilt protrudes from his bundle.

GODFREY OF IBELIN rides forward alone, and notes the sword in the bundle.

GODFREY *

Have you come to kill me? Even these days, it is not easy.

ODO and the HOSPITALLER ride up. The MEN AT ARMS look interested.

GODFREY (CONT'D) *

What do you want?

BALIAN *

To take the cross. *

GODFREY *

You do not seem a man for the pilgrim's palm.

BALIAN *

Perhaps I have acquired a sin, my lord. *

GODFREY realizes, almost smiling: the boy took his advice about enemies. *

GODFREY *

(to Firuz, in perfect Arabic)

Look at his hand.

EXT. A CAMP BY A RIVER. NIGHT

BALIAN is having his hand re-wrapped by FIRUZ. He is given a drink by the HOSPITALLER.

HOSPITALLER

It is the poppy which grows in the East. I think it is the true lotus that the men of Odysseus ate. It murders pain, and its enthusiasts. A burn needs that, and butter.

BALIAN watches as:

A falling star glitters and explodes. The men of the camp exclaim at it.

HOSPITALLER (CONT'D)

Perhaps Jerusalem has fell.

(smiles)

No. There are no portents. Stars fall for their own reasons, whatever they are. I hope you have not believed in stars.

BALIAN

I have never known what to believe. I know that what seems or is said to be... is not what is. Or very seldom.

HOSPITALLER

That makes you a scholar. But not the kind that is advanced at Paris. Can you read?

BALIAN

My brother was a clerk. He was not always my enemy.

HOSPITALLER

Can you write?

BALIAN

I am not that much a prodigy. Are you a Templar?

HOSPITALLER

No. I am a knight of the Hospital. The Templars

(rolls eyes)

you will know when you see them.

(a beat)

Why did you come from France?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOSPITALLER (CONT'D)

(a beat, glances
around)

I may hear your confession.

BALIAN shakes his head "no". The HOSPITALLER nods, accepting this. BALIAN, the drug affecting him, sees: FIRUZ at a distance, is praying.

ODO throws a sword to Balian, who catches it.

HOSPITALLER (CONT'D)

His hand is hurt, Odo.

ODO

Fuck his hand. I have fought two days with an arrow through a testicle.

He swings the flat of his sword at Balian, who, favoring his parries, clumsily but like lightning and with great force. The clang sends RAVENS up from the trees. ODO grins: not bad. The other knights watch. BALIAN takes up a "low" guard. BALIAN is obviously in terrible pain, and stuff (blood, possibly pus), is leaking through his bandage.

ODO (CONT'D)

Learn to fight hurt. Never take a low guard. Watch.

(He raises the
"cross" of the sword
above his head, the
pommel at the level
of his eye, the
sword at a 45 degree
angle.)

Like this. This guard by the
Italians is called la posta di
falcone...one strikes from high.
Like a falcon. Like this. Do it.

BALIAN (though it is difficult with his swaddled hand) duplicates what ODO is doing. ODO from the high guard swings (low and sweeping) and BALIAN parries. The great sword hacks into the dirt. But when Balian strikes at ODO...clang! His sword spins away, and ends up falling point down into the earth, the cross hanging sideways, much like a grave marker. It's obvious: Balian may have some experience, but he's no match for a knight.

ODO (CONT'D)

(touches Balian's
eyes with two
fingers)

Pay attention.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ODO (CONT'D)

(to Godfrey)

I have your leave?

GODFREY, sitting in the leaf-litter, eating dried apricots, nods gravely.

FURTHER OFF

We see ODO and BALIAN circling each other, fighting. Steel clangs.

EXT. A WOOD. THE NEXT DAY. TWILIGHT

The PARTY, riding, sees: ARMORED MEN riding ahead through the trees.

ODO

They are getting to the front of us.

HOSPITALLER

(letting the BOY down
from his saddlebow)

How many?

ODO

Too many.

GODFREY

The war horses. All else dismount
and cover in the trees so they may
not charge among you.

BALIAN goes among the trees with the men-at-arms and pack animals. The KNIGHTS, changing from saddle to saddle, mount their destriers.

GODFREY'S POV

A KNIGHT, and then four more KNIGHTS, come out of the trees to the front. They are the equivalent of rich country layabouts out to do a lynching. (No emphasis should ever be placed on "nobility". All classes act and talk the same.). The leader is:

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

Uncle.

GODFREY nods.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW (CONT'D)

You have with you a man, Balian,
who killed a priest his brother.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GODFREY'S NEPHEW (CONT'D)

If you have had expectation of his service, I have twenty pound for him in consideration.

GODFREY

(suavely)

Give it to the church which lost the priest. This man is going to Jerusalem, and shall expiate better there than if he hanged in France.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

I am charged by both my father and the lord bishop to bring him back.

The KNIGHTS look at Godfrey, who says nothing. He stares at his putrescent nephew calmly..

ODO

(riding up to

GODFREY'S NEPHEW)

I say he is innocent of the charge. If you say he is guilty, then we will fight, and God will decide the truth of it.

HOSPITALLER

(leaning drily
forward)

My German friend is a close student of the law.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

(through his teeth)

Give him to me and I'll fight you for something else.

BALIAN walks up.

BALIAN

(to Godfrey)

I'll go with them. What they say is true.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

He is a murderer.

GODFREY

(slowly, and very
dangerous)

So am I.

(and also slowly)

I will double that money
(takes purse from
belt)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GODFREY (CONT'D)

and we will go. Take the offer.
There is no other.

A half dozen MEN AT ARMS with PIKES come out of the trees to the right. Godfrey's party is flanked on both sides: CROSSBOWMEN to the left, PIKEMEN to the right. And confronted by the knights.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

Whoever dies here, you will be
among them.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

(warily, looking at
the very veteran
knights)

You are my uncle: I must give you
the road.

The OPPOSING KNIGHTS unexpectedly wheel away. GODFREY (not new at this) snaps a look left as--

A VOLLEY OF CROSSBOW BOLTS fly out of the trees. The SQUIRE is struck in the heart and dies instantly. FIRUZ has his mare killed beneath him. ODO is shot through the middle of the neck, but he wheels and as a PIKEMAN stabs at him grabs the shaft of the PIKE and kills the man holding it. The HOSPITALLER also deals with the Pikemen (and so does his destrier, a weapon in itself, which bites a man's face off, and kicks another down).

GODFREY'S NEPHEW AND KNIGHTS (having attained the distance to mount a charge) wheel and charge the party, taking advantage of the confusion following the ambush. GODFREY looks up at them and only now do we see that he has been shot under the arm and into the chest.

GODFREY spurs directly at the knights. He kills the man to the left of GODFREY'S NEPHEW (into whose horse his destrier smashes). The HOSPITALLER now is with him. HORSES go down: the two men have broken the charge; they wheel, looking for enemies.

The SERGEANT, as a KNIGHT thunders towards him, swings a PIKE and plants it in the earth. The KNIGHT is piked off his rearing horse and the SERGEANT expertly goes forward and daggers him where he lies. He has done this before: a lot.

In the path there is a general melee. FIRUZ kills two men (The French, in general, are hopelessly outclassed by the Crusaders, and we can see this fact in the white face of GODFREY'S NEPHEW, whose ambush is coming apart around him) and then FIRUZ is shot in the head with a crossbolt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ODO even with a crossbow bolt through his neck and gargling with blood is a serious customer. He runs at and smashes down a dismounted knight, and turns and cuts another across the body, armor ripping like linen. The now wounded second KNIGHT, grappling close with ODO, grabs the bolt and twists it. BLOOD spurts everywhere and ODO dropping his sword grabs the man's own dagger and kills him with it. He staggers a little way, and then falls. A PIKEMAN runs out of the wood with an axe and crushes ODO'S head with two blows and then (as the HOSPITALER, still mounted, wheels) runs away.

The BOY is ridden down by GODFREY'S NEPHEW and crushed.

BALIAN, unarmed, is being chased among the trees by two scrambling CROSSBOWMEN now using short swords. He comes back down into the fight.

ENGLISH SERGEANT

(throwing Balian a
LONGSWORD formerly
belonging to the
PIKED KNIGHT)

Die in the Holy Land, not here!

BALIAN (as the ENGLISH SERGEANT takes up a YEW BOW) catches the sword. HE goes to the "high guard" as ODO demonstrated. The CROSSBOWMEN fall back. One starts to load and cock his CROSSBOW. But (as the ENGLISH SERGEANT lets fly and kills the CROSSBOWMAN--the other one runs into the wood) GODFREY'S NEPHEW emerges through the trees...and kills the BOY. Then he (and his equally terrifying, eye-rolling destrier) charges down on Balian. BALIAN stands his ground and--- is shoved aside by the ENGLISH SERGEANT. GODFREY rides in between Balian and GODFREY'S NEPHEW, and confronts his nephew.

GODFREY

(visibly weakening)

Thank my brother for his love.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW stares: then turns and rides away. GODFREY thunders after him, and raising in the saddle (with blood streaming down his side from the wound under his arm), hacks down on his nephew with a two-handed stroke that cuts through his helmet as if it were paper (As he does this though, we see the downward motion of his arm SNAP OFF the shaft of the bolt, leaving the head of the bolt in his body). GODFREY twists in agony and almost falls out of the saddle.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW'S eyes roll while and he rides on a little way and then topples from the saddle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GODFREY in agony (more blood streaming through the links of his mail) turns his horse and sees:

The ATTACKERS running away, routed. The ENGLISH SERGEANT kneeling by the KNIGHT knocked down first in the melee by ODO. He has a dagger to the knight's throat.

KNIGHT

(almost affably)

I am the son of Roger de Cormier. I am accorded the privilege of ransom.

GODFREY nods at the ENGLISH SERGEANT who:

CUT'S THE KNIGHT'S THROAT.

ENGLISH SERGEANT

(standing up from the corpse, and to BALIAN)

Nothing better in the world than killing a fucking knight.

The HOSPITALLER stares with horror at ODO, tries to move him, realizes that he is dead. He stands up, and removes his hood of mail (we should see how sweaty & blown-out a man is really after such a fight in heavy armor) and looks around.

GODFREY is slumped in the saddle. He rides up and looks at:

BALIAN, kneeling by the BOY.

GODFREY rides on.

GODFREY, looking at the sun through the black French trees, has blood bubbling on his lips.

LATER

The dead SQUIRE is stripped: clothing was worth gold at the time. The dead KNIGHTS are robbed. BALIAN crosses himself, and closes the BOY'S eyes.

GODFREY is helped from the saddle by the ENGLISH SERGEANT and a CROSSBOWMAN. The HOSPITALLER examines him. Both the Hospitaller and Godfrey, locking eyes, know that the wound is fatal.

GODFREY

Let me walk. Give me a cup of wine.

GODFREY (as he is given the wine) looks sternly at BALIAN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GODFREY (CONT'D)

(to Balian, clutching
him by the collar)It was not that they had no right
to you. It was the way they asked.GODFREY goes to the bed that has been made for him and is
helped down to it.

EXT. THE ROAD. TWILIGHT

The HOSPITALLER leads the party. PACK HORSES are loaded with armor recognizable as the booty from the killed knights; and with it we see ODO'S GEAR, his recognizable shield. GODFREY rides half conscious and muttering in the baggage cart which has been fitted out as his ambulance, made comfortable with skins and silks. But something changes about the march: as the party comes to a juncture of the road we begin to hear singing (a contemporary war-song, sung in French), and our party joins with a party of CRUSADERS. It's a bad year for Crusading, an off year, but here are fifty knights and their parties, poor priests riding mules, and the true religious, very old people among them, walking with staffs. All the Crusaders and Pilgrims wear the cross, one way or another: richly on their breasts, marked in ash on their heads. Our party watches them pass. The barefoot saints, the escaping criminals, the ruined women, the strictly insane. It is a procession out of Chaucer: the crooked priests, the wimpled widows. A complete representation of medieval Europe. The Hospitaller looks amiably at the Crusaders, and (a reminder that the Hospitaller is a priest), blesses them.

HOSPITALLER

Where do you go?

OLD PILGRIM

Jerusalem, brother.

HOSPITALLER

By what direction?

OLD PILGRIM

Someone knows. God knows.

The HOSPITALLER nods. BEGGARS skirmish along the flanks of the travelers. They scatter as: KNIGHTS dressed in the surcoats we will later recognize as belonging to the party of de Lusignan (and we will see these faces later) canter to get to the front of the travelers and pass by Godfrey's cart, glaring.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Among them is: GUY DE LUSIGNAN, a splendid knight in the red cross we will associate with "The Newcomers", Balian's age, is riding along, with a young pimpled boy, HUMPHREY, and a huge party of knight recruits also wearing red crosses.

HOSPITALLER

(suddenly staring, as
if at a threat
greater than any so
far)

De Lusignan.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(reigning in to speak
to the Hospitaller)

Far from Jerusalem. You see I have
raised some knights, to be blessed
at Rome.

The HOSPITALLER looks at Humphrey, a scared effeminate boy.

HOSPITALLER

And this contribution?

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

To be married to my wife's sister.

HOSPITALLER

(to Humphrey)

I wish you joy of your stepfather.

HUMPHREY

(innocent and
genuinely
interested)

Do you know Reynald of Chatillon?

The HOSPITALLER nods "oh yes". HUMPHREY looks polite and confused. GUY has ridden up to GODFREY'S CART. GODFREY is unconscious. GUY sneers down at him.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

The lion has found his rest. It
seems. About time.

(to Hospitaller)

Don't worry. I'll talk to the Pope.

GUY spurs on. BALIAN stares after him.

EXT. THE CAMP ABOVE ROME. TWILIGHT

The HOSPITALLER, apart by himself in the woods, is praying at a crude SHRINE TO THE MADONNA, over his piled arms, in his shirt. This is real faith, a sign of the cross executed as if it means something. BALIAN, with a plate of food, hesitates; but the HOSPITALLER, seeing him, smiles, gestures "come".

HOSPITALLER

Prayer is never finished but only suspended. One may eat

(eating)

But merely because then one may pray the longer.

(hard to know if the
worldly Hospitaller
is serious)

And my lord?

BALIAN

(dropping before the
Madonna and crossing
himself)

Better.

HOSPITALLER

(arming himself, a
warrior now)

Do not be deceived by his chances.

(he shrugs on his
mail)

The bolt is broken off and cannot be cut out. If his ribs be further broke the marrow may enter the blood. He will take a fever and die; or a cyst will form and he will live. He is in the hands of God.

As the HOSPITALLER goes off, BALIAN, looking at the shrine, lowers his head and prays.

EXT. THE CAMP. NIGHT

Fire burning. The men at arms watch for thieves. BALIAN is making his bed. The Hospitaller, attending to Godfrey, leaves Godfrey, then walks to Balian.

HOSPITALLER

Balian. Come by the fire.

He unfolds a beautiful SILK MAP.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

35.

HOSPITALLER (CONT'D)

This is the Mediterranean, which
the Romans called "our sea".

(BALIAN is
fascinated)

Now it belongs to the Venetian
traders and the Muslim pirates.
This bulbous bit is Africa, and
this is Sicily, whence we shall
sail, and this

(essentially modern
Israel)

is the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

(poking with knife)

Jerusalem, Acre, Tyre, Beirut,
Nazareth... Ibelin. Whence his grace
is from.

BALIAN

What is Ibelin?

HOSPITALLER

A fort on the pilgrim road. A way-
station. My lord is not rich,
except in the love the King of
Jerusalem has for him. To this
side of Jerusalem, Egypt. To this
side, Syria. What do you note about
Syria?

BALIAN

(after study)

That since the Frankish Kingdom of
Jerusalem was made Syria has no
ports on the sea.

All smile: a penetrating observation.

ODO

Exactly, artificer, and fuck them.

HOSPITALLER

(truly interested in
Balian's capacities)

And what do you see of the Holy
Kingdom? What is its primary fact?

BALIAN

(after study)

That it has enemies on all sides.

(CONTINUED)

HOSPITALLER

(approving)

Since Saladin has come out of Egypt
and taken also the throne at
Damascus the enemy is one. They
have reason to hate us beyond
religion. The Christian Kingdom
holds every port

(shows them on the
map)

which Syria should otherwise use to
trade. Spices. Silks. Slaves. All
of what would be their commerce is
to our account. The Genoese, the
Venetians, all have warehouses
which followed the cross of God.

BALIAN

No priest has ever said this.

HOSPITALLER

Nor pope. Yet they take the
revenues.

BALIAN is confused. This is contrary to everything he has
heard.

HOSPITALLER (CONT'D)

There was only one Christ. He never
achieved the papacy.

WALKING ON TO THE TOP OF THE HILL

They stare at: An enormous field of fires, of lighted
houses, as far as the eye can see. Blue night is come down.

BALIAN

I have never seen so many lights.
Is that Rome?

HOSPITALLER

The beginning of it.

(amused)

What know you of Rome?

BALIAN

(staring towards the
lights)

That it was once, and is no more.

HOSPITALLER

Rome is a candle left burning in a
skull.

EXT. A STREET IN ROME. DAY

As it was in the twelfth century. The Romans have become Italians, and live among ruins. Rome might as well be an abandoned planet. The knights and their party ride. GODFREY though winded, feverish, is in the saddle, and wearing his best clothing: velvets, a cloak.

GODFREY

(to Hospitaller)

Before we see his Holiness, Balian will dress as my squire. He will attend me.

BALIAN rides in the van, staring around rube-like at the great city.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

I would not bring a son to Rome and not let him see the Pope.

INT. THE PAPAL CHAMBER. DAY

This is the Apostolic Court, and grand. BALIAN kneels, with the HOSPITALLER. GODFREY has been allowed to sit in a chair. CARDINALS and PRIESTS in galleries to either side. GUY DE LUSIGNAN, sneering, stands with HUMPHREY (it is a joint audience). The POPE (no real matter which of them he was) is a worldly man who looks as if Godfrey is attempting to sell him a pig in a poke.

GODFREY

From England, this news. More money has gone to Jerusalem, to expiate for the dead archbishop, Becket-

The Pope grimaces: the Becket incident was not one of his successes.

But Henry of England will not crusade.

POPE

(biting his papal ring)

No troops.

GODFREY

None. Not this year, nor the next, Your Holiness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARDINALS look at each other: this is bad. HUMPHREY merely looks confused--and makes eye-contact with a young PRIEST, who raises his eyebrows at him.

POPE

You presented to England that Saladin has surrounded the Holy Kingdom? That the situation is...grave?

GODFREY

Yes. And nevertheless there will be no troops from England.

POPE

(grimacing, walking)

And what news from my brother the king of France? Will he Crusade?

GODFREY

He will not Crusade because should he crusade, Henry of England will take France from end to end.

POPE

Is the King of France a sodomite?

GODFREY

(tactfully)

Not with me, Your Holiness.

General laughter, not shared by the POPE.

POPE

(loudly)

The condition of kings, not least what they do in their beds, is my chief preoccupation. I must know all about kings.

(no bullshit)

Who will wear the crown in Jerusalem if the boy king dies?

GODFREY

His heir.

The POPE comes close: a dangerous man.

POPE

There will be none. I will tell you what I have heard about the king.

The POPE whispers in Godfrey's ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GODFREY

(GODFREY stares at
GUY DE LUSIGNAN.)

Who says this?

GUY is the culprit. GUY smiles: a curl of a smile. He looks at BALIAN, who looks away. GUY is already wondering who Balian is: perhaps he detects a resemblance. GODFREY looks alarmed and uneasy.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

Rumor, Your Holiness. Jerusalem, though Islam be united around it, is consumed by faction. Guy de Lusignan, in example, is married to the King's sister yet he is not the king's man.

(back to business,
having outed Guy)

Our business is this: now as my endeavours with England and France have been fruitless, only your Holiness may relieve and reinforce Jerusalem.

POPE

If an army from me were possible, you should not have gone to France!
(a beat)

If Jerusalem stands alone then the matter, the fitness, of the young king of Jerusalem, who is Jerusalem, is precisely what we must discuss. I must know the succession.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(interrupting)

Your Holiness. This with me is Humphrey of Toron.

(GODFREY, sitting in
his chair, grimaces)

Should the king die, and if the young prince who is my stepson not thrive, Humphrey is next the throne. I have fetched him in France.

ON Humphrey, who scrapes and bows.

POPE

(cynically)

And who sent you to get him, Guy de Lusignan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(bowing)

His mother.

POPE

Hmm. His stepfather Reynald of
Chatillon, more like.

(GUY's expression

say: true enough)

I know about your factions. Your
parties. While you brawl over the
kingdom the Muslims grow strong.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

In the matter of "factions", Your
Holiness, there are two. There are
those who would fight the Muslims,
and those

(looking at Godfrey)

who would not. My faction, if it
pleases Your Holiness to so call
it, does merely press and agitate
with his Holiness himself for God's
Holy war.

The POPE did not get to be pope by not knowing a line of
bullshit when he hears it.

GODFREY

I am a man of war and God help me
little else. But the Muslims are
too strong to be provoked.

POPE

(wanting this to be
true)

The king writes that he is in
health and in expectation of an
heir. Is this true?

GODFREY

(an evasion)

In these four months his Holiness
has been nearer Jerusalem than I.

POPE

(close on pope)

I will tell you about Jerusalem.
You, you lords of Jerusalem, who
have gone beyond the sea and made
yourselves there, oft from nothing,

(on GODFREY at this)

have forgot that Jerusalem is God's
Kingdom, and not yours.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

POPE (CONT'D)

He who was once a citizen of Rheims
or Chartes has forgotten war for
Jesus Christ and now become a
Galilean!

GODFREY

(at the end of his
violent life
realizing, somewhat
to his surprise,
that his own journey
has been towards
"goodness")

Or yet a Nazarene. Like Jesus
Christ.

CARDINALS rustle.

POPE

(coming forward)

Beware of me.

GODFREY, afraid of very little else, does.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

The Kingdom of Jerusalem strikes
treaties with the Saracens.
Treaties with the followers of the
Imposter, Mohammed. Was this why
the Pope that was called Crusade
for Jesus Christ?

CARDINALS

No, no.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

This my lord of Ibelin, and the
King, would live in prosperous
amity with the infidel and have
suppressed those who would war
against them as is proper to God.

GUY, who has won the room, looks a wry "fuck you" at
GODFREY.

POPE

It is God's Kingdom, you both shall
tell the lords of Jerusalem, and
not yours and never yours.

GUY, minding the butter on his bread, is immediately
humble. GODFREY gets painfully to his feet. He uses his
sword as a crutch. As Balian watches:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GODFREY

If a war is provoked while we cannot win it, there is no Jerusalem. Trust a man who knows war, rather than one practiced in robbery of whoever, Muslim or Christian, does look the other way.

GUY blanches. Looks death at Godfrey. GODFREY could care less about him.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

(the last act of a lion)

If you wish Jerusalem to be God's Kingdom, Your Holiness, then give me some of God's money and your troops. Otherwise it will please your Holiness to rule here, and Saladin in Jerusalem.

Though CARDINALS go nuts here, the POPE is outmaneuvered. GUY watches closely for the outcome of this: he does not want the King of Jerusalem reinforced.

POPE

I will give you, Godfrey of Ibelin, 50 knights and sergeants armed, 200 Genoese crossbowmen, and 500 infantry, with this condition: that they *only* defend the holy city.

(looking directly at GUY, who drops his eyes)

They will hold the City of Jesus Christ against the Muslims merely. Not for King or faction, but for Christendom. Which is to say, me.

GUY seethes. GODFREY nods: he will take what he can get. The POPE and his entourage stand. GODFREY kneels painfully, propped on his sword. The GREAT DOORS are closed. BALIAN stares open-mouthed.

GODFREY

And you thought it was about religion. Help me up, for Christ's sake.

(points at oranges)

Get one of those.

BALIAN does. Godfrey peels the orange. BALIAN allows Godfrey to put the section of fruit (not unlike the host) into his mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Quite obviously he has never expected that anything on the earth could taste like this. Mouth still crammed, the juice trickling, he stares at his father.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

That is the East.

(a beat)

And take the rest of them. It's not every man who has stole the Pope's oranges.

Before BALIAN can move, GUY comes close to GODFREY. He looks from GODFREY to BALIAN, to GODFREY. He sees the resemblance, and smiles.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Would I had seen you when you still did fight Muslims, rather than dine with them. I concede your reputation. Would I had fought you when you were still capable of making bastards.

Godfrey chuckles for a long time.

GODFREY

I knew your mother when she was making hers. Some come out less well than others.

(ignoring GUY, upon whom he has dropped an atom bomb, and, to BALIAN, though hating to say this in front of GUY)

Help me.

BALIAN (who has not followed the subtlety between Godfrey and Guy) does. The HOSPITALLER helps. A TRICKLE of blood on the marble. GUY, looking down at the blood, and then up from it, watches the men (and Godfrey his father) go.

EXT. MESSINA. DAY

BELLS ringing in a crumbled belfry. Beyond them: A Medieval port city, a Crusader launching point. Caravels at anchor.

EXT. A STREET IN MESSINA. DAY

The Mediterranean winter: whipping wind, a cold blue sea. GODFREY, now near death, is carried on a litter. MEN AT ARMS knock aside beggars, ragged priests, ragazzi. The HOSPITALLER meets other HOSPITALLERS in clerical habit, and gestures to GODFREY in his litter. These compassionate men come forward, and take the litter from the paid locals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Messina (and we can see it in Godfrey's strained face) is no place to die. BALIAN watches his father carried off.

EXT. THE PORT OF MESSINA. DAY

BALIAN, sitting on the quay with the (dozing) ENGLISH SERGEANT, is fascinated by the sea-trade. (And there's a lot of it: oranges, spices, silks, being unloaded). He is observing: A strange type of ship: Horses are loaded through doors in the side of the hull: then the door is sealed with smoking pitch. CRUSADERS are streaming onto ships: GUY comes up on horseback. His KNIGHTS and HUMPHREY clatter on.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(coming up beside
Balian, as if
friendly)

They can carry ten horse and the
feed for them, and so many men at
arms...I forget the number. By
Jesus I have never had a head for
numbers.

GUY, examining Balian, is charming.

BALIAN

The doors should be in the front.

BALIAN looks as if he is going to find the man responsible, and straighten him out. He squats and sketches in the dust.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(leaning forward in
the saddle,
pretending to be
interested)

The doors should be what?

BALIAN

(politely)

The doors should be in the front.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

"The doors should be in the front
"my lord".

BALIAN stands, and stares. By habit, through reluctantly, he lowers his head.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

If you are insolent I cannot
recommend the consequences.

(DESTRIER snapping at
BALIAN)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

I am Guy de Lusignan.
(spits on BALIAN'S
tunic: GODFREY'S
livery)

Remember that name, which IS my
name, and me.

He cuts Balian (just raising his eyes after being spat upon) across the face with his stick, and rides on. The ENGLISH SERGEANT remains. Peering after Guy, then at Balian.

GUY, whooping, rides his horse aboard a TEMPLAR SHIP.

A Strange cry, which we know as the Muslim call to prayer, but which Balian has never heard before. BALIAN looks around and sees: SARACENS. SHIPYARD workers, they are making their ablutions, then praying.

BALIAN
(astonished, walking
forward)

What are those men?

ENGLISH SERGEANT
Followers of the imposter Mohammed.

BALIAN
(shocked)
The Saracens are allowed their
prayers?

ENGLISH SERGEANT
(shrugs)
If they pay a tax.

BALIAN
I thought the purpose of
Christendom was to kill them.

ENGLISH SERGEANT
(irritated by this
greenhorn)
Not if they pay a tax.
(kindlier, realizing
he's talking to a
peasant)
At Palermo, which the Saracens call
al-Madinha, there are mosques.
Mosques.

(Balian is
astonished)

Truly.

(translates)
"Praise be to God.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ENGLISH SERGEANT (CONT'D)

It is proper to praise him." That is one of their prayers. The pagan poets too had a turn of phrase, yet they are in hell.

BALIAN, unable to assimilate this information, looks towards the ships again. He is fascinated by the ships.

BALIAN

I say again that the doors should be at the front. It is contrary to reason to have them on the side.

ENGLISH SERGEANT

The Saracens would not have them at all. They would wait for God to fly horses across the sea.

(grins at Balian)

No preparation, the Muslim thinks, will turn the outcome of a battle, for men cannot affect their fortunes or evade their deaths, and all outcome in the world is forever God's. It makes a brave warrior who thank god neglects to bring enough arrows. That is why we shall always beat them. A Muslim that takes sensible precautions against the obvious is automatically a heretic... Though Saladin, by report, is...

(looks shrewdly at

Balian)

Well. He's Saladin.

(spits orange-peel)

Isn't he.

INT. THE "HOSPITAL" OR HOSTEL OF ST. JOHN. NIGHT

A fire at the end of the long room. HOSPITALLERS serve food. GODFREY is dying. A HOSPITALLER BROTHER is writing to GODFREY'S whispered dictation.

GODFREY

(barely audible)

...those transmissible lands I have by the King...all...and the revenues thereof...

We do not really hear what he is whispering (not even so much as I've given above) but we know that he is giving his will. The HOSPITALLER - our HOSPITALLER - comes forward from the deathbed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOSPITALLER
(grim, to ENGLISH
SERGEANT, and other
HOSPITALLER
BROTHERS, who stand
waiting)

Get him.

INT. SERVANT'S SECTION OF THE HOSTEL. NIGHT

Balian is asleep on a mat. The ENGLISH SERGEANT kicks him. BALIAN looks up: he has been dreading the news that GODFREY is dying...and expects it...but does not expect...

A WHITE GARMENT, dropped in his lap.

SIX HOSPITALLERS and the ENGLISH SERGEANT stand looking at BALIAN, who is very much a peasant holding a white cloth.

ENGLISH SERGEANT

Put it on.

BALIAN looks at the garment, at the man. He stands, already shirtless, and puts on the white gown.

ENGLISH SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Come with these knights and do not
be afraid. I will walk behind.

BALIAN

(no suspicion
whatsoever)

What is it?

ENGLISH SERGEANT

Come with these knights.

INT. A HALLWAY. NIGHT

BALIAN, in his white gown, is taken along the hall.

INT. THE ROOM WHERE GODFREY IS DYING. CONTINUOUS

Balian, entering, confronts:

The HOSPITALLER. GODFREY is on his feet, supported by two HOSPITALLERS.

HOSPITALLER

Get on your knees.

BALIAN, with no idea what is happening, complies. The HOSPITALLERS (including our HOSPITALLER) get to their knees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GODFREY, supported by the monks, comes forward through the gloom. Then he stands by himself above BALIAN. BALIAN dares for a moment to look up; and then looks down. A very long pause, as the old man gathers himself. BALIAN has no idea what is going on.

GODFREY

(barely able to
speak)

Be without fear in the face of your
enemies. Be brave and upright that
God may love thee. Speak the truth,
always, even may it lead to your
death. Safeguard the helpless, and
do no wrong. That is your oath.

GODFREY with the last of his strength delivers a blow with his open hand that nearly knocks Balian sprawling: the true "collee" of knighthood. (There was no crap with swords in those days: you got whacked).

GODFREY (CONT'D)

And that's so you remember it.

As BALIAN recovers, GODFREY is being helped back to his bed. BALIAN stands, shakily, staring. He still has no clear idea what has happened: it is still in the realm of absurd suspicion.

HOSPITALLER

Rise a knight, and Baron of Ibelin.

Balian looks up in wonder.

INT. THE ROOM WHERE GODFREY IS DYING. LATER

GODFREY is whispering. BALIAN kneels. GODFREY, speechless, grips Balian's arm.

HOSPITALLER

(softly)

You must confess now to Holy God,
my lord, not your son.

GODFREY nods, weakly: he might differ; but it is time.

HOSPITALLER (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Are you sorry for all your sins?

GODFREY nods. OIL is applied to his head. LATIN is spoken. The HOSPITALLERS kneel. GODFREY slowly makes the sign of the cross; and dies.

EXT. A GALLERY. LATER

HOSPITALLER

Leave the monks to bury him. You must leave tomorrow. I leave now with my order.

BALIAN

Who was he.

HOSPITALLER

No one knows any man, except a woman somewhere. And she's wrong.

(a beat)

Letters have been written. If it is God's will I die at sea yet still you will be known at Jerusalem. Seek the King, and Raymond Count of Tiberias.

BALIAN nods. The HOSPITALLER embraces him.

BALIAN

What do I do?

HOSPITALLER

It is a simple oath. Each day do right. And no wrong.

EXT. MESSINA HARBOR. DAY

THE HOSPITALLER GALLEYS stand out to sea.

EXT. MESSINA. DAY

BALIAN watching from a height above Messina. He holds his wife's CRUCIFIX.

ENGLISH SERGEANT

For those who go upon the sea in ships, Mary Mother of God pray for them.

As the sound of WIND rises on sound:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A FRANKISH GALLEY BELOWDECKS. CONTINUOUS

DESTRIERS are kicking each other to death, SAILORS trying to calm them. MUSLIM OARSMEN are rowing, praying to Allah. A LADY in a pearled dress is praying, along with her MAID.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN lashes GODFREY'S SWORD to his back. The ENGLISH SERGEANT looks at him,

BALIAN

If the ship founders, we are close to the shore!

ENGLISH SERGEANT

I am no fish.

THE SHIP ROLLS

Water blasts white through the ship as

EXT. THE SHIP. CONTINUOUS

As it rolls in surf, breaks in half, and spills its guts.

INT. THE WRECKED SHIP. CONTINUOUS

Armored KNIGHTS sink towards the bottom, witnessed by BALIAN, who clambering up in the inverted hull gets his elbow through a rib.

The bottom races past and the MASTHEAD digs into...

SAND.

EXT. OFF THE BEACH. CONTINUOUS

What remains of the ship "polevaults" on her mast she explodes in white surf.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE COAST OF THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM. MORNING

The wreck of a shattered FRANKISH GALLEY lies broken on the sand. A sail bearing a red cross flaps in the wind. Birds in great number are screaming overhead, and pecking at the bodies of the drowned. There are knights...dead...priests...dead...great ladies and their servants...dead. THE ENGLISH SERGEANT lies dead with his mouth full of sand...one of the crossbowmen... and...Balian, who wakes, coughing. He wears a simple tunic, hose. He has lost his boots. On his belt there is...he feels for it...a small purse. He gets to his feet and surveys the destruction as the sun rises. He approaches one corpse--another--he drives the birds away from several --but they are all dead. He crouches near a DEAD LADY. He closes her eyes or tries to - and then snaps loose her purse and empties it. He walks towards the galley.

INT. THE SHATTERED GALLEY. CONTINUOUS

SARACEN SLAVES drowned still chained to their cars, and some rolling of the vessel half filled it with sand. Seawater trickles. BALIAN climbs in through the shattered hull, sees that all are dead, and then climbs up through a hatch to --

INT/EXT. THE GALLEY. CONTINUOUS

DROWNED horses lie tangled, drowned, kicked to pieces, all very dead, except one palfrey, which is panting, rolling its one visible eye. BALIAN climbs up to the CASTLE of the wrecked ship. As he does we see (before BALIAN does) a ragged PRIEST (ERNOUL) standing on the sand. BALIAN unties GODFREY'S SWORD, which is lashed to a rail. Then, turning, he sees ERNOUL.

ERNOUL

I didn't think there was another left alive. I came ashore down there, most a mile.

BALIAN stares at him.

ERNOUL (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Not answering, BALIAN finds a knife as well and sticks it through loops on the back of his belt. The MASTER of the vessel is lashed to the rail. BALIAN cuts his purse and takes the man's boots.

BALIAN, again, looks up at ERNOUL and says nothing.

EXT. THE BEACH. LATER

BALIAN coaxes a single horse out of the wreck. He calms it, hobbles it deftly with a piece of line. He breaks open a chest. He finds...lady's clothing and small shoes. He breaks open another, and knocks the neck off a bottle of wine and drinks. He sits on the sand. He drinks...and spits the wine out. He is dehydrated and needs water. ERNOUL crouches nearby.

ERNOUL

I think that this is a Saracen place. Perhaps we are on Africa. Perhaps we are near the holy city.

(a beat)

There is no way to tell.

(gestures at wrecked caravel)

Navigation is unperfected.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN figures himself well-enough equipped. He has a knife, boots, sword, gold. He looks inland:

BALIAN'S POV:

A scrap of green in a chasm in the desert rock. The mirage has begun to waver.

BALIAN

Water. There must be some inland.

Stay here. We'll go on together.

BALIAN walks inland. As he is beginning to climb the rock: hoofbeats. The PRIEST, having stolen the horse, rides away through the dazzling seelight. BALIAN, clinging to the rock, watches the priest go.

EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

BALIAN is walking. There is no way to tell how many days he has walked. He has come to a small spring and has drunk there. He hears a sound, and stands.

BALIAN'S POV:

Two riders and one man running afoot approach from the mirage. They resolve as -- A SARACEN KNIGHT (HUNTING)--- what appears to be his SQUIRE (IMAD), also mounted on a horse and leading a mule with baggage, and a third man (a BEATER) banging on a pan for no reason that Balian can fathom until: A LION leaps over BALIAN's head, and landing by the stream, turns on him, snarling. BALIAN flings himself into a crevice of rock. As he reaches for his dropped sword, 18 inches outside his hiding place, the LION rakes for him and slashes his arm and then:

(BALIAN'S POV)

Is stabbed with a javelin as the mounted SARACEN KNIGHT thunders past.

The LION collapses dead in the spring, blood streaming in the water.

BALIAN comes shakily out into the light, ready to ask for help...information... quarter...but the SARACEN KNIGHT unships another lance.

SARACEN KNIGHT

ALLAH!

and immediately charges. BALIAN leaps aside, and hacks into the unarmored horse which screams. The KNIGHT turns his bleeding horse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The SARACEN SQUIRE, a handsome, learned-looking young man (IMAD), watches impassively: this is what is done, when Muslim and Christian meet in the desert and can get away with it. The BEATER runs at Balian, drawing a dagger, and is (luckily, clumsily) hacked down. The SARACEN KNIGHT drives again with his lance, misses. He casts aside his lance and now takes out his recurved bow, and feels for an arrow. BALIAN, seeing his own death, runs wildly towards him. The SARACEN KNIGHT keeps his distance, trying to nock an arrow. BALIAN staggers and slips in the sand.

BALIAN

Fight me!

SARACEN KNIGHT

Why should I?

BALIAN

(desperate, and just realizing it)

I am the Baron of Ibelin.

SARACEN KNIGHT

(not buying this, nocking arrow)

He is old. I knew him at Damietta.

BALIAN

I am the new one.

The SARACEN KNIGHT considers. He dismounts, and draws his sword. They fight. IMAD does not intervene or express emotion: he watches. BALIAN takes "the high guard" as shown him by ODO. In the fight, Godfrey's good sword snaps the heavy scimitar. The SARACEN KNIGHT scrambles for his dropped lance. BALIAN, sword raised over his head, runs him down and kills him. IMAD is thrown from his rearing horse (BLOOD from the final blow having flown into his horse's eyes) and lies stunned on the ground. Staggering with exhaustion, bleeding, BALIAN recoils from the dead SARACEN KNIGHT, and approaches IMAD. IMAD, sitting up, holds out his arms in a gesture of surrender.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

(sword on him)

On your honor.

IMAD nods. BALIAN digs ravenously in a saddlebag, finds DATES, crams into his mouth.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

You have taken it very well that I have killed your master.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IMAD

It was the end of his time. Taking
it poorly bakes no bread.

BALIAN, crouching, can't quite understand this. But no
matter.

BALIAN

Take me to Jerusalem.

IMAD (scholarly, awfully well-dressed for a servant, but
Balian has no way to measure this) nods his head "yes".

EXT. THE DAVID GATE OF JERUSALEM. DAY

The massive "DAVID TOWER" stands above the track. Above it
the domes and spires of Jerusalem. It is an impressive
sight: the "center of the world", completely walled. BALIAN
and IMAD ride towards the gate, covered with dust.

IMAD

I will be cloaked in the town if it
pleases my lord.

BALIAN

I care not. But why?

IMAD

(lying poorly)
I owe money.

BALIAN could care less. Outside the gates a party of
pilgrim knights are abasing themselves. On their knees,
armor piled, they throw dust on themselves. Striped with
blood, their hair chopped off and burning on a fire.

BALIAN and the cloaked IMAD enter, past TOWN GUARDS. The
entry into Jerusalem is a bit Giotto, Christ on an ass.
BALIAN wide eyed stares down at PALM FRONDS (which are just
there accidentally, but the only thing Balian really knows
about Jerusalem) and as IMAD giggles we follow through
into:

EXT. JERUSALEM. CONTINUOUS

A BOOMING MARKETPLACE. Jerusalem is a carnival of
cultures. Arabs, Jews, Syrians, Byzantine Christians,
Europeans, Pilgrims walking barefoot, ash on their heads
and vast numbers of the mad: naked saints covered with
filth. Many, many children. It's almost a city of children.
We see the PIOUS, the PILGRIMS, the THIEVES that prey on
them. An ARROWSMITH is at his work, wrapping a fletched
shaft, then adding the arrow to a vast pile of them. Etc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN, clutching his wounded arm, stares around in more wonder than he had when he looked at Rome. BALIAN staggers when he dismounts. He is feverish. The arm is infected. IMAD has a clean rag and some VINEGAR. He pours the vinegar; binds the arm.

IMAD

Better that, than a Frankish doctor. Strong vinegar.

BALIAN

(a question which
unasked has plagued
him)

Do all Saracens speak French?

IMAD smiles, laughs, and shakes his head "no". Balian looks reassured but still confused.

BALIAN and IMAD walk on, leading their horses. A caravan of Saracen pilgrims is preparing to travel home. One of the pilgrims recognizes Imad: begins, shocked, to speak; Imad raises a palm and quiets him. And so passes, cloaked.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

(not having noticed
this)

Where did Christ die?

IMAD

I am not expert in these matters.
(points)

But that is where the Prophet came
down from the sky.

BALIAN

(coming to his
decision)

Take the better horse and be about
your business.

IMAD

It is your prize of war. And
insofar as I was the servant of the
man you killed, I am your slave.

BALIAN

I have been a slave, or very near
to one. I will never keep one nor
suffer any to be kept. Go.

IMAD looks at Balian with admiration. Not overcooked: he accepts it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IMAD

I will join these pilgrims to Egypt.

(mounting)

You killed a very great cavalier among the Moslems. His name was Mummad al Fais.

BALIAN

(seriously, holding Imad's bridle)

I will pray for him.

IMAD

Your quality will be known among your enemies before ever you meet them.

He mounts and joins a stream of MUSLIM PILGRIMS.

BALIAN goes to an UNRELIABLE GUIDE.

BALIAN

Where is the hill where Christ died?

The UNRELIABLE GUIDE holds out his palm. BALIAN gets money out and gives it to the man. The man points.

EXT. "GOLGOTHA"/CALVARY. TWILIGHT

Balian climbs "Golgotha" with a desperation, as if he will find every answer to the universe at the top. A ROBBER steps out of the shadow (turbaned, ghoulis, but originally French), and holds a dagger on him. BALIAN shoves the startled man (not a very good robber) aside and striding on reaches into his purse and throws back a handful of COINS, which bounce in the dust, and which the ROBBER and his LEPER FRIENDS scramble for. Balian does not want money: he wants God. He comes to the apex of the hill: the site of the crucifixion. He falls to his knees. Here, at the absolute navel of Christianity, as dust blows about him, he tries to pray. Seems to fail. Lowers his head and tries again. Then, defeated, he sits in the dust, the twilight. GODFREY'S SWORD on the ground before him.

STARS come out.

EXT. GOLGOTHA/CAVALRY. DAWN

At cock crow, BALIAN, who has not slept all night, nor found what he is looking for, looks into the rising light. He needs water. He remembers where he is: the hill where Christ died. He looks out over Jerusalem.

EXT. A MARKETPLACE BELOW "GOLGOTHA". DAWN

ERNOUL is asleep, wrapped in a cloak, his back against a PILGRIM'S CISTERN. He wakes to find:

BALIAN, staring at him, as if mad.

ERNOUL, terrified, scrambles half to his feet. BALIAN grab him.

BALIAN

How much of a priest are you?

ERNOUL

Enough to sell pardons which may or may not be reliable.

(more seriously)

Enough. A proper man has more than one vocation. That was my father's constant precept. Before he was hanged.

BALIAN goes to his knees.

BALIAN

I think that I have no faith. I think that I will go to my death with my sins on my head and that there is neither heaven nor hell except on earth. That is what I think. Even on the hill where Christ was killed.

ERNOUL

(glances up nervously
at "where Christ was
killed")

That's not where Christ was killed. That hill has a church on it. It's over there.

BALIAN

(no matter)

I need you to bless me.

ERNOUL

Then I bless you.

(confident that he's
dealing with a
peasant)

What is your name?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN
(having stood,
modestly)
Balian of Ibelin.

ERNOUL drops immediately and comically to his knees. BOOKS
fall out of his clothing.

ERNOUL
(head down)
I sold the horse my lord, and
gambled it. I am a worthless man
but pray your mercy.

BALIAN
(after considering)
We could both use food, I think.

He gives over two coins.

ERNOUL
I have not been reliable, my lord.

BALIAN
Then you must become so. What is
that?

ERNOUL
It is the book of the great
imposter Muhammad.

BALIAN
(picking up another
book)
This?

ERNOUL
It is in Aramaic, my lord. There is
no particular need for Aramaic.

BALIAN
I shall need to find a place to
sleep.

ERNOUL
Why do you not go to your house, my
lord?

BALIAN had not considered such a thing possible.

BALIAN
My house?

ERNOUL nods.

EXT. A STREET IN JERUSALEM. MORNING

A GRATED DOOR. ERNOUL'S FIST pounds at it. A BEARDED FACE appears: AMALRIC, one of Godfrey's sergeants.

AMALRIC

Get away. Is this door marked for
beggars?

BALIAN, swaying on his feet, is seen to be wearing
GODFREY'S SWORD. AMALRIC opens the door.

AMALRIC (CONT'D)

My lord's son?

BALIAN nods. He moves like a sleepwalker into the
COURTYARD. One could not imagine anything greener or more
beautiful. Falling water. Fruit trees. We see (as he sees)
that Godfrey's house (to one side of the courtyard) is a
bit like a firehouse: stables below. The knights (now
staring out of windows) sleep above. He staggers on his
feet. AMALRIC looks at his bandaged arm, and then up into
his eyes.

AMALRIC (CONT'D)

(not knowing what to
make of this
apparition)

My lord....

BALIAN walks on his own power into the house.

AMALRIC (CONT'D)

Bathe him, and put him to bed.

CHRISTIAN ARAB GIRLS (understood to be the wives of the
SERGEANTS), guide BALIAN where he needs to go.

AMALRIC stares after BALIAN. He is still in grief at the
loss of Godfrey, and does not know what to make of his son:
he resents him, very likely. He looks at ERNOUL.

ALMARIC

Stand you as his servant?

ERNOUL

(making a career
decision)

Yes.

ALMARIC

(gesturing)

Get fed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNOUL'S never heard anything better.

INT. GODFREY'S BEDROOM. THE NEXT MORNING

BALIAN is sleeping on silks, in a breeze, in the shadow of window-lattice. He wakes, feels the fabric. He sees: a bowl of ROSEWATER. He drinks it uncertainly, and then tries to eat the petals. SERVANT-GIRLS flee.

INT. BALIAN'S HOUSE. MORNING

BALIAN, wearing a silk tunic, explores the rooms, nodding at the people who stare at him, and bow. Bowed at in the kitchens, he nervously escapes into the STABLES.

AMALRIC

(eating, to alarmed
SERGEANTS)

He may be mad.

EXT. THE STABLE COURTYARD. DAY

ALMARIC is staring dubiously out into the yard.

ALMARIC

Will you look at that.

BALIAN with ferocious intensity is shoeing a horse. He is shirtless and covered with sweat. Frightened Arab STABLEHANDS stare at him, hand him what he needs. BALIAN sets down the hoof just done, and looks around as A SURE OF DOGS, WHIPPETS, come through the gate, followed by a rider. A beautiful woman sits side-saddle on a palfrey. She rides around BALIAN, who, peasant nerves operating, stands with his head down. Riding on the horse (perhaps against the glaring sun), is SIBYLLA, the sister of the King of Jerusalem, and the wife of Guy de Lusignan. She wears riding silks, and a turban.

SIBYLLA

Where is your master?

BALIAN has no idea what to answer: he for the first time has none. SIBYLLA figures it out. She smiles delightfully. But then looks stern, deciding to play it out. DOGS harrass BALIAN.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Do you know who I am?

BALIAN shakes his head. SIBYLLA is fascinated by Balian, possibly attracted to him, and possibly aware of her power over him. She rides around him again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Should you see Balian son of
Godfrey, my cousin, though not
dangerously so-

BALIAN looks up at her lethal beauty as if at the sun.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Tell him that Sibylla Princess of
Jerusalem called.

She starts to ride out. Then turns.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

I bless your father's name. And
wept at the news.

She rides out, her dogs tumbling after her. BALIAN goes to
the gate and in deep confusion and blind lust stares after
the splendid figure caroming down the street, scattering
merchants like pigeons. BALIAN, starting to work again
shoeing the horse, turns and sees:

AMALRIC, who is looking with concern at the potential
madman.

AMALRIC

(embarrassed, from
the corner of his
mouth)

My lord, bow no more to equals, and
we have two blacksmiths.

BALIAN nods, seeing the joke (and his first joke in ages).

BALIAN

Yes.

He looks up and sees:

THE HOSPITALLER. Now in Jerusalem the Hospitaller is not in
his stained travel kit, but resplendent, looking more the
priest, though in armor.

HOSPITALLER

How find you Jerusalem?

BALIAN

I thought to find God. I was sent
to the wrong hill by a Syrian and
bastard.

BALIAN laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOSPITALLER

(shrugs)

If you are a good man you are a man
of God. The other will come.

BALIAN

(truly wanting to
know)

What is Jerusalem?

HOSPITALLER

It is a city precious in its
absences. Two absconded prophets
and some Hebrew rubble, yet it is
the center of the world.

(a beat)

Today you will learn more. Do you
know that you are famous?

EXT. A STREET IN JERUSALEM. MORNING

BALIAN and the HOSPITALLER ride. PEOPLE stare at BALIAN. He
is in armor, the surcoat that signifies the King's Men,
with his *Jerusalem Cross* (as opposed to the Red Cross of
the Newcomers, of the Templars, of Guy de Lusignan, of, in
short, our bad guys). They bow. We hear whispers. "He
killed Mummad al-Fais". Etc. BALIAN nods gravely to the
people acclaiming him.

EXT. A SQUARE BEFORE THE PALACE. DAY

TEMPLARS, bearded fanatics, their hands tied behind them,
ropes around their necks.

OFFICIAL

By King's decree these men are
condemned, for having broke the
peace.

OTHER TEMPLARS roar objections; but still the signal is
given. The men are hoisted; hang.

BALIAN watches from horseback.

HOSPITALLER

He waits.

INT. OUTSIDE TIBERIA'S ROOMS AT THE PALACE. DAY

VOICES raised in Arabic. BALIAN stands listening.

REYNALD (O.S.)

Who says I raid?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS (O.S.)

This man.

MOVE INSIDE THE ROOM. A MUSLIM GRANDEE (a rich merchant) glares. REYNALD OF CHATILLON, a magnificent brigand, is on the carpet. He looks from the Muslim grandee to Tiberias.

REYNALD

This man, if you call him that, is a Saracen. He lies.

TIBERIAS leans over his table. Tiberias, a plain ferocious knight and noble of fifty-odd, is the regent of the kingdom.

TIBERIAS

There will come a day, Reynald, when men are not protected by their station.

REYNALD

Alert me, Tiberias, when men have moved to the stars.

TIBERIAS

Two men have been hung in your place.

REYNALD

Men, Tiberias, must look out for themselves.

(bored)

Having paid this thing three times the value of goods I did not steal, may I depart?

TIBERIAS, no way to hold him, nods. REYNALD goes. As REYNALD does he sees:

BALIAN.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

(eyeing Balian closely, as if sniffing him)

Hmmn. Mummad al-Fais, eh?

He moves on. BALIAN and the HOSPITALLER enter the room and see:

REYNALD and the MUSLIM GRANDEE clasping hands. The MUSLIM GRANDEE is not satisfied; but he has got what he can get.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIBERIAS

Your caravans past Kerak would be safe if you allowed me to give Christian guards if you like.

MUSLIM GRANDEE

I trade with Damascus to make money. Not to offend God by associating with Christians.

TIBERIAS holds out GOLD.

TIBERIAS

Take this, from a Christian?

The GRANDEE, of course, does.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

You are an ignorant and difficult bastard.

MUSLIM GRANDEE

Who is ignorant who knows God?

TIBERIAS

A man who claims to know God knows neither God nor anything else. Get out.

The MUSLIM GRANDEE goes, starchily. TIBERIAS, face in hands, sits at his work-table. The work of Government goes on around Tiberias: papers, bills, clerks.

HOSPITALLER (O.S.)

My lord.

TIBERIAS looks up and sees:

GODFREY'S SON. For the first time we see Balian fully in armor and surcoat.

TIBERIAS

It is true.

(Remarking
resemblance.)

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

You are your father's son. He was my friend.

(a beat)

Godfrey dead. It could have come at a better time.

(a beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

But you sir have made your mark already. It was shouted in the streets this morning. Was it a fair fight? When you killed Muhammad al-Fais?

BALIAN

He rode down on me...I was fortunate.

TIBERIAS

I have wrote to Saladin that the fight was fair. What know you of Saladin?

BALIAN

That he is the King of the Muslims, and surrounds this kingdom.

TIBERIAS

He could walk into this city and kill every European here and is daily given cause. Here from this room I keep the peace, so far as it may be kept. I begin

(to Hospitaller)

To wonder why.

(to Balian, crisply)

What did your father tell you of your obligations?

BALIAN

That I was to be a good knight.

TIBERIAS at first laughs. Then looks BALIAN closely in the eye.

TIBERIAS

Nothing more than that?

(BALIAN shakes his head)

I pray the world and Jerusalem can accomodate such a rarity as a perfect knight.

(a beat)

Come.

INT. THE GREAT HALL OF THE PALACE. NIGHT

In a great hall under a long second-story gallery A DINING TABLE, and very much different it is from the one in France. The delicacies are Eastern, Muslim. HERACLIUS is eating greedily. SIBYLLA sits (no son with her: he would not eat here). TIBERIAS, careworn, is eating slowly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN, his clean hair slicked down, eats something new to him with his knife. All eat with knives, but not with a lack of manners. There is no conversation. This is cut-and-dried eating. BALIAN steals looks at SIBYLLA, who catches him at it: and a world is said though her face does not change. BALIAN looks down at his plate. GUY de LUSIGNAN enters, drunk, with a cup. He takes in the room and then notices: Balian.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Oh. You rise in the world like the,
ah, sun. To become a baron, to kill
Mummad al-Fais, and now be at my
table?

Sits across from Balian and stares at him. Drunk.

TIBERIAS

It is the king's table.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Is it. I have not seen a king at it
for some years.

(stares at Balian,
drinks wine)

Well. However far you rise we shall
always remember Messina. Eh?

He stares, trying to provoke a fight. BALIAN says nothing.
He is too out of his depth to know, precisely, what is
going on. GUY gives up, contemptuously.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

(rising)

I won't eat. I am finicky about
company. In France

(points at Balian)

This could not inherit. But here
there are no civilized rules.

He smashes the table. TIBERIAS stands, ready in one second
to kill him. GUY and TIBERIAS stare at each other, an inch
from drawing daggers. SIBYLLA sits with her face unchanged.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

I have affairs in the East. My wife
does not lament at my absences.
That is either the best of wives

(kisses the top of
Sibylla's head)

Or the very, very, worst.
(goes)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIBERIAS

Do you go to meet Reynald of
Chatillon?

GUY turns at the door.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(openly lying, and
mocking Tiberias)

No, my lord. He is in disfavor. I
am a member of this court. Why
should I make league with that
adventurer.

TIBERIAS

You will molest no caravans and
kill no Muslims. Break the peace
again and it will be worth your
life.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Will you take that life personally,
Tiberias?

TIBERIAS

Are you drunk enough to say I could
not?

GUY doesn't want to "go there". Not at the moment, anyway.

GUY upends his cup. Wine like blood on the stones. Then he
drops the cup and leaves. No one can think of anything to
say.

SIBYLLA

We will ride together. And you will
tell me about France and what is
and is not the fashion there now.

BALIAN looks, to say the least, unequal to the job.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

(drily)

If here in the East we have found a
better world and more interesting
it must not be mentioned and we
must know what Eleanor of Aquitaine
uses this year for a pessary. Are
you married?

BALIAN

My wife is dead, lady.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SIBYLLA

You must be found another. That is
another interest of ladies.

(disingenuous)

Matters of state and power do not
intrigue us.

TIBERIAS

They had better not. I have not
decided whether you best be
divorced or a widow.

SIBYLLA

Neither have I.

BALIAN looks upwards at something we do not yet see.

BALIAN'S POV

THE WHITE, MASKED FIGURE OF THE KING on a balcony.

TIBERIAS

(standing)

The king.

All stand. The KING moves along through the shadows,
attended.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

(brokenly, careworn,
and now to himself)

The king.

EXT. A COURTYARD. TWILIGHT

Falling water. The castle is full of shadows, whispers, a
desert Elsinore. BALIAN looks around warily.

SIBYLLA

Do you fear being with me?

BALIAN

Yes.

SIBYLLA looks pleased. It is as it should be. She walks
around the fountain.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Your face did not change through
all your husband said or did.

SIBYLLA

A woman in my place has a mask. Not
a face.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Until she does unmask in privacy.

(a beat)

We are private now.

BALIAN looks up at her. Fear, but desire. And they are not so private. A scuffling beyond pillars. Elsinore.

TIBERIAS (O.S. from the other direction)

Balian of Ibelin.

BALIAN turns (away from the scuffling) and sees: TIBERIAS.

TIBERIAS comes forward. Sussing out the (fairly dangerous) sexual situation.

SIBYLLA

My uncle thinks me unpredictable.

TIBERIAS

(wearily amused)

You do not know the beginning of unpredictability.

(as SIBYLLA reacts to the jab, RAYMOND, stolidly)

The king would see Godfrey's son.

SIBYLLA

I will take him.

BALIAN and SIBYLLA go. RAYMOND stays. On SOUND we hear the muzzoin at Al Aqsa call the evening prayer. RAYMOND, as if in prayer, closes his eyes.

EXT. A CORRIDOR IN THE PALACE. MOMENTS LATER

The call to prayer still echoes (conflicting now with churchbells). BALIAN and SIBYLLA have come to the king's door, which is guarded.

BALIAN

You do not come in?

SIBYLLA

(coldly)

I cannot bear to look on him.

(more charmingly)

I shall see you anon.

She goes off down the corridor. At the end she opens a door: a fall of light. She goes through the door, leaving the door open. Balian stares at the open door; then looks at the door to the king's chambers. Terrified. The doors are swung open.

INT. THE KING'S APARTMENTS. NIGHT

BALIAN enters the room. It is lit by oil-lamps. Silks and tapestries but it is still a working room--papers and scrolls---books. A great map. The KING sits in a chair before the window, his back to Balian. Before him, Jerusalem and the desert stars.

THE KING
(easily, but lonely,
like a boy in a
Victorian children's
story)

I wear a mask. I should warn you
before I turn.

BALIAN stands staring in lamplight. We see as he sees: one of the king's swaddled hands.

THE KING (CONT'D)
I did love your father. I am glad
to know his son.
(he stands)
Do not kneel.

He turns. What he wears is the most beautiful mask imaginable, hammered silver, hammered planes catching light.

LATER

A CRUDE CHESSPIECE: A PAWN. It is a barely anthropomorphized triangle of ivory. It is touched by a bandaged hand. BALIAN (now to some extent just playing chess with another young man) looks at the BOARD.

BALIAN
I cannot think far enough ahead to
be good at this game.

We see the boy-king's masked face.

THE KING
It is the world.
(back to the board)
Enemies
(another angle on the
board)
arrayed in all dimensions. Each
move can be the death of you.
(on the CRUDE PAWN)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KING (CONT'D)

Do anything except remain in your starting place in the world or on this board and you cannot be sure of your end. Were you sure once of your end?

BALIAN

(BALIAN has great reason to listen to this)

I was.

THE KING

A man may move himself....a King may move a man...a father may claim a son...and then the man begins his own game. Remember howsoever you are played or by whom that your soul is in your keeping. Even though those who presume to play you be kings. Remember.

(BALIAN stops looking at the board: the game itself is not the point)

When you answer to God you cannot say "I was told it was thus", or that virtue "was not the fashion of my times". Remember.

BALIAN stares at a PAWN. (the crude image of a man). Flickering light. He looks up.

BALIAN

I will.

THE KING

The man you killed in the desert taught me to hawk when I was a boy. He was my father's prisoner and my friend. He taught me to shoot arrows from horseback as the Saracens do. The man you killed was there when my arm was pinched and it was he, not my father's physicians, who noticed that I felt no pain.

(his eyes expressive in the mask)

This disease the Muslims say, is god's vengeance against the vanity of our kingdom. As wretched as I am here, the Arabs say, after their book, the chastisement that awaits me in hell is more severe.

(MORF)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE KING (CONT'D)

(a wry beat)

If it is true, I call it unfair.

BALIAN may know that this man wants a friend: but he's unable to act except as if he is with a king- whose eyes die a little when he sees that Balian averts his own eyes. The King is condemned to be lonely. Condemned also to be a king. He stands. To servant:

THE KING (CONT'D)

Wine.

The SERVANT pours two cups. Very careful about which cup is which. Balian takes his own. The king drinks with swaddled hands.

THE KING (CONT'D)

(to Balian, with authority, now unmistakably the king)

You are to go to your house of Ibelin and patrol with your knights the pilgrim road. That was once the Templar's function yet they harass and rob the Jews and the Muslims. All are welcome in Jerusalem.

(a beat: drinks off his cup)

Protect the helpless.

BALIAN nods. He takes it seriously. He drinks.

THE KING (CONT'D)

And when one day I am helpless... perhaps you will protect me. You may go.

BALIAN looks up. The glittering mask. Balian nods, sets down his cup, goes.

The KING returns to his lonely chair by the window.

EXT. THE CORRIDOR. NIGHT

BALIAN comes out of the king's apartments, and looks down the hall. SIBYLLA'S DOOR still stands open, light falling into the hall. Balian might well have walked towards the door, but the BOY (Sibylla's son) comes out and stares at Balian expressionlessly. BALIAN turns, and leaves. The BOY stares after him.

INT. THE DINING TABLE. NIGHT

TIBERIAS sits alone among the dishes and wreckage, staring, the weight of the kingdom on him. A CASTRATO (European contrast to the other song that gave him pause earlier) somewhere begins to sing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A BARRACKS COURTYARD IN THE PALACE. MORNING

CLOSE ON TIBERIAS.

TIBERIAS

The king has charged you with your tasks. You keep the peace. The Muslims shall not be attacked.

(walking, glaring at
men--of Ibelin, and
other houses)

My lord of Ibelin will go to his house of Ibelin and from there protect the pilgrim road. All who pass are under the king's protection, and yours. Jews, Christians, Muslims, all are welcome in this kingdom and all protected. To break the peace, to rob Muslim, Jew or Christian, is death on the instant. Do you understand.

BALIAN nods. His men nod, perhaps more reluctantly.

ALMARIC

Ibelin.

SOLDIER

That shithole.

ALMARIC

Sch.

TIBERIAS comes up to BALIAN, and privately.

TIBERIAS

Be gone to Ibelin. Not least before the princess Sibylla does take you "riding".

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

AMALRIC, AND BALIAN'S SERGEANTS, ALL TURNED OUT IN FULL LIVERY, WITH THE IBELIN STANDARD, CANTER ALONG A DESERT TRACK. Balian rides apart, head down.

SERGEANT

What do you think he's doing?

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Praying to be half his father.

EXT. THE PILGRIM ROAD. LATER

JEWS by a campfire stand and bow as BALIAN, cloaked, rides past with two of his knights, also cloaked. They are very much policemen on patrol.

FACES of the pilgrims: the young, the old, the girl who Balian might well become involved with if this were Ivanhoe. The HEADMAN blesses Balian gravely.

BALIAN

It is a wonderful thing to not molest the Jews.

JEWS are praying.

ERNOUL

These Jews are not I think the ones who killed Christ. They were not in the area at the time.

ERNOUL rides along, leering at a JEWISH GIRL. ERNOUL has a bit of a problem.

ALMARIC

It was different with the last king, Amalric of memory. Dead set against the Jews he was sir.

(lawyerish)

This we call the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

BALIAN

(uncertain where this is going)

Yes.

ERNOUL

Is God his father dead?

BALIAN

I pray not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNOUL

Then why, in France or the Kingdom
of heaven, should a son inherit
when the father be not dead?

BALIAN

You would be burnt in France.

ERNOUL

Why think you I came to Jerusalem?

They ride on, past more CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS trudging in a
line towards the city. ALMARIC draws up his horse.

ALMARIC

There, my lord.

BALIAN rides a little forward.

BALIAN's POV:

IBELIN. A faintly green valley floor, an oasis, a fort that
would best be called a "Casbah". A village around it.

ALMARIC (CONT'D)

Ibelin.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

Establish Ibelin as Balian and his party ride in. WOMEN
with buckets hung on poles are carrying water towards the
dry MELON FIELDS. The population consists of Jews, Muslims,
and Syriac Christians. The place is desperately poor. This
is a way station.

ERNOUL

Godfrey's importance had little to
do with his lands.

But to Balian, who looks at the blowing palms, it might as
well be paradise.

BALIAN

I have no importance. It will suit
me fine.

A TEMPLAR drags a bound young man through a melon field.
BALIAN rides up to him.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

What is this?

TEMPLARS

He stole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

Stole what.

(no answer)

What is the object and where is it.

TEMPLARS

My lord?

BALIAN cuts the boy free. As we get closer to the casbah (and move into the courtyard) we see that greasy indolent TEMPLARS infest the half-ruined house.

ALMARIC

You, knights of the Temple, are
relived.

EXT. IBELIN. TWILIGHT

Torches are lit on the rough battlements. BALIAN stares out at the desert. At the road, where a solitary pilgrim proceeds to Jerusalem on his knees. He steps down from the battlements, revealing:

His KNIGHTS. They have gathered here at their post. Cold men by a fire (still unsure of Balian). A KNIGHT holds out a plate of boiled wheat. BALIAN takes it and eats with his fingers.

BALIAN

(finally putting down
plate, and boldly:)

I am not my father.

The KNIGHTS, who have been thinking just this, look at each other.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

But I will do my best.

BALIAN, as the KNIGHTS look at each other, goes to the shattered gate of the fortress and looks out at:

A COLUMN OF CHILDREN. Ragged, starving, desperate.

AMALRIC

My lord if you were a hundred
times your father and there were a
hundred of you and all did their
best the kingdom yet will fall.

AMALRIC goes out with the COOKPOT and sets it down among the pilgrim children.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNOUL

My lord this is a poor and dusty
place.

BALIAN

Is it.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

A commotion among the people. They run towards the spring. What they see there is wonderful. A DONKEY turns a wheel which turns a gear which drives an axle which raises buckets from the water. The buckets upend and the water pours into an irrigation ditch which extends into the fields. BALIAN, shirtless, is with the townspeople in the water, driving in boards to shore up the dug walls of the watercourse. The PEOPLE (Jews, Christians, Muslims) are exultant.

LATER

BALIAN comes up from the water through the streets of the village (preventing his "people" as he does from kneeling) and sees:

AN ARAB GIRL, collecting eggs. She turns, sensing that she is being stared at. She is veiled across, but the beauty, all the beauty you need to know about, is in the eyes. She continues to take eggs from beneath the hens. BALIAN, caught in a memory, extracts himself, and walks on towards the fort. But in his face we see: he has made something useful, he is alive again, he could have a life here. As he walks, he suddenly notices: WHIPPETS. They course around in a pack. He looks up and sees:

SIBYLLA, mounted. She is veiled and with a guard of "Turcoples"--lancers. SIBYLLA unveils and rides forward.

SIBYLLA

Cousin.

EXT. A POOL IN THE DESERT. DAY

BALIAN and SIBYLLA have been riding. Their horses are watering. SIBYLLA drinks, and looks at Balian. No dialog necessary. Balian looks around at the desert. Sibylla, barefoot, wrings a cloth, and washes the dust from Balian's face. He catches her wrist, meaning: don't.

SIBYLLA

(smiling, and
continuing to wash
his face)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

The Commandments are not for
persons in our condition. They are
for the others.

(Luins, pours water
over her hair)

My marriage was arranged by my
mother. She thought the kingdom
needed "new blood".

(a beat, wrily)

She took what was available at the
time.

Out of shot, with Balian staring after her. Picked up, she
wades into the green, saline, pool, under the palms,
holding up her dress. She's no princess, just a girl of 19,
kicking through the water. She stops and looks into the
desert. Rippling wind.

HER POV:

Beyond palms, mirages.

SIBYLLA cocks her head, waiting to hear if Balian comes up
behind her. He has not. She looks around and sees:

BALIAN staring into the desert.

INT. THE FORT AT IBELIN. AFTERNOON

SYRIAN servants attend SIBYLLA. They take her cloak, her
"turban" as she reveals and drops her hair. There is a
MUSLIM CALL TO PRAYER.

SIBYLLA

A mosque even here. My brother will
not drive them from the city. Jesus
would not, he says. And so they
pray. Was this the point of
Crusade?

BALIAN

My lady, you could be your husband.

SYRIAN servant removes SIBYLLA's small velvet shoes.

SIBYLLA

What do you pray?

She gives Balian WINE. Balian drinks as if it is an elixir--
and then he doubts the medicine. Balian isn't a prig; but
he's in a new world.

BALIAN

I once prayed to God. I have prayed
for....

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN (CONT'D)

("the soul of my
wife")

Now insofar as I pray at all I pray
that I may be equal to what I have
been given.

SIBYLLA

We all pray that, at first. And
then we pray for more.

(swerving a look at
him)

Who stays content?

BALIAN

I could have been. I was. I think
that I may be again. Here.

SIBYLLA

If I do not tempt you in this
garden?

BALIAN

Perhaps.

SIBYLLA

We are unobserved.

BALIAN

We see ourselves.

BALIAN, looking out the window, sees:

BALIAN'S POV:

The ARAB GIRL. She moves along the lane.

SIBYLLA

This is the world, not heaven.

(a beat)

Sit by me.

Sibylla reaches out her ringed hand. When Balian does not
move:

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

If I were queen it would be
treason. Now it is good manners.

BALIAN ignores her.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Look at me.

In the gloom, Balian does.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

You are not here because I am
bored, or wicked.

(holds up her small
palm an inch or two
from Balian's)

You are here because in the East
between one person and another,
there is only light.

BALIAN's had enough: Sibylla is irresistible. He carries
her back against the wall.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

CAMELS laden with dyed goods move along, bells tinkling.
Three of the merchant's daughters (and we'll recognize the
merchant in a bit) ride in camel howdahs.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A MUSLIM TRADING CARAVAN moves across the wide desert. Two
hundred camels. It has with it a small force of cavalry,
riding in a file.

A HILLTOP. TWO RIDERS CREST IT.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN and REYNALD sit their horses and stare
towards the Muslims. They are at the head of a little over
50 knights, including fanatical TEMPLARS. Destriers
restless. Ready as the men are to fight.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

This is not just a caravan,
Reynald.

REYNALD

No.

(chuckles)

I make the guard a force twice the
size of ours.

A CRY FROM BELOW as the knights are spotted. The MUSLIM
FORCE spreads out, archers on horseback, forming a line
between the Crusaders and the now hastening caravan. A
rider detaches and streaks away across the desert. GUY
notices.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

They've sent off a rider!

REYNALD

There they are, de Lusignan! The
enemies of God!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

We cannot take this caravan,
Reynald.

REYNALD

Can we not.
(squinting)
That's Mohammed of Damascus, there,
in the gold. He's worth a bit
alive, if we can get him.

The TEMPLAR MASTER rides up beside them. Bloodthirsty.

TEMPLAR MASTER

God wills it.

REYNALD draws his sword. GUY looks apprehensive.

REYNALD

God wills it, de Lusignan! God
wills it!

REYNALD charges. GUY hesitates with his own knights--and
then charges down the hill.

Reverse it. The CAMELS and people are running. Men grabbing
weapons of every kind.

The heavy knights smash through the defenders, killing
everyone they come near. A CHILD ridden down, old men
hacked down, people trying to surrender killed. We see the
TEMPLARS fighting with particular savagery. Leave the fight
in the dust, the knights murdering, the camels running,
silks and silver spilling...

REYNALD rides up to:

The MUSLIM GRANDEE. The man he paid off at the palace.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

You.

He splits him in half.

INT. BALIAN'S ROOMS AT IBELIN. DAWN

BALIAN is asleep with Sibylla. A pounding at the door. He
wakes. ON SOUND: ARABIC SHOUTING.

EXT. THE COURTYARD. CONTINUOUS

A HUGE CROWD OF VILLAGERS ARE RUSHING THE FORT. Spearmen
hold them off at the gate. WIND is rising. A big desert
wind. BALIAN comes down the open steps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

What is this?

ALMARIC

A murder.

A PRISONER is held by his men. The head is dragged back by the hair and he sees: ERNOUL.

ALMARIC (CONT'D)

He raped an Arab girl. The one who sold eggs. And then he killed her.

(punches ERNOUL in the face)

Priest.

BALIAN stares at the bleeding ERNOUL. The Muslims of Ibelin are crying at the gates, held back by pikemen.

ERNOUL

(insane)

Her people would have killed her.

Their customs are not as ours.

BALIAN stares down at him. He looks up at the Muslims. Then back at ERNOUL

BALIAN

Hang him.

ERNOUL, struggling, is taken to the gallows and hanged. BALIAN looks around at the crowd. They quiet. But the wind still rises, blowing the palms, blowing dust through the streets of the town wind carries through to...

EXT. THE SCENE OF THE CARAVAN ATTACK. DAY

Dust blowing across a scene of carnage. Raped women, their throats cut, being covered with sand. More dead Muslims. Not one man, woman or child has survived. At a nearby POOL KNIGHTS are drinking, amidst their bloody horses. Exhausted and wounded men lie upon the ground. GUY DE LUSIGNAN is drinking as well, from his helmet. REYNALD walks up, dragging the famous "Mohammed of Damascus" on a rope. GUY, blown out, strikes REYNALD across the face with his mailed glove.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

They sent a rider to Saladin. We want a war after we have the throne.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNALD, after grinning with bloody mouth, smashes GUY in the face and knocking him down lays a dagger across his throat.

REYNALD

Make no mistake about who will make you king if you are one.

The TEMPLAR MASTER is listening, privy to this. Glittering with evil. Covered with blood.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

If the war is to be now or later I would have it now. Even I don't last forever.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(bleakly)

What now?

REYNALD

Me to Kerak, you wherever you like. I have a marriage on my calendar. Tuesday, rememberest thou marry whore to sodomite so that the throne has another claimant if de Lusignan has not the balls to kill his stepson. Politics, de Lusignan, never end and we are weary those who practice them.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

What do I say to the court? What do I say to Tiberias?

REYNALD

(insouciant)

That I have started another war.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

I can't do that.

REYNALD POURS GOLD INTO HIS HANDS. Smiling.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

SIBYLLA has mounted. In the wind and dust. A RIDER thunders in. ALMARIC goes to him.

ALMARIC

(coming to BALIAN)

A caravan.

EXT. THE CARAVAN MASSACRE. TWILIGHT

BALIAN'S MEN pick through the wreckage. BALIAN is "solving" the fight. What horses came from which direction.

A DEAD HORSE. It is a Percheron or mix thereof: a European warhorse.

BALIAN

(examining it)

That's not a wound. The brand is cut off.

A cry OS:

SOLDIER

Franks. The bodies hid.

In a natural ditch, hastily covered, stripped European bodies, half-buried. The sand blows across them. As BALIAN stares down: SIBYLLA rides up behind him.

SIBYLLA

(equably)

Find you my husband there?

BALIAN stares at her: what sort of woman is this?

ALMARIC

That is an Italian Templar. I disremember the name. And there, Chatillon's Spaniard, Gonsalvo.

(to Balian)

We must send a rider to the King.

(looks at Sibylla)

Unless my lady will take the news to Jerusalem.

SIBYLLA

I go to Kerak. My sister is to be married to Humphrey of Toron. The King does not approve.

BALIAN

What side of these troubles are you on?

JACKALS are loping towards the dead.

SIBYLLA

In the end, you will find me on the side that has won.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

(a beat, taking
Balian's hand)

Be with me there.

She rides off through the twilight with her lancers. BALIAN
staring after her. A weird cry from the distance. Balian
looks and sees:

RAGGED figures stumbling towards the site of the massacre.
Europeans once. Naked except for rags, some just naked.
They move like animals. They stay at a distance.

BALIAN

What are they?

ALMARIC

Taffirs. They were pilgrims once.
They eat the Muslim dead.

BALIAN, looking at them, has no problem believing.

ALMARIC (CONT'D)

The king's orders are to kill them
where they are found.

BALIAN

Do it.

EXT. IBELIN. DAWN

BALIAN, a changed man, stands by the dying watchfire. From
the other direction: a rider. Light horse, light clothing,
at full gallop.

ALMARIC

From Jerusalem.

Rider draws up. King's livery.

RIDER

Balian d'Ibelin. The king his
Majesty Baldwin IV commands that
you take your whole command from
Ibelin and watch the approaches to
Kerak. Should the Saracens cross
the Jordan, send report to the
king.

BALIAN nods.

ALMARIC

(holding the man's
bridle)

Will a Muslim army come?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIDER

The king does expect one.

INT. THE THRONE ROOM. JERUSALEM. DAY

An assembly of the powers of the land. Set up like the House of Commons, with Templars and "newcomers" on one side, Hospitallers and loyalists on the other. The king wearing a mask of silver, looking at GUY DE LUSIGNAN and TIBERIAS, who stand before him.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(lying for his life)

The Muslims have broken the treaty.
We stopped their force at The Pools
of Goliath. I did.

TIBERIAS

You did not stop a "force". You
massacred a caravan.

TEMPLAR MASTER

(intervening for Guy:
a shout)

The caravan was armed.

TIBERIAS

The Muslims are arming their
caravans because Reynald, the
Templars,

TEMPLARS

(as GUY smiles)

Lie! Lie!

TIBERIAS

and, you, Guy de Lusignan--
(roaring to the room)
in league with the Templar
fanatics--

TEMPLARS

Lie!

TIBERIAS

*Break the king's pledge of peace,
attempting to start a war. Saladin
will come into this kingdom and
besiege Reynald at Kerak.*

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(taking a dangerous
flyer and knowing
it)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

The Count of Tiberias knows a great deal about Saladin's "intentions".

TEMPLAR MASTER smiles as if he'd given De Lusignan the line previously (and perhaps he did). Uproar among the BARONS. TIBERIAS goes close to GUY.

TIBERIAS

What do you say?

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

What do I not say? My lord regent.

A close moment. TIBERIAS, we understand, has something to hide, and Guy knows what it is.

THE KING (O.S.)

Reynald will be besieged at Kerak.

TIBERIAS

Let Saladin or the Devil take him.

THE KING

And Kerak?

TIBERIAS knows that Kerak cannot be lost.

TEMPLAR MASTER

You would hand a Christian to a Muslim?

TIBERIAS

There is a truce which took two years to effect!

TEMPLAR MASTER

(softly)

No more, Tiberias. No more.

TIBERIAS

We cannot have a general war. We will not win it.

TEMPLAR MASTER

Blasphemy.

The MASTER OF THE HOSPITAL looks at his Templar enemy across the room.

HERACLIUS

(lawyerish, greasy)

An army of Jesus Christ which bears his holy cross cannot be beaten. Does the Count of Tiberias suggest that it could be?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

An uproar among the Barons, the divided parties. TIBERIAS closes his eyes, waiting it out. GUY DE LUSIGAN looks malevolently pleased, drunk on the thrill of danger.

TEMPLAR MASTER

There must be war. God wills it.

TEMPLARS AND NEWCOMERS

God wills it. God wills it. God wills it.

TIBERIAS

(roaring at the whole court)

Then pray, Jerusalem, that God will win it for in the end we shall not.

The hall falls silent. A MESSENGER Has entered. He moves forward, and speaks to the King. The King raises his masked face.

THE KING

Saladin has crossed the Jordan.

PHYSICIAN

Your majesty, you are in no condition...

THE KING

Assemble the Army at Sephoria.

BARONS leave in haste. THE KING goes to GUY. As he stares at him, wordlessly, GUY lowers his eyes. The KING walks on.

ON SOUND: A BELL CLANGING ALARM.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF KERAK. DAY

A LINE OF REFUGEES (Arab Christians) are streaming towards the castle, through a rubbly village by a pool which is also being evacuated in haste. People loading mules, camels. Some simply running.

EXT. A HILL ABOVE THE VALLEY OF KERAK. CONTINUOUS

BALIAN crests the hill, mounted, followed by his men, the entire garrison of Ibelin. In the distance down the valley: dust.

ALMARIC

The cavalry will come up the valley to close Reynald in, and the siege army will come behind it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN looks at the refugees straggling across the desert. As he does he sees: MUSLIM HORSE--thousands--are coming up the valley.

ALMARIC (CONT'D)

My lord? We must depart or go into the castle.

BALIAN rides a little forward, staring. MOTHERS with children running through the dust.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS OF KERAK. DAY

KERAK'S BELL is ringing alarum as well. REYNALD, wearing a festive gown, and eating an orange, stares indifferently at the desert. HUMPHREY, his reluctant stepson, is beside him. MEN-AT-ARMS are manning the walls. CROSSBOLTS brought up in buckets. An oil-boiler lighted.

REYNALD

(grabs Humphrey, to use him as "binoculars")

How many?

HUMPHREY

(terrified)

I can't see yet.

REYNALD

I thought that being drawn into the Kingdom he would go for Jerusalem. I would. Why is it me? Why is it always me? What have I done?

(walking again with Humphrey)

I serve God. That is what I do. If God tells me to raid Mecca *then by God I raid Mecca*. That is the way things are done. And now it's all this. Again.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF KERAK. CONTINUOUS

MUSLIM HORSE move from a canter to a gallop. Thousands. Sweeping up the valley.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS OF KERAK. CONTINUOUS

We see the REFUGEES making it through the gates. SIBYLLA stands on the ramparts, looking out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNALD

I wish I were fifty again or that
you drank liquor. What do you look
at?

SIBYLLA

Knights.

REYNALD squints.

REYNALD

What knights?

EXT. THE VALLEY NEARER THE CASTLE. MOMENTS LATER

We see the streaming refugees, driving cattle, and heavy on
the women and children. Into the shot, BALIAN and knights.
They turn face the oncoming Muslim cavalry, that rolling
wall of dust. They walk forward through the refugees moving
in the other direction. A RIDER comes up.

RIDER

My lord Reynald of Chatillon prays
you bring your knights into Kerak.

BALIAN completely ignores him. The RIDER is mystified. But
he twigs it: Balian is going to delay the Muslim cavalry.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS OF KERAK. LATER

REYNALD, now being helped into his armor, stares towards
the south, still squinting and using HUMPHREY as his
"binoculars".

REYNALD

They mean to charge that?
They are better men than me. Not
quite so bright, but better men
than me.

(to Sibylla)

You know this fellow. Why is he
doing this?

SIBYLLA

Because he is a knight, Reynald.

REYNALD

Hmmn.

(turning away)

Selah.

SIBYLLA, unexpectedly, crosses herself, and watches for the
outcome.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF KERAK. DAY

BALIAN advances with his thin line of heavy cavalry, now fully interposed between the Muslims and the refugees. We hear the "allah" beginning, assembling to a roar. The Muslims are racing, but in contrast to them (going back to BALIAN) we should not mistake how very dangerous the heavy knights are. BALIAN draws his sword. Some of his men are crossing themselves. BALIAN spurs his horse up to a canter, and then as his men catch up, and, taking the "high guard" (none of the knights now using reins: the destriers know exactly what to do) gallops towards the Muslim force. The forces collide. The knights drive deep all across the front, killing, unhorsing, scores of MUSLIMS, completely destroying the impetus of the Muslim cavalry. DESTRIERS smash down Arab horses. A KNIGHT is lanced off his horse. ARABS, in the hundreds, are hacked out of the saddle. Arrows miss their targets. Men roll on the ground in the melee. The IBELIN MEN are grotesquely outnumbered but they have stopped the Muslim advance.

EXT. KERAK. DAY

REFUGEES stream in.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF KERAK. CONTINUOUS

Now the inevitable end is near: There are too many Muslims. IBELIN MEN go down and are run down by horses or killed or seized by dismounted men. BALIAN wheels in the melee, killing. His HORSE is hamstringed (we see the hatchet that does it), and he goes down. Immediately he is overwhelmed by Arabs, disarmed, beaten, dragged. Horses, whirling dust, screaming men. BALIAN is dragged, forced to his knees. He sees: ALMARIC, with a head wound, and some other of his men, kneeling, all threatened by yelling Muslims. BALIAN closes his eyes, preparing to accept death, and lowers his head. FINE BOOTS come forward through the dust. A SCIMITAR is drawn. BALIAN looks up and sees: the SCIMITAR raised as if to behead him. He lowers his eyes and head. The sword impacts--

ON HIS SHOULDER. The flat of it quivers there and is withdrawn.

BALIAN looks up and sees:

IMAD. The commander of Saladin's cavalry. In beautiful Damascus armor, smiling at him.

He helps Balian to his feet.

IMAD

That was something to see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MUSLIMS stare. Do they kill these men? Do they not? What they do, finally, is salaam. BALIAN, beyond blown out, nods at them. IMAD hands him a waterskin. BALIAN drinks. ALMARIC can't believe this is happening.

IMAD (CONT'D)

You may go, or you may go into
Kerak. But you will die there. My
master is coming.

BALIAN nods.

EXT. KERAK. LATER

THE ARAB FORCE PARTS. BALIAN and his surviving men, released to cheers from the battlements, walk out towards the gates of the castle, which are opened.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS OF KERAK. CONTINUOUS

REYNALD watches.

REYNALD

Sometimes they are chivalrous. They
learned it from us.

INT. THE COURTYARD AT KERAK. MOMENTS LATER

BALIAN and his men stagger in, acclaimed by the peasants they have saved. Through the crowd comes Reynald.

REYNALD

You've given me more mouths to feed
and more shit to throw over the
wall. You have a great deal to
learn about sieges.

BALIAN doesn't respond. REYNALD claps him on the arm.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

(whispering)

But that was magnificent.

BALIAN, looking up, sees SIBYLLA. She stands in an archway. Smiling down.

EXT. KERAK. THE NEXT DAY

THE MUSLIM HOST SURROUNDS THE CASTLE, which stands under full siege. CATAPULTS hurl stones and GREEK FIRE which explodes on the battlements. STONES hurled by petraries smash into the towers. CROSSBOWMEN are firing. REYNALD, still dragging the terrified HUMPHREY along as his eyes, is having a terrific time. BALIAN is with them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNALD

(to BALIAN, laughing,
as GREEK FIRE bursts
on a rooftop, and
runs down the slates
onto a Man at Arms)

My God, look at that.

(a beat)

There was to be a wedding, but not
today. Thirty thousand Saracen are
a good excuse for leaving a bride
grappling at herself in her bed.

(cackles)

Which of course she would be
anyway.

A STONE SMASHES above their heads and carries away part of
a tower.

HUMPHREY

You are a direct pollution of
everything you are near.

A DRUNKEN KNIGHT, pissing against a wall, has his head
turned to paste by a stone which rebounds towards the
Muslim army. He leans headless against the wall, still
pissing.

REYNALD

(mock-seriously)

If the woman comes to her crisis in
the act of love, Stepson, there is
better chance of conception.
Scientists have proved it.

HUMPHREY

Have you never tried decency?

REYNALD (as great stones hum through the air above his
head) laughs.

REYNALD

A word in your ear. That is not why
your mother married me.

HUMPHREY hits out at him and REYNALD nearly breaks his arm.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

(explaining to
Balian)

My wife's son. I have brought him
from France to marry the king's
sister.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REYNALD (CONT'D)

I should have saved the money, but
one must try everything to get
ahead. God gives nothing on a
plate.

*
*
*
*

A stone flung by the Saracens strikes a huge lance used to
fly a banner on a tower. The lance breaks in half and the
part with the spear-head (and the fluttering banner)
plunges into the castle court (a matter of 5 stories) and
goes through the whole body of a man from the head to the
crotch and thence into the earth. The dead man stands like
a scarecrow.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. I have
never seen that before.

(uses Humphrey as
binoculars)

What is that, there?

*
*
*
*
*

BALIAN

Another catapult.

*
*

REYNALD

Will the king relieve us?

*
*

BALIAN has no idea.

*

REYNALD (CONT'D)

Hmmn.

(as he stares out at
Saladin's army and
ignores a HUGE STONE
humming past his
head)

I thought he would go for
Jerusalem. They are not like us.
Well. The king will come, or he
will not.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

HUMPHREY

He would come to save the Princess
Sibylla, surely.

*
*
*

REYNALD laughs.

*

REYNALD

Not if he's smart, boy.

*
*

He looks uneasily at Balian.

*

REYNALD (CONT'D)

Where stand you? In this.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BALIAN

With the king.

REYNALD

Hmmn.

INT. A BEDCHAMBER AT KERAK. NIGHT

BALIAN looks at SIBYLLA in the gloom. We hear the battle going on. Cries in the night.

SIBYLLA

You kill Mummad al Fais, and now what you did today. I see a man who will be great, unless he prefers to be good.

BALIAN

You wish your husband dead.

SIBYLLA takes it well. Philosophical.

SIBYLLA

If he is dead I have one course. If he is alive...I have another. I have no course that is not a matter of state. My brother is dying. My son...is not...

(looks up at Balian)

I will not lose Jerusalem. My grandfather took it in blood. I will keep it the same way, or any way I can.

BALIAN

We will not survive this siege.

SIBYLLA

No one kills princesses. It's somewhere written down.

BALIAN starts to go. OS a whisk of silk. BALIAN turns. SIBYLLA stands naked. BALIAN (the sound of fighting OS) isn't going anywhere.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. BEFORE KERAK. DAWN

The MANGONELS and CATAPULTS continue to hurl stones and Greek fire. The MUSLIM ARMY prepares to assault the castle. But then...

As MUSLIMS here and there stare down the valley...

EXT. THE "COMMAND" HILL NEAR KERAK. DAY

Staring down the valley IMAD (attended by slaves) appraises the situation also.

IMAD

Tell my lord Saladin that Jerusalem is come.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF KERAK. MOMENTS LATER

HALF THE MUSLIM ARMY IS MOVING INTO A DEFENSIVE POSITION. FOOTMEN AND ARCHERS IN ORDER, ACROSS THE VALLEY FLOOR.

IMAD rides in front of the Muslim Army, staring down the valley. CAVALRY is pouring out towards...

EXT. A PLAIN NEAR KERAK. DAY

THE ARMY OF THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM.

THE HOLY CROSS, covered with gold and jewels, passes through the streaming dust. 500 knights are marching towards the relief of Kerak. They are flanked by and protected by 5,000 SPEARMEN and CROSSBOWMEN. Essentially the army is a moving square, tremendously disciplined. Crossbowmen form, fire, and reload as they move forward to form and fire again. The KING rides in his litter. MUSLIM CAVALRY harrases the "hedgehog" but cannot break it. Arrows rain down, but are caught on shields, or stick in the quilted armor. Few men fall. A LARGE GROUP OF MUSLIM CAVALRY charges on the rear of the square. The Square opens like a mechanical thing and--

At THE KING'S signal...

100 KNIGHTS CHARGE. The Saracens are butchered by the heavy cavalry the KNIGHTS in perfect discipline (including Guy de Lusignan) return to the square, which, still fighting on all sides, closes behind them, spearmen ready, archers firing. TIBERIAS, riding beside the king, then darting here and there, watches like a hawk, missing nothing.

TIBERIAS

Keep order!

CROSSBOWMEN slaughter with a volley, and then run ten paces forward and reform again, and take position behind the spearmen with their locked shields.

EXT. BEFORE THE MUSLIM ARMY. CONTINUOUS

IMAD stares through the dust. A man rides up beside him. A small, slight, figure, unarmored, in simple clothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALADIN

Pull back the cavalry.

EXT. THE HEDGEHOG. MOMENTS

As HORNS blow and the Muslim horsemen retire the hedgehog does an "evolution" and in one movement it is transformed into a fighting line, facing the Muslim rear guard. Out of the dust rides...

THE KING.

THE KING, a brilliant, erect, horseman, is using every ounce of strength he still possesses to not only stay in the saddle but look as if he is still a living man, when in fact he is, essentially, already a dead one. He rides in front of his army, and raises his palm to...

EXT. BEFORE THE MUSLIM ARMY. CONTINUOUS

SALADIN, who rides forward himself.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS OF KERAK. LATER

REYNALD is watching. BALIAN with him.

REYNALD

That bastard is a king.

EXT. BETWEEN THE ARMIES. CONTINUOUS

In silence, Imad and Saladin and The King and Tiberias meet in the "no man's land".

THE KING

You may not hold this siege. Kerak is strong and I behind you. I pray you retire unharmed to Damascus.

SALADIN moves forward, looking closely at the dying king. He knows how much effort this has cost the boy.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Those who have done you this injury will be punished. I swear it.

GUY, in earshot, is not very comfortable with this.

SALADIN

I have sworn to kill Reynald.

THE KING

I will do that. I swear. Withdraw, or we all die here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALADIN looks at the Army of Jerusalem. Then at the king. *

SALADIN *

I will send you my physicians. *

The KING lowers his head but only for a moment. *

THE KING *

Do we have terms? *

TIBERIAS is staring. *

SALADIN *

We have terms. *

EXT. THE COURTYARD OF KERAK . LATER

REYNALD approaches The King, a look of guilt, contrition and fear. He says nothing. He stares. He has been saved by the king he attempted to betray. THE KING gets painfully, from the saddle. The ride has killed him: has taken near the last of his strength. The King, walking to Reynald, dragging one leg, removes his turban. He drops it on the ground. He walks towards Reynald, and takes off his mask. We do not see The King's destroyed face. But Reynald does. And BALIAN does. *

THE KING *

Will you give me the kiss of peace, Reynald? This is Jerusalem. *

The King beats him with a stick. Again, again, again...a 24 Year old boy, ill, unarmed, savagely beating a large, dangerous knight. Blood starting from welts on his face, REYNALD faces his king. GUY watches, flinching. PHYSICIANS grab the king, who faints. The KING is helped to his litter. The KING reaches out a hand to SIBYLLA...who recoils from him. The KING, a tear falling, closes his eyes. *

REYNALD *

(to TIBERIAS)

What are you looking at? *

TIBERIAS *

A dead man. Reynald Count of Chatillon you are arrested and condemned. Your castle of Kerak is taken by the King. *

EXT. A PLAIN NEAR KERAK . DAY

The MUSLIM ARMY in retreat is making its way towards Damascus. SALADIN is riding, mildly, with IMAD and IBN JUBAYR. IBN JUBAYR is an old timer, senseless, bigoted.

IBN JUBAYR

Why did we retire? God could not favor him! God alone determines the results of battles.

SALADIN

The results of battles, Ibn Jubayr, are determined by preparation, numbers, the absence of disease, and the availability of water.

(a beat)

One cannot maintain a siege with the enemy behind.

IBN JUBAYR stares: heresy.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

How many battles did God win for the Muslims before I came?

(a courtly pause)

Before, that is, God determined that I should come.

IBN JUBAYR

Few enough.

(thinks about the reason)

That is because we were sinful.

SALADIN

It is because you were unprepared.

IBN JUBAYR

If you think that way you shall not be king for long.

SALADIN

When I am not king I quake for Islam.

EXT. JERUSALEM. EVENING

The domed city is under a dust-storm. We hear churchbells and together with them the Muslim call to prayer.

INT. THE PALACE DUNGEON. CONTINUOUS.

REYNALD, bearded, very much a prisoner, is flung like a snarling lion into a dungeon. TORCHBEARERS and KING'S GUARD withdraw leaving all dark as the door clangs.

REYNALD
(in the full dark)
I am Reynald of Chatillon. I am
Reynald of Chatillon!

INT. A HALLWAY IN THE PALACE. NIGHT

The KING is carried on a litter into his chambers. In the hall, GUY, hiding behind a pillar, watches the King retire; and then pushes on towards his own (and SIBYLLA's chambers). He is exhausted, careworn, frightened, dirty, and at the moment wants only his wife. He tries the door: locked. He tries it again: locked. He bangs on the door with his fist.

REYNALD (O.S.)
(and far off, in the
depths of the
building)
I am Reynald of Chatillon.

No response from Sibylla's chambers. GUY pounds again. A sound behind him:

HERACLIUS, looking tense.

HERACLIUS
(whispering)
My lord.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN
What.

HERACLIUS
Your wife...

GUY DE LUSIGNAN
(knowing it finally)
Ibelin's bastard? That will be
settled.

HERACLIUS
There is more than that. Take
refuge with the Templars.

GUY, knowing very well that he's had it, abruptly goes in one direction. HERACLIUS in another.

INT. KING'S CHAMBERS. CONTINUOUS

The KING is laid on his bed by attendants and PHYSICIANS. He turns his head sideways and sees:

THE KING'S POV:

THE CHESSBOARD. All angles.

INT. A HALLWAY IN THE PALACE. CONTINUOUS

GUY, turning a corner, confronts: the KING'S GUARD. The same men who just locked away Reynald. GUY stares at his fate. GUY starts for his sword. PIKES come down.

KING'S GUARD

Come with us, my lord.

GUY sneers, and, at pike-point, complies. He hands his sword to a guard and leads the way towards his imprisonment. Torchlight flares among the columns.

INT. THE KING'S CHAMBERS. CONTINUOUS

Up from the CHESSBOARD to the MASKED FACE. The beauty and calm of the mask in firelight. TIBERIAS looks down at the dying king.

THE KING

Coronate the boy as my successor in the morning. Bring me Balian d'Ibelin.

TIBERIAS

He is here.

BALIAN steps forward into the light. Uncertain.

INT. SIBYLLA'S ROOMS. CONTINUOUS

Silence, rustling. Incense burns. MUSLIM PHYSICIANS are gathered around the bed of the PRINCE. SIBYLLA is on her knees, as if she has been praying. Now she stares, blown out, as A PIN is pushed into the boy's FOOT. No reaction. The MUSLIM PHYSICIANS look at each other. ANOTHER PIN. SIBYLLA retreats behind her own mask, her court face. She remains on her knees, beyond agony. Quiet talk in Arabic from the doctors..

A MUSLIM PHYSICIAN comes towards her through the lamplight. He stares.

MUSLIM PHYSICIAN

It is your brother's disease.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA, half mad, turns her head into profile. Where another might have burst into tears, she, with responsibilities of state, her "court face" on, nods....but then does it again, again.

INT. THE DUNGEON. CONTINUOUS

THE MUSLIM PRAYER-CALL audible. REYNALD is chuckling at GUY.

REYNALD

~~All this~~ way from France, and gone so high, to fall so low. A traitor, a cuckold, a dead man. They'll coronate the boy and find your wife another husband.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(looking no better
than Reynald)

I swear to God, I'll kill you.

REYNALD

Don't bother. They won't let us live.

(shouts)

I AM REYNALD OF CHATILLON.

INT. THE KING'S APARTMENTS. CONTINUOUS

BALIAN sits by the king's bed.

THE KING

You charged the Muslims before
Kerak.

BALIAN nods.

THE KING (CONT'D)

You are a knight. But you are above
all is a peer of this kingdom. Do
you know what that means?

BALIAN shakes his head "no". TIBERIAS watches gravely.

THE KING (CONT'D)

I cannot die with there being a
chance of Guy de Lusignan taking
the throne through my sister. Would
you marry my sister were she free
of de Lusignan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

My lord, they say in the streets
that de Lusignan is not high-born
enough. What then of me? Your
sister...would not...

You couldn't say Balian isn't tempted.

THE KING

It has been proposed her. I have
her consent.

TIBERIAS has seen enough: he has business.

TIBERIAS

(to BALIAN)

Do it. And as for rank, you and de
Lusignan share a father. Do it.

He leaves the room.

BALIAN

A king may move a man, you said.
But the soul, you said, is the
man's.

THE KING

Yes.

BALIAN

I lost my place in the world as a
man might lose it in a book. What I
am next I pray you allow me to make
it in my conscience.

The KING (we can see it through the mouth-hole) smiles.

INT. TIBERIAS'S ROOMS AT THE PALACE. LATER

TIBERIAS and two BARONS, at the end of the day, sit by a
fire-overworked conspirators taking a break. BALIAN comes
in behind them.

TIBERIAS

(not looking around)

Has he proposed it you?

CLOSE ON BALIAN

BALIAN

Yes.

TIBERIAS stands, turns, and looks wordlessly at Balian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS

(coming closer)

It is the will of your king.

BALIAN

The king left it that it is my
decision.

INT. THE HOLY SEPULCHRE. DAY

The boy, kneeling, is crowned by HERACLIUS as the successor to the King as SIBYLLA looks on. There is a sense of foreboding, as if this ceremony is a funeral. A DRUM beats. The nobles kneel to both the coronated CHILD and TIBERIAS, who is holding the child's hand. SIBYLLA, her face a mask, stares out over the crowd. All dumbshow, as if by players.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

BALIAN has ridden out to think. He sits on a rise, Jerusalem and the whole Holy land laid out before him. The HOSPITALLER paces. ALMARIC sits apart.

HOSPITALLER

I shall play The Devil.

(gesturing)

There is the world. It is yours.

BALIAN, chin on fist, says nothing.

ALMARIC

I say do it. Don't trust me,
however, for I rise with you. I
would see your soul in hell if I
had a better dinner.

(a beat)

I lie.

HOSPITALLER

Do you love her?

BALIAN says nothing. The HOSPITALLER gives up and stares into the desert. A mirage.

HOSPITALLER (CONT'D)

This place is the furnace of
religion. One stares into the light
until one becomes the light. I have
done it. Why? Because, staring into
nothing, we think that "nothing"
cannot be true. That there is only
nothing is unacceptable.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOSPITALLER (CONT'D)

In the end one can only say that
God is in the right act.

ALMARIC

(impatient)

Watch, my lord.

A CREOSOTE BUSH stands nearby. ALMARIC throws a stone at
the stones at its base. Another. Another. The third stone
throws a spark, and the bush explodes into flame.

ALMARIC (CONT'D)

There's your Moses. I think.
There's religion.

BALIAN is in a frenzy of thought. He stares at the burning
bush.

HOSPITALLER

We cannot know what God wants. If
he wants anything at all. But I do
not think he minds a knight.

EXT. BALIAN'S HOUSE IN JERUSALEM. NIGHT

BALIAN is let in through the courtyard door. He sees (as
his servants step away), SIBYLLA. She is cloaked, and
stands by the fountain.

INT. BALIAN'S ROOM. NIGHT

SIBYLLA stares at Balian in the dark. She is always
unreadable. Never moreso than now.

SIBYLLA

Only Christ was obligated to be
Christian.

BALIAN stares at her. Nothing more beautiful could be
imagined than Sibylla in the lamplight.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Do you understand the offer. It is
to be, in essence, the king. I
can't rule alone. Take what I
offer.

BALIAN

Your son is to rule. Not you.

SIBYLLA can't respond to this. In tears she turns away.
Balian does not see the tears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN (CONT'D)

If I say yes I have Guy's blood on
my hands for no better reason than
ambition.

SIBYLLA

You leave me to Guy?

BALIAN

(confused)

Guy is in prison and shall never
get out alive.

SIBYLLA (the true SIBYLLA) smiles.

SIBYLLA

We shall see. I cannot rule alone.
You have had your chance.

BALIAN stands alone in the room.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Tomorrow we shall talk.

BALIAN

I return to Ibelin in the morning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JERUSALEM. DAY

A DUST STORM engulfs the city. BELLS are clanging.

INT. THE DUNGEON. CONTINUOUS

The door of Guy and Reynald's cell is opened. They both
stand up, expecting their deaths. Instead, they see:

SIBYLLA

SIBYLLA

The king is dead. Tiberias is in
Jaffa. Come now. I take Jerusalem
for my son.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

And me?

SIBYLLA

You live. If I have your knights
you have a wife.

INT. THE PALACE. LATER

KNIGHTS we recognize as Guy's men, "newcomers". Move through the palace. Moving fast. This is a coup d'etat.

EXT. THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. DAY

THE KING's casket is placed in its crypt.

EXT. THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. DAY

BALIAN and TIBERIAS and REYNALD. REYNALD'S WIFE is being handled into her cart.

REYNALD

It is past your day to kill me, Tiberias.

(TIBERIAS says nothing)

You were born to what you have. The rest of us have what we can get. And to get what we have we have come to the East. If you had nothing, when you were born, then you could talk to me.

TIBERIAS

If I am not the regent, I have my knights. If you break again the truce with the Saracen you will answer.

REYNALD

I've always known I will "answer", Tiberias. Whether to you or someone else...the hangman...or to God- is to be determined. I will see what I can do before then.

GUY and SIBYLLA emerge. SIBYLLA holding the BOY KING, guarded. The BOY is (significantly) given into the arms of TEMPLAR MASTER.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

They should leave him to be raised by wolves. He would have better chances.

TIBERIAS

(holding bridle)

Do not provoke the Saracens. I tell you, Reynald. Do not raid them. You will be the death of us all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNALD

What does a man do without war?
 What is there? I suppose I will
 discover it, for you have my word.
 I will make no war. I will live on
 cheese, and butter.

REYNALD rides bitterly off. His wife's CART creaks after.

HUMPHREY

My step-father will be the death of
 the world.

EXT. THE STREET OF BALIAN'S HOUSE. TWILIGHT

BALIAN, turning a corner, finds:

A DAGGER at his throat.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(drunk)

The right of the matter is all
 mine. But knights may not murder
 each other without formalities. It
 is written down. I have not read
 it, of course, but I have heard it
 is written down.

BALIAN, knife at throat, swallows.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

They would have tried marry her to
 a bucket or a Saracen, if it would
 keep their world intact. I don't
 mind that you fucked her, for are
 we not all French...

BALIAN disarms GUY, grabbing the dagger, and swings him
 against the wall. Dagger now at Guy's throat.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

I must be drunk.

BALIAN

Go to your wife.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

There will be a day, and soon, when
 you and even Tiberias will want to
 count me as a friend. I am not a
 bad man. I am only a man making my
 way. I am simply making my way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN is walking away. He throws the dagger down.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Or as all are, except you. The perfect knight. Do you think you are Galahad? Do you? Do you? There are no perfect knights.

(slips down, drunk,
against the wall)

Look at me.

(a beat, and
different
inflection)

Look at me.

EXT. A ROAD NEAR KERAK. DAY

REYNALD, armor covered with blood, stands and surveys: A SLAUGHTERED MUSLIM CARAVAN. Silks are being dragged from bundles. Purses are being cut from dead Saracens. REYNALD walks through the scene of slaughter. MUSLIM WOMEN are being stripped and raped. REYNALD walks as if stunned and ashamed, but still he has done what he has done. Saladin was right: REYNALD quite simply cannot help himself.

REYNALD

I am what I am. Someone has to be.

EXT. A PALACE BALCONY. TWILIGHT

SIBYLLA, the sleeping future king against her breast, stares across the city. She strokes the sick child's hair, singing a beautiful lullaby in French.

SIBYLLA

Learn to sleep.

(the child's eyes
close)

Learn to sleep.

She uncorks a phial. She pours it like medicine into the boy's ear. (We should know very well, by Sibylla's expression, that this is euthanasia for love, not murder for the throne). The BOY struggles as the poison begins to work. SIBYLLA holds him until he dies.

The PHIAL rolls on the stone floor.

EXT. JERUSALEM. TWILIGHT

HORNS are blowing, We hear wailing. BALIAN, with ALMARIC, stares towards the palace, as do other cloaked KNIGHTS.

INT. THE DEATHCHAMBER. CONTINUOUS

SIBYLLA sits frozen-faced, staring towards her dead son. The boy is biered, ghastly white, his own effigy. TIBERIAS, who has entered, covered with dust, looks at the boy, and then kneels to pray. GUY, from his own chair beside SIBYLLA, watches him. TIBERIAS, having prayed briefly, looks again at the dead boy and all that he signifies, and rises. As he does (and as SIBYLLA stares autistically) TWENTY KNIGHTS comes into the room. TIBERIAS, the death of a child in his face, looks around at: GUY's KNIGHTS. They stand armed around the room: TWENTY FRENCHMAN.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

We face matters of succession.

TIBERIAS

Yes.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

The succession is a matter for the Barons. The barons are assembled at Nablus. You must consult them there.

TIBERIAS

Who assembled the barons at Nablus, rather than here?

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

I do not know, but they are there. Perhaps the Queen ordered them there.

TIBERIAS

Did you?

SIBYLLA is capable of saying nothing. She stares ahead as the clamor of mourning (really, lament for the Kingdom, not the boy) grows louder in the streets.

If she is the queen it will be decided at Nablus.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

If it is not so decided it will be civil war. My wife is the queen.

TIBERIAS and GUY walk behind a pillar.

TIBERIAS

In this room, because of your knights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

In this room. In this palace. In this city. In this kingdom. It's done, Tiberias. Of course the Barons must consent. Go and make them. I did say they're at Nablus? If they decide otherwise, they may try to take the city. But of course then the Muslims would see us divided, at war, and come in. And so much for Christ's kingdom.

TIBERIAS says nothing.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

Of course you care little for Christ's kingdom. A man who would live with the Saracens rather than kill them. A man who when away from the court --and where do you go, Tiberias-- dresses as they do and speaks their gibberish. You are barely a Frank any more. What are you? Whatever you are you are no more the regent here. I have the town, I have the palace, I have its guard, and I have the Templars. The leper is dead and you have no knights.

TIBERIAS

I would talk to your wife alone.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

My wife is indisposed.

(TIBERIAS starts to go and GUY to knights)

Escort him.

TIBERIAS exits. TWO KNIGHTS follow him.

INT. A HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE DEATH-CHAMBER. CONTINUOUS

TIBERIAS sees HERACLIUS. HERACLIUS would have preferred not to be surprised by Tiberias; but he is emboldened by the KNIGHTS, by the success of the coup. Not a bright idea, because Tiberias strikes him across the face. KNIGHTS draw. TIBERIAS draws a dagger simultaneously and cuts off HERACLIUS' PURSE and throws it to the knights. Then he lays his dagger against HERACLIUS' throat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS

I tell you one thing: Do not crown
Guy of Lusignan.

When Heraclius says nothing (swerving up a look of
unexpected defiance), TIBERIAS shoves him to the floor.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

Do not crown Guy of Lusignan.

HERACLIUS is very frightened; but he is a man who has been
very afraid before, and still risen in the world

HERACLIUS

I will not.

TIBERIAS

Swear.

HERACLIUS

(as if trying to
charm)

I swear.

TIBERIAS, unconvinced, charges off.

INT. A STAIRCASE. CONTINUOUS

TIBERIAS, going down, meets REYNALD, coming up. TIBERIAS,
realizing another force against him, stares at him.

TIBERIAS

Why are you not with the Barons at
Nablus.

REYNALD

There's barons, and barons.

TIBERIAS

(simply, and then
moving on)

There will be war.

REYNALD looks after him.

REYNALD

The boy never looked like living!

TIBERIAS encounters the HOSPITALLER, who has come to pay
his respects.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOSPITALLER

The day the boy died Guy came with
seventy knights. He has the towers.
The walls. The palace.

TIBERIAS

Was there poison?

HOSPITALLER

(not wanting to say
it)

He was well when he went into his
mother's room, and dead when he
came out.

TIBERIAS moving on encounters: the TEMPLAR MASTER.

TIBERIAS

(to TEMPLAR MASTER)

I ask you, whatever good it does,
to swear to hold and defend
Jerusalem until the succession is
agreed.

The HOSPITALLER moves on outside.

TEMPLAR MASTER

The crown is yours to take now.
Take the throne now and I will
support you. We will leave this
house now and we will go to the
Sepulcher. Your right is plain. The
old line is dead with the boy: the
crown is yours.

TIBERIAS

You are complicit in this murder.

TEMPLAR MASTER

Perhaps I am. But make me virtuous:
be the king. Say the word and I
will get the bishop and the crown
and I will personally put the crown
of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ upon
your head.

TIBERIAS

The Barons will decide.

He goes, the Templar Master grinning after him.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE PALACE. MOMENTS LATER

BALIAN, standing with the mounted HOSPITALLER, watches as TIBERIAS emerges.

TIBERIAS

The king was poisoned.

BALIAN

By whom?

TIBERIAS grabs BALIAN roughly and kisses him on the cheek as he imparts this terrible information:

TIBERIAS

By his mother.

BALIAN nearly falls. TIBERIAS keeps him on his feet.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

By his mother.

BALIAN

No.

TIBERIAS

(as GUY'S MEN appear,
with crossbows, on
the parapets above)

By his mother.

THE CRYER

All knights of the orders are to
return to their houses.

The HOSPITALLER, with no choice, turns his horse away, with a nod at TIBERIAS. GUY appears on the parapet with his crossbowmen.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

I fear that the Barons may not
return from Nablus in time for the
funeral. Tell them that we know
their grief, and love.

TIBERIAS stares up at GUY. GUY (who looks for the moment at sea, complicated, and no stage villain,) turns away from the parapet. TIBERIAS mounts. BALIAN mounts as well.

EXT. AN ALLEY IN JERUSALEM (towards the DAVID GATE). LATER

TIBERIAS and BALIAN riding side by side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS

I need you as my eyes here. Are you capable?

(BALIAN nods)

Go to my house. If they crown Sibylla or her consort, or make attempt to do so, ride to me at Nablus.

BALIAN

The throne is yours if you will take it. Why do you not take it?

TIBERIAS is in hell.

TIBERIAS

Because I am a Muslim.

INT. A ROOM IN THE PALACE. LATER

GUY in mortal terror is washing his face. TEMPLAR MASTER is with him.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

I have your backing?

TEMPLAR MASTER

It is not even a question.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(paranoid at the apex
of his "success")

Yet you offered Tiberias the crown.
I have ears.

TEMPLAR MASTER

(simply)

Because he would not take it.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(a beat)

Will the Hospitallers accept me?
The people?

TEMPLAR MASTER

A king is a king that is. One would
go mad looking at how kings become
kings.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

The Saracens?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEMPLAR MASTER

Reynald attacked a caravan. As you know very well, having taken the profits. They will come. Are you sure you want to be King?

GUY swallows. He isn't sure at all.

TEMPLAR MASTER (CONT'D)

(walking out)

Never mind, de Lusignan. Christ is with us.

EXT. DAMASCUS. DAY

A GREAT PUBLIC SQUARE, filled with tens and tens of thousands of Muslim men. They are acclaiming SALADIN but using the words to praise God. SALADIN raises his palm and the ALLAH is louder. In a fury Saladin moves away from his balcony and into his palace.

INT. THE PALACE IN DAMASCUS. CONTINUOUS

IMAD is looking at his master with a kind of fear.

SALADIN

As they slaughtered the Saracens when they took Jerusalem so will they die.

SALADIN cuts his palm; and with a finger puts a streak of blood on his head.

EXT. THE CHAPEL AT BALIAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Candles flare. Balian is kneeling at the altar. The wails and cymbals of mourning continue. all over Jerusalem.

ALMARIC

My lord.

BALIAN turns.

ALMARIC (CONT'D)

A visitor.

BALIAN knows who it is and is having none of it--but--shattered, cannot help himself, and nods. A whisk of silk, and someone is kneeling beside him.

BALIAN

What have you done?

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN (CONT'D)

What have you done?

Silence. SIBYLLA is praying, beautiful head covered, down.
(We never see Sibylla: she is in darkness).

BALIAN (CONT'D)

What have you done?

SIBYLLA

When his foot was pinched, he could
not feel it. It was only a matter
of time.

BALIAN physically hurls her away from him and draws his
dagger.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

(seriously)

Do it.

BALIAN doesn't move. SIBYLLA grabs his dagger and pulls it
towards her throat. He has to fight to pull it back.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

You could not bear a little evil
and now the Kingdom will fall.

INT. THE TEMPLE. NIGHT

REYNALD hammers on the door. It is opened by a TEMPLAR,
armed, with a candle.

REYNALD

Get de Ridfort, and the keys to the
treasury.

INT. THE TREASURY. NIGHT. TORCHLIGHT

We see all the Templar wealth. Desks for clerks among great
boxes of treasure. Reynald looks around in avaricious
wonder.

REYNALD

Why do I bother raiding Saracens?
(to TEMPLAR CLERK)
Get the crowns.

INT. CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. MORNING

As monks chant. HERACLIUS takes the CROWN from the pillow
and places it on....

SIBYLLA's head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA, stony-faced as she has been since poisoning her child, removes the crown, and places it on the head of...

GUY DE LUSIGNAN.

GUY and SIBYLLA both kneel before the altar and are given holy communion. *

As REYNALD kneels, in the nave of the church, a dusty knight slips in beside him.

REYNALD'S KNIGHT *

The Saracens are come out of
Damascus.

REYNALD *

I have brought on the Apocalypse.
Not bad for the fifth son of a
fifth son. *

BALIAN, at the back of the church, is watching as GUY stands before the crowd--the King.

TEMPLAR MASTER notices BALIAN, and gestures to TEMPLARS. *

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOLY SEPULCHER. LATER

BALIAN, emerging, finds himself confronted by TEMPLARS. TWO of them. He walks on, past the ragged, fanatical knights. They follow him through the (rather thin) coronation crowd.

EXT. A ROOFED ALLEY. MOMENTS LATER

BALIAN, followed still, stops. The TEMPLARS stop close behind him.

BALIAN *

Are you my murderers?

The BELLS begin, all over Jerusalem, announcing the new king and queen.

FIRST TEMPLAR *

You must decide my lord what it is
to be.

(We SEE, perhaps, the bells ringing, and rung by Monks)

SECOND TEMPLAR

My lord the master of the temple
would have a word with you. Or
none.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

Templars are sworn prettily to Christ.

FIRST TEMPLAR

We are sworn to the Temple and the Temple knows the will of Christ. This arrest is the will of the Master and thus the will of Christ.

SECOND TEMPLAR

A word, my lord, or none again ever.

BALIAN, parting his cloak, fires a small crossbow directly into the FIRST TEMPLAR'S throat. As he falls, gagging, BALIAN draws in time to parry a blow. But without knowing how the fight will go, we go to:

EXT. THE CAMP AT NABLUS. DAY

TITLE:

"NABLUS, TWELVE MILES FROM JERUSALEM"

A camp. The BARONS and TIBERIAS, the HOSPITALLER and the tired, bitter, HUMPHREY.

ELDERLY BARON

Write that they are breaking their oath to the king.

TIBERIAS is in a quiet fury.

SECOND BARON

Write that they are endangering Jerusalem and we the council...

TIBERIAS

Write nothing.

HUMPHREY

(drunk)

In the name of God will you be the king.

TIBERIAS looks virtually out of his mind.

TIBERIAS

I am not suitable.

All eyes turn towards HUMPHREY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUMPHREY

I will not be king of a grave.

TIBERIAS

We are all finally the kings of graves.

(HUMPHREY stares at him)

You have a valid claim. Sibylla's is defaulted. We coronate you at once and challenge her in law and at Rome as well as on the field.

ELDERLY BARON

And by withholding of revenues. She is not entitled!

TIBERIAS is exasperated by this senile nitpicking. HUMPHREY leaves. As he does: BALIAN, wounded, arrives on a palfrey.

HUMPHREY

(poking at the blood on Balian's clothes)

The world has done that to you. Be a philosopher. Be a monk. Personally I shall climb into a bottle and stay there.

HUMPHREY spurs off. BALIAN rides on through the BARONS. They all approach him but none hold his bridle but, finally, TIBERIAS.

BALIAN

De Lusignan is king. Sibylla did it. With her own hands she crowned de Lusignan.

BARONS murmur. Shouting. TIBERIAS walks, his head in his hands. He has let this happen. BALIAN, unobserved by the arguing barons, turns his horse.

TIBERIAS

Ibelin!

BALIAN rides on. AMALRIC runs up, catches his stirrup.

ALMARIC

My lord...

BALIAN

I am no lord nor never was.

He spurs out of the camp, surprising men staring at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EXT. A HILL NEAR NABLUS. LATER

BALIAN turns his horse, looks back, and then rides on, alone in the desert.

INT. THE THRONE ROOM IN JERUSALEM. LATER

HUMPHREY stands looking at SIBYLLA. He goes down on his knees. Sibylla sits stroking the hair of her sister. Guy sprawls drinking in a throne.

SIBYLLA

(beyond her court
face: frozen in
psychosis)

You were not at my coronation yet
now you treat me as queen?

HUMPHREY

Lady, I could not do otherwise, for
at Nablus they would have made me
king by force. Yet they did not,
and now I am here. I am come also
to see my... wife.

HUMPHREY'S WIFE

For what purpose?

HUMPHREY

To pray that you shall come with me
to France. To quit Jerusalem and
all claims here.

HUMPHREY'S WIFE has no expression. GUY DE LUSIGNAN gets to his feet, and walks over.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Who can trust a man like you? The
Barons of the land offered you the
crown and all its treasure and you
refused it? That is a thing that a
man might reconsider, later. Even a
man like you.

TEMPLAR MASTER emerges from the gloom behind HUMPHREY.

HUMPHREY

Before God I loathe Jerusalem and
want no part of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

You loathe your wife and want no part of her nor she of you yet she is your wife, if the weather changes. I am not concerned that you want a right, but that you have it.

GUY, as TEMPLAR MASTER grabs HUMPHREY from behind, jams a dagger through HUMPHREY'S ARMOR. HUMPHREY falls to his knees.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

When you are given things, take them.

BLOOD streams on the flags. HUMPHREY'S WIFE continues with her crewel-work. GUY drops the dagger on the flags.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

(to TEMPLAR MASTER)

Send to Nablus. The Barons who will not come are at war with us. Tell them that.

INT. THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. DAY

BARONS recognizable from Nablus, including the ones who would not accept de Lusignan, are in attendance. TIBERIAS, defeated, stands among them. De Lusignan, wearing a crown, is on the altar of the church: nervous.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

There was never a king without controversy yet I in this church was crowned King of Jerusalem by right of my wife, the true heiress of both Baldwin the king that was and my wife's father King Amaury. I am Jerusalem. Do me fealty for the kingdom's good and continuity, I pray you. If I am unworthy I pray that I may be worthy with your help. The Saracens not only grow stronger, they are coming. Saladin has 180,000 men at Damascus. Elements of the army may have crossed the Jordan. Divided we cannot stand against them. I beseech you.

BARONS, one by one, go forward. It is Guy's triumph. He looks for Tiberias over their heads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS walks out into the burning light.

INT. THE THRONE ROOM IN JERUSALEM. NIGHT

GUY DE LUSIGNAN is drinking. Not looking very much like being King was his best idea. He is listening to a messenger.

DUSTY KNIGHT

The Sultan will not talk terms. He means to try the Kingdom in the greatest wager of battle yet seen in this land. The Sultan finds us divided. The Sultan says that we have a false king. The Sultan demands the surrender of Jerusalem. The Sultan has besieged Tiberias.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Is Tiberias himself there?

DUSTY KNIGHT

No. Tiberias is in Jaffa, and the siege is upon the town.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Assemble the army.

SIBYLLA

What army have we without Tiberias?

GUY doesn't want to think about it.

EXT. THE CAMP AT SEPHORIA. DAY

The CRUSADERS are encamped. AMALRIC and BALIAN'S KNIGHTS are with them. The BANNER OF THE HOLY CROSS flies near GUY'S red tent. DUST rising in the distance. GUY DE LUSIGNAN, alerted, emerging from his tent, stares into the distances. A RIDER flashes into the camp.

RIDER

Tiberias!

GUY walks forward towards the distant pillar of dust.

EXT. THE CAMP AT SEPHORIA. DAY

As TIBERIAS and his KNIGHTS ride in, grim, dust-covered the camp cannot contain its joy. GUY watches, HERACLIUS and TEMPLAR MASTER with him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALL
 (except Guy's men)
 Tiberias, Tiberias, Tiberias.

TIBERIAS rides in. *

INT. GUY'S RED TENT. DAY

GUY has arranged himself in a thronelike chair at the end of his council table. TIBERIAS enters, and stares at Guy in the half-light.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN
 We are pleased to have you with us.
 But we cannot fathom it. *

TIBERIAS
 (dropping his
 gauntlets on the
 table)
 It is war, and you are the king. *

GUY DE LUSIGNAN
 Meaning that you may not undertake
 the relief of Tiberias alone. *

TIBERIAS
 It is not my advice to relieve
 Tiberias. *

This is shocking, confusing, stuff. (Tiberias' wife is
 under siege at Tiberias.) *

GUY DE LUSIGNAN
 This army is assembled because your
 castle of Tiberias has been
 attacked. *

TIBERIAS
 Listen with care. All of you.
 Tiberias is my city and my wife is
 there. None of you is so desirous
 as I to come to the aid of
 Tiberias. But this army must not
 move away from water. If you march
 in the heat of this season, you
 will kill this army. If the
 Saracens take Tiberias, at whatever
 cost, they will be swollen with
 victory, and they will march on
 this army to challenge it in battle
 wheresoever it be. Let the Army be
 strongly within the walls of
 Jerusalem. *

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

We will destroy Saladin and secure
the kingdom in one battle.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

You would sacrifice your wife and
children?

TIBERIAS

I have come to give advice in war.
In war I have no wife and no
children. March on Tiberias in this
season and this army will be
destroyed and Jerusalem lost.

TEMPLAR MASTER

Do you recognize the King?

TIBERIAS

In war, and for Jerusalem, I do.

For now, for Guy, that's enough.

EXT. THE CAMP AT SEPHORIA. NIGHT

TIBERIAS comes out of the tent and sees: ALMARIC

TIBERIAS

Balian?

ALMARIC shakes his head.

ALMARIC

I think he has gone into the desert
to pray.

RAYMOND

One less knight will not defeat us.
One more will not save us.

The TEMPLARS are beating the earth for war.

TEMPLARS

God wills it! God wills it! God
wills it!

TIBERIAS, hearing this, hesitates, then walks on.

INT. GUY'S RED TENT. NIGHT

GUY, as the Templars howl for war, is lying on some
cushions, thinking, chewing a thumbnail. TEMPLAR MASTER
nearby.

TEMPLAR MASTER

Tiberias is a traitor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

His advice is sound. It is sound.

TEMPLAR MASTER

You know he has no love for you. A man not wishing to defend his own lands? There is a trick in it. It is the hair of the wolf.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

But what he says...

TEMPLAR MASTER

What he is afraid of is that if we reinforce Tiberias we may keep it. He did not do homage to you. He did not give you the kiss of peace.

GUY is still unconvinced.

TEMPLAR MASTER (CONT'D)

He couched it well, seeming to care more for the Kingdom than for his wife. But do not be deceived. He wishes you to seem weak. A coward. He has designs on the Kingdom.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

I do not think...

TEMPLAR MASTER

Do not be deceived.

GUY stares into lamplight.

EXT. THE CAMP AT SEPHORIA. NIGHT

TIBERIAS is sleeping on a rude bed, under the stars.

TIBERIAS' SERVANT comes with a torch. TIBERIAS sits up.

TIBERIAS' SERVANT

He will march on Tiberias at first light.

TIBERIAS sits, considering.

TIBERIAS

(with a suicide's
finality)

So be it.

EXT. A GREAT PASS IN THE DESERT. DAY

BALIAN, sitting on the ground beside his drinking horse, stares into mirage. What he is looking for is obscure: God, peace, forgetfulness. Prophets always go into the desert, to find out what to do. He begins to strip the Jerusalem cross off his surcoat, as if it is a parasite. Then he gives up, drops to his knees, and stares dully at the water. Finally he drinks some. A little. Enough to live, and not enough to be satisfied. He stares into the mirage, blinded by the sun, which elsewhere now is hammering down on...

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

THE ARMY OF JERUSALEM, marching in order, and is already in trouble. INFANTRY trudges and staggers. KNIGHTS in armor grown red-hot under the sun, faces burnt, peeling, reel in the saddle.. The "hedgehog" is shapeless, no fine square like the one the King brought to the relief of Kerak.

EXT. A MELON-FIELD OUTSIDE MARESCALLIA. CONTINUOUS

Skirmishers from the army (visible on the march in the stony valley below) are smashing open unripe melons and cramming the flesh into their mouths.

EXT. THE DESERT NEAR MARESCALLIA. DAY

A FRANKISH HORSE goes down. With no warning, it staggers, and pitches forward on its shoulder, and rolls on its rider. No one near can be bothered. Men trudge past.

GUY, tearing hopelessly at the throat of his mail is obviously thinking that he should have listened to Tiberias. He looks around at: TIBERIAS, riding stone-faced. GUY stares forward again.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

What king am I, who listens to the man who spoke last? What king am I.

The HOLY CROSS sways, jewels sparkling. GUY stares forward.

EXT. THE MELON FIELD OUTSIDE MARESCALLIA. CONTINUOUS

The SKIRMISHERS so recently eating melon lie pincushioned with Saracen arrows, silently killed. Arab skirts swish through the low vegetation.

ARAB ARCHERS and SPEARMEN run along the tops of hills, flanking the Frankish army. On a distant hill, a long stream of cavalry is seen riding over the ridge and down out of sight.

CONTINUED:

The infantry parts to let out the TEMPLARS (a drilled tactic) but as the knights charge...

(and the MUSLIM HORSEMEN retire)

Another TWO THOUSAND MUSLIM HORSEMEN attack the opposite side of the rear-guard.

GUY, on a wheeling horse, stares in all directions.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

BALIAN enters a great, ruined room. PIGEONS fly from the cracks in the masonry. TAFFIRS retreat, staring at him, mad.

BALIAN

This is my house.

TAFFIRS do not move fast enough.

EXT. THE HAMLET OF MARESCALLIA. DAY

FRANKISH CROSSBOWMEN return sky-blackening volleys of arrows. SARACEN HORSES, hit, veer wildly, throw their riders. The TEMPLARS of the rear guard gallop around to the other side of the "hedgehog" to protect their infantry, but as they do: FIVE THOUSAND FOOT-ARCHERS attack from the preliminary direction. If the sky was black before, it is nothing compared to what it is now. The FRANKS are slaughtered, and the survivors break ranks.

TIBERIAS

(as survivors stream
past, trying to
reform with the main
body)

They will harrass your rear, and
drive you on into their main army.

GUY, sword drawn, stares around.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

Keep order and keep moving! The
rear guard must hold.

KNIGHTS from the main body charge out to defend the infantry as it reforms. The KNIGHTS are stuck like porcupines in their quilted surcoats, retire into the mass of the army.

More Arab archers, mounted, and on horse, appear and fire.

(CONTINUED)

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

The WATERWHEEL is frozen, askew, in a dry pond. Both fort and village are deserted. Balian, alone, rides up the lonely road.

INTO IBELIN

Shutters banging. All around lie the dead. VILLAGERS mummified skin and white bone.

BALIAN rides through his former house, his only previous chance. TAFFIRS scuttle in the corners of the streets.

BALIAN dismounts at the well to find...a dry bucket, a dry well. Lips cracked, he stares around at the deserted town.

EXT. THE HAMLET OF MARESCALLIA. DAY

The FRANKISH ARMY is moving in order through the deserted village. A trickle of water among the rocks. KNIGHTS tear their horse's heads away from the water, but still some of the horses are going mad. GUY has stopped, with TIBERIAS, GERARD, HERACLIUS.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

We should stop here. Stop here.
Give battle here.

TIBERIAS

You cannot water an army here.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(beyond any control
on himself,
staggering in the
heat)

I grant you your experience in
these regions. If we returned to
Sephoria....

TIBERIAS

We cannot.

GUY wheels his horse and stares at GERARD. But he says nothing, because:

TWO THOUSAND MUSLIM HORSEMEN have attacked the rear of the army.

The "HEDGEHOG" tightens. Men are struck with arrows through the head, in the throat, in the eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The infantry parts to let out the TEMPLARS (a drilled tactic) but as the knights charge...

(and the MUSLIM HORSEMEN retire)

Another TWO THOUSAND MUSLIM HORSEMEN attack the opposite side of the rear-guard.

GUY, on a wheeling horse, stares in all directions.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

BALIAN enters a great, ruined room. PIGEONS fly from the cracks in the masonry. TAFFIRS retreat, staring at him, mad.

BALIAN

This is my house.

TAFFIRS do not move fast enough.

EXT. THE HAMLET OF MARESCALLIA. DAY

FRANKISH CROSSBOWMEN return sky-blackening volleys of arrows. SARACEN HORSES, hit, veer wildly, throw their riders. The TEMPLARS of the rear guard gallop around to the other side of the "hedgehog" to protect their infantry, but as they do: FIVE THOUSAND FOOT-ARCHERS attack from the preliminary direction. If the sky was black before, it is nothing compared to what it is now. The FRANKS are slaughtered, and the survivors break ranks.

TIBERIAS

(as survivors stream
past, trying to
reform with the main
body)

They will harrass your rear, and
drive you on into their main army.

GUY, sword drawn, stares around.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

Keep order and keep moving! The
rear guard must hold.

KNIGHTS from the main body charge out to defend the infantry as it reforms. The KNIGHTS are stuck like porcupines in their quilted surcoats, retire into the mass of the army.

More Arab archers, mounted, and on horse, appear and fire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The FRANKISH ARMY, no other way to describe it, begins to run. The INFANTRY seeks high ground on its own, thousands of men breaking away from the knights and streaming up the hill (the nearer of the "Horns" of Hattin, and it is now (more Arabs appearing) that the battle is joined.

INT. THE RUINED CASTLE. DAY

BALIAN sits in one of the ruined archways. He is hallucinating. He has nothing to eat. He sees, in his mind's eye:

The COCKEREL in the yard in France. His wife's bare feet in the dust. He sees: Godfrey in France, his brother with the sword through his chest, the knighting, the shipwreck, Mummad al Fais, the King alive at the chessboard, the King dead, Ernoul hanged.

It is too much for him. As if he has a pain in one eye.

He hears a scuffle. He looks around and sees: SIBYLLA. She is not real. She stands in an archway.

BALIAN

I am a blacksmith.

He starts laughing, and then laughing, begins to cry uncontrollably, dryly, crawling on the floor.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Be without fear in the face of your enemies. Be brave and upright that God may love thee...Protect the helpless. Do no wrong.

EXT. HATTIN. DAY

The ARMY is still in fighting retreat, uphill. HORSES go down and KNIGHTS crash to the ground. The KNIGHTS are, accidentally, in the position of fighting a rear-guard action for their fleeing infantry, and it is a melee on badly broken ground: BAGGAGE HORSES buck and break away, stuck with arrows. KNIGHTS are swarmed off their horses by ARAB PIKEMEN. A whirl of single combats. GUY DE LUSIGNAN, faced with something he can do, is splendid. Not a few MUSLIM HORSEMEN want to take on the king, and Guy does for them: one, two three.

TEMPLAR MASTER

(catching his bridle)

The high ground! We must go to the high ground.

GUY allows himself to be led away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUGE SHOT of the retreat up the hill, the MUSLIMS following, killing. And now in the not-too far distance , as we rise up with the fight, we see:

THE SEA OF TIBERIAS. Blue, cool, perfect.

EXT. BELOW THE CREST OF THE HILL. DAY

The battle is now a siege. FRANKISH INFANTRY is no longer retreating but holding its ground, and well, along a perimeter drawn across the middle of the stony hill. Archers fire, snatch up Muslim arrows (tearing them out of corpses), and fire them back. Arrows clatter everywhere-- and hit men, too. Hand to hand fights explode along the line: Saracens are axed down...throats are cut...dismounted KNIGHTS are fighting...but bit by bit the Franks are retiring further up the hill.

MUSLIMS light the brush on fire: torchmen ignite it all around the Frankish position.

The Christian army draws back from the heavy smoke, tightening its position on the hill.

INT. IBELIN. DAY

A TAFFIR reaches for the sleeping Balian. More TAFFIRS limp closer. Balian continues to sleep...or is dead...the Taffiirs are unsure. One raises a stone to smash in Balian's head. BALIAN whirls up and decapitates a TAFFIR.

EXT. HATTIN, FURTHER UP THE HILL. LATER

TIBERIAS and his KNIGHTS are mounted.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Break them, Tiberias. Break through to the water. We must make out stand with our back to the water.

TIBERIAS stares towards the MUSLIM LINES.

TIBERIAS

God wills it.

TIBERIAS'S KNIGHTS, a hundred of them, charge down the hill. But as they do:

EXT. SALADIN'S POSITION. CONTINUOUS

SALADIN gestures...

EXT. THE HILL. CONTINUOUS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And the MUSLIM ARMY parts, opening like a gate. TIBERIAS'S KNIGHTS pour through to safety.

TIBERIAS turns on his horse, and stares back through the smoke at GUY. Then he turns and rides on after his knights.

The MUSLIM LINES close, and more TORCHMEN ignite more brush. *

The HOSPITALLER throws his sword down and wanders away through the thickening smoke, stripping off his armor. *

ARABS light more brush on fire. GUY is screaming to rally. The SQUARE is holding--SPEARMEN, CROSSBOWMEN, LIGHT ARCHERS. GUY himself (with other knights) rushes at a breakthrough as the line collapses and cuts down through a Muslim's helmet. The line repairs itself despite a terrible sky-blackening hail of arrows, and GUY reels away exhausted and comes face to face with:

REYNALD *

Pitch the tents so we may make our stand among them. It's the end.

Smoke-blackened, GUY stares at him.

REYNALD (CONT'D) *

But be of cheer.
(wanders away)
It's never the end for kings.

EXT. HATTIN. MOMENTS LATER

The TENTS of the nobles are pitched and the stakes pounded in; and the reason for pitching the tents is obvious immediately: ARROWS by the hundreds catch in the fabric and are snatched out and fired back at the MUSLIMS (mainly spearmen, but a few venturesome grandees also), who advance screaming through the smoke. Running MUSLIMS are tripped by the guy-lines (another reason for "pitching the tents" and the Christians fight around and within their cover. A melee within the billowing silk as the Muslim horde closes. Fire-arrows tear through the tents and ignite them. Men are knocked down and gutted; throats cut. CHRISTIANS of all classes go down on their knees in surrender and are slaughtered or taken prisoner and robbed. REYNALD, surrounded, is splendid: no MUSLIM will come near him. Finally he throws down his sword, and holds out his arms: he is done. MUSLIMS swarm him and take him prisoner. GUY DE LUSIGNAN throws down his sword, and like Reynald had done holds his arms out. We see GUY, a bit like Christ, against the smoke on his little hill, as he is taken by a crowd of a hundred men. *

EXT. HATTIN. LATER

The aftermath of the battle. Dead horses and men, tangled with their enemies. Saracens of the lower classes brawl over purses, arms. (This was, and still is, the greatest Muslim victory of all time), and the Saracens know it: they have smashed not only the army of Jerusalem but the Crusades). The HOLY CROSS is surrounded, spat on, beaten with sticks, carried upside-down. The "noble", meaning rich, and ransomable, prisoners (screamed at by MULLAHS in Arabic) are sorted into groups: GUY'S KNIGHTS and BARONS and various knights in one, and the religious, TEMPLARS and HOSPITALLERS (including. Praying, our HOSPITALLER, who has survived, now wearing only a dirty and bloody shirt) in another. CHRISTIAN INFANTRY, all tied together with rope, are being led off barefoot and naked, down the road to the north. THE HOLY CROSS IS CARRIED UPSIDE-DOWN IN TRIUMPH, MULLAHS dancing around it. MUSLIMS are loading booty on camels, fighting over it.

MULLAH

(to blown
HOSPITALLER)

There is no god but God.

The MULLAH strikes down with a stick. The HOSPITALLER, cut across the face, bleeding, looks up like Jesus at his tormenter.

HOSPITALLER

(not without wit, at
his saintly end)

You're entirely right.

The MULLAH looks confused.

EXT. A HILL ABOVE HATTIN. CONTINUOUS

TIBERIAS watches, from horseback. He looks precisely what he is: a man revenged, but in hell. He turns his destrier, and as he rides away he tears the cross from his breast. He does not throw it down, but clutches it in his hand; and rides out of the shot, his shamed knights with him, glancing back.

EXT. HATTIN. MOMENTS LATER

SALADIN, stone-faced, walks over the battlefield. IMAD is with him.

SALADIN

Kill the knights of the religious
orders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMAD looks taken aback.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

They are fanatics and no peace will ever be made with them.

(seriously)

Kill the knights of the orders.

They are fanatics. They will think one thing their entire lives, and they will never stop thinking it.

IMAD

As good Muslims do?

SALADIN

(bitterly, staring
across the
battlefield)

Let our own fanatics do it.

IMAD watches as SALADIN walks on.

EXT. HATTIN. LATER

The TEMPLARS and HOSPITALLERS are being butchered one by one by MULLAHS. Ordinary knights, bootless, stare on in fear. Most of the holy knights make the sign of the cross and accept martyrdom. Some try to run, an unseemly scrambling as the Saracens scream. But it is an abbatoir, a frenzy of hacking and killing. Our HOSPITALLER is brought forward onto the bloody ground. He kneels and makes the sign of the cross. The MULLAH from the previous scene slashes down to hack his head off; and makes a bad job of it. The crowd essentially boos. The MULLAH keeps hacking and the blood splashes up on his clothes and face.

INT. SALADIN'S TENT. NIGHT

GUY, bloodstained and smoke blackened, kneels before SALADIN.

CLOSE DETAIL: SNOW is scooped into a cup, and water poured into it. SALADIN takes the cup and with his own hands gives it to

--GUY, who drinks, not greedily, suspecting what the hospitality means: his life. He hands the cup, thoughtlessly, sideways to REYNALD, who also knows what the cup means...and that neither the cup nor what it means was meant for him.

SALADIN

(quietly)

I did not give the cup to Reynald.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNALD
(undisturbed, drinks
the last drop)
I drink water for what it is.

SALADIN
What would you do with me, if I was
your prisoner?

REYNALD
I would kill you.

SALADIN stabs the smiling REYNALD in the throat. Blood
gushes out. REYNALD pitches forward on his face. SALADIN
kneels beside the dying and choking REYNALD.

SALADIN
(whispering to
REYNALD)
I vowed.

SALADIN touches his fingers in REYNALD's blood and puts a
mark in blood upon his own forehead.

SLY YOUNG BARON
My lord your reputation for
chivalry....

SALADIN
(ignoring this king)
Send the head to Damascus..

REYNALD is dragged out and (as the crowd screams)
butchered. GUY DE LUSIGNAN, on reflection, is more bitter
at the nature of his apparent end than afraid of it. He
looks up bravely at Saladin. SALADIN (to GUY'S relief)
hands his bloody scimitar to IMAD.

SALADIN (CONT'D)
(bending to GUY'S
ear)
A king does not kill a king.

This does not make Guy (who is about as much of a king as I
am) less nervous.

SALADIN (CONT'D)
And there are other considerations.
(a beat)
I have entirely destroyed your
army.

(GUY nods: Saladin
sits)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SALADIN (CONT'D)

You should not have marched away
from water at this season of the
year.

(GUY, wrily,
bitterly, nods)

I have no idea how came you to be
the King nor how this fact may
among infidels be contested, but
you are the king, and I ask you to
surrender the holy city.

GUY, staring at Saladin, finally nods.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

I do surrender it. I surrender
Jerusalem.

*
*
*

EXT. JERUSALEM. VARIOUS. TWILIGHT

The news of the disaster has reached the city. Wailing, as
if Herod's troops are going through the city. Some citizens
are escaping, dragging donkeys laden with their
possessions.

*

INT. THRONE ROOM. NIGHT

*

IMAD stands, staring at the Queen.

*

IMAD

My master gives these terms. All
Christians may leave this city for
Christian lands unharmed and with
their goods. He shall grant rights
of pilgrimage to Christians,
forever.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

SYBILLA has her court face on.

*

IMAD (CONT'D)

If these terms you do not accept he
will kill every Christian here and
offer no other terms. You know his
word.

*
*
*
*
*

HERACLIUS tries to give Sybilla the high sign: take it.

*

IMAD (CONT'D)

If you defend he will not stop
until every Christian- man, woman,
or child, is dead. I ask your
majesty to speak carefully. There
is no reconsideration.

*
*
*
*
*

SIBYLLA looks up, eyes luminous.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA

I will defend.

HERACLIUS stares.

IMAD

Consider your answer.

SIBYLLA

I have given my answer.

IMAD bows and leaves the room.

HERACLIUS

Lady, there are simpler ways to
commit suicide. Not as grand, but
simpler. Think what you do. We
cannot fight them. We have only the
Pope's troops. Saladin has a seige
army and two hundred thousand men!

SIBYLLA

I have done it.

HERACLIUS

To expiate for the boy.

SIBYLLA

To end pain. To end Jerusalem. To
end it all.

HERACLIUS stares at her in horror.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

BALIAN is asleep on a tower-top, covered with dust. As he
sleeps, a shadow falls across him. Water is splashed on his
face. He wakes and stares weakly up at:

TIBERIAS.

BALIAN gets to his feet and takes the water-skin. He
drinks. Tiberias' knights are in the courtyard below.

TIBERIAS

The army is destroyed, and Saladin
marches on Jerusalem. He will
slaughter every person alive in the
town.

BALIAN

We must go there...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS

I go to Cyprus. I have done with Jerusalem. And Jerusalem with me. Half my knights would stay with you. They have no further taste for me. They will tell you why. They are yours.

BALIAN nods. TIBERIAS turns...and then turns back.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

Protect the helpless.

INT. THE THRONE ROOM. DAY

Sibylla hears commotion, cheering, in the town. Horses. Then men outside her door. The door bangs open. GUARDS come in. Behind them, BALIAN.

BALIAN

The queen is arrested. Take her.

EXT. JERUSALEM. A SQUARE. DAY

CATTLE and FOOD are coming into the town. BALIAN, in a fury, is organizing defences. ARMS are being distributed. ALMARIC with him.

BALIAN

The pope's archers will hold the David Gate and wall... have you among you engineers.

PAPAL KNIGHT

None.

BALIAN

So be it. Arm your servants from the palace. Take all you need.

HERACLIUS

We must quit the city.

BALIAN

And be massacred on the open road? Saladin's cavalry is between us and the sea.

HERACLIUS

(dancing after
Balian)

We have no knights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

Have we not.

BALIAN turns to a PEASANT BOY, perhaps of 16.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

What is your name and condition

BOY

Amaury. I am a servant to the Patriarch.

HERACLIUS

You are a slave. That is my slave!

BALIAN

Kneel.

As HERACLIUS and other BOYS watch, the BOY kneels.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Be without fear in the face of your enemies. Be brave and upright, that God may love thee. Be a true knight. That is your oath.

(smacks the boy as
Godfrey smacked him)

And that's so you remember it.

The BOY can't believe it. BALIAN charges on. HERACLIUS staring after him.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

(roaring at the rest
of the CROWD)

Every man of arms or capable of bearing them, kneel.

The CROWD kneels, BOYS, SERGEANTS, MERCHANTS, OLD PEASANTS.

HERACLIUS

(nearly crying,
grabbing Balian,
who's going to
knight everybody)

Does making a man a knight make him fight better?

BALIAN is surprised by the question.

BALIAN

Yes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JERUSALEM. DAY

The SARACEN ARMY is surrounding the city. Tents are everywhere on the hills. ENGINES FIRE, and as the MUSLIM ARMY screams and Saracen drums beat, the SIEGE TOWER, ARCHERS firing from its platform, is pushed towards the wall. It has caught fire in two or three places. LADDERMEN run alongside the tower. SPRAYS OF STONE from Mangonels tear through the Saracens and rock the tower.

EXT. THE WALL OF JERUSALEM. CONTINUOUS

DEFENDERS wait. CROSSBOWMEN fire and FLAMING ARROWS are fired. BALIAN watches. The SIEGE TOWER comes within ten feet of the wall and as a great RAMP descends, hundreds of MUSLIMS charge forward into PIKEMEN. They are staved off.

BALIAN

Now!

From a TOWER to the side, two GRAPNELS are thrown. Were it not Balian the artificer managing things, this may or may not have been effective, but the instant the grapnels catch (and are hand-tightened), BALIAN waves his arm. The two lines run to a DERRICK which is holding up a stone the size of a small cottage. A line is cut (killing, as it snaps, the man who cut it), and the weight of the stone jerks the SIEGE TOWER to pieces. It literally explodes. Debris, burning beams, knock Muslim LADDERMEN off the walls. The wreckage collapses back on the infantry tightly packed behind the tower, killing scores.

SPEARMEN knock over the ladders that have been gotten up.

BALIAN, moving through smoke then waves and

GREEK FIRE is flung straight down into the infantry exposed by the tower's collapse. As hundreds of Saracens burn...

CROSSBOWMEN en masse come forward to crowd the walls and begin to slaughter the retiring Saracens.

EXT. ANOTHER WALL OF JERUSALEM. CONTINUOUS

As MUSLIMS in the thousands mass with ladders beneath another wall....GREAT WOODEN TRAYS running the length of the wall are levered up by a hundred men, and pour stones down, smashing thousands of tightly-massed men (the lumber follows, tumbling down). As a SECOND WAVE of Saracens presses forward over the smashed men, GREEK FIRE jets from pipes fixed to the walls, igniting men as well as the smashed wooden trays. Men on fire run everywhere, and fall burning.

EXT. A LESSER GATE OF JERUSALEM. CONTINUOUS

As MUSLIMS advance, tens, scores, fall into concealed killing pits of sharpened stakes, and even as they are surprised by them...begin to reconsider the assault, an archer fires a flaming arrow into.... A FIELD OF PITCH. An area of about an acre has been covered with pitch and straw and dirt. It goes up like an oil-rig fire, fierce enough to drive defenders back from the walls. This part of the Muslim army is entirely incinerated.

BALIAN on the wall watches as from the three attacked sides of the city....

MUSLIMS withdraw, defeated.

EXT. JERUSALEM. NIGHT

CATAPULTS are being worked non-stop by the Saracens, and the walls are being struck, hard. The walls are coming down.

EXT. JERUSALEM. DAY

Concentrated catapult fire is collapsing a wall. It suddenly shivers down, from the bottom, the stone pouring out into a great apron. And the MUSLIM ARMY is ready.

SALADIN rides along the front of his force.

SALADIN

Not one alive. Not one.

ARMY.

(advancing)

Allah!

EXT. INSIDE THE BROKEN WALL. LATER

A SHIELD WALL forms, BALIAN directing it. Defenders (all the knights there are, including the first BOY made Knight) go shield to shield. ARCHERS and CROSSBOWMEN take elevated positions behind. As the Muslim army of thousands advances at a run, ready to kill the Christians at a single rush, BALIAN looks to his left in the shield wall and sees:

FRANCOIS, the gravedigger from the first scene. He now wears armor, silks, and looks like he might have done some fighting in the past years. He has got to the Holy Land by himself and made himself a noble.

FRANCOIS

Master Blacksmith.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

Master Gravedigger.

The SARACEN ARCHERS, coming up closer, fire a sky-blackening volley of arrows and charge, screaming Allah. This is their chance: they will take Jerusalem at this rush and are not afraid of martyrdom. No arrows oppose them: merely the waiting knights in the broken wall. But they break on the line, hacked down, man after man, by the heavily armored knights. There is no need to scream keep the line: the line is kept, by the knights and the "made knights" with them. Dissolve in the fighting to:

EXT. THE BREACH IN THE WALL. DAWN

BALIAN, blood-covered and thirsty, wakes from a doze. KNIGHTS are leaning on their swords, or lying on the ground, coughing.

CRANE UP TO REVEAL:

The line of defense is marked by immense piles of dead. Saracens tangled with Franks inside the breach in the wall. Hundreds of dead: thousands perhaps. The defense of the breach has nearly killed Saladin's infantry.

BALIAN wanders, stumbling, among the bodies.

FRANCOIS lies dead, hacked across the face.

BALIAN

Remember me in France.

ON SOUND (as Balian looks at the butchery by daylight):

The MUSLIM ARMY is called to prayer.

From the walls of Jerusalem we see the whole army praying.

A SERGEANT

(covered with blood)

They will ask for terms. They will
ask for terms.

EXT. BEFORE SALADIN'S TENT. LATER

Saladin waits mildly as BALIAN comes through the crowd, escorted. As he comes through: the Arabs look at him with interest, many salaaming. BALIAN, awkwardly, returns the salaam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALADIN
(immediately hands
Balian a drink, with
his own hands)
We must discuss Jerusalem.

BALIAN
You offered no quarter and we ask
none. What has changed?

What has "changed" is that Saladin cannot take the city
without destroying his entire army. But he doesn't say
that.

SALADIN
Will you yield the city?

BALIAN
Before I lose it I will burn it to
the ground. Your holy places. Ours.
Every last thing in Jerusalem.

SALADIN
I wonder if it would not be better
if you did.
(looks reflectively
at the city)
You will destroy it?

GUY DE LUSIGNAN
He will not.

BALIAN
Every stone. And every Christian
knight you kill will take ten
Saracens with him. You will kill
your army here and never raise
another. I swear to God that to
take this city will be the end of
you.

BALIAN is too simple, and too tired, to attend to this.

SALADIN
I have never said that the
Christians cannot fight. One day
you will put Islam in a long
shadow. But the day is mine, now.
You cannot resist another assault.

(BALIAN, exhausted,
knows this)
Your city is full of women, and
children.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SALADIN (CONT'D)

There will be disease, soon, from
the dead. If my army will die, and
so will your city.

BALIAN

(swallows, knowing
that it is true)

Do you offer terms? For I ask none.

SALADIN

Thirty dinar for every Christian,
this to appease my army, and I will
give every Christian safe-conduct
to Christian lands. Every
Christian. The women, the children,
the old, and all your knights also.

MULLAHS object. BALIAN staring at SALADIN.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

You cannot fear leaving Jerusalem.
It is where prophets once where. It
is where I will once have been, and
you. I will grant Christians the
right of pilgrimage.

(MULLAHS object)

No one will be robbed or harmed, I
swear to God.

BALIAN

Godfrey of Bouillon butchered every
Muslim within the walls when he
took it.

SALADIN

I am not him. I am Saladin.

BALIAN

Then on these terms I surrender
Jerusalem to the King of Egypt.

EXT. INSIDE THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. LATER

MUSLIMS have taken control of the DAVID GATE and their flag
flies there. Inhabitants of the city cheer Balian, mobbing
him, falling to kiss his hand. By his defense he has saved
their lives. MUSLIMS, respectfully, pass through the crowd.

EXT. THE PALACE IN JERUSALEM. DAY

MUSLIM CLERKS are visible within a room, writing. BALIAN,
sitting on a parapet, looking out at the city. MUSLIM FLAGS
fly on every pinnacle. SALADIN sits beside him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALADIN

So.

BALIAN inhales; breathes. What remains for him in life is uncertain.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

I knew your father. He nearly killed me in the Lebanon. Truly. On a great horse he crashed through my guard, and scattered them. Not five paces from me an arrow struck through the throat of his horse. I saluted him: I knew his face, and his quality.

(a beat)

I admire the Franks. It is said in Spain, and I have heard this, that I have learned chivalry from them.

(BALIAN smiles)

But the trouble with Franks is that Christianity, and kindness, and even decency, if I may say so, is so infrequent among you that you must give these things an extraordinary name. "Chivalry". It is like religion. If it were true, it would be good.

BALIAN

What worth is Jerusalem?

SALADIN

None.

BALIAN nods.

SALADIN goes back into the palace.

EXT. THE PALACE ENTRANCE. DAY

In the square before the palace Christians with their goods loaded are forming caravans. BALIAN, moving among them, mounted, encounters:

GUY. The King is mounted, with two knights, and HERACLIUS on foot beside them.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

(closer to Balian)

It is never the husband they dream of, in the idleness of which their days are made. Never the husband.

(to knight)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

Though the idleness of which their days are made is the very thing the husband has paid for. Not in my case, of course. But what other seventh son can claim to be a king? I have not done badly, except that I have lost God's kingdom.

(to Balian,
seriously)

Go. I wish you no harm. What you have done...is incalculable.

BALIAN stares at him. GUY draws.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

I told you to go. Your king has thanked you, and told you to go.

BALIAN does not move.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

There are constrictions on combat. A leper may not challenge a healthy man. A bastard may not challenge a man of legitimate birth. These things are known.

(but GUY lets that
go, and says to the
crowd of Franks)

This hear youJustices, subjects, various Saracens...that I have this day neither eaten, drunk, nor have upon me either bone, stone, glass, nor or any enchantment, sorcery or witchcraft where-through the power of God might be strengthened or diminished, nor the devil's power increased, and that my appeal is true, so help me God and his saints.

(to BALIAN)

I've done this before.

GIRAUT

Do you swear the same, that you have availed yourself of no sorcery that may increase the power of God or of the devil?

(this is the medieval equivalent of pre-fight urinetesting)

BALIAN

I swear it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Giraut

Then to combat my lords. On the lists, or here.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Here.

There is no pretense of lances. GUY rides out and takes a battle-axe from a retainer, reaching down, slipping his gauntlet through the loop on the shaft. BALIAN unships a mace. They charge each other.

BALIAN gets his shield under a blow of the axe and the shield explodes in splinters and he loses his mace. GUY turns his destrier into Balian's, and Balian's horse is plowed down. BALIAN stands away from the fallen horse, eludes a blow of the axe, is knocked down by the horse. Guy circles him, never taking his eyes off Balian.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

To have done what you have done.

BALIAN watches him.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

You've lived.

GUY prepares to ride him down. Balian takes the "high guard"--hopelessly.

Knight (o.s.)

Dismount and fight him.

GUY looks around.

GUY'S OWN KNIGHT (GIRAUT)

Dismount and fight him.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

I will remember you, Giraut.

GIRAUT is not afraid of him.

GIRAUT

I'll be there when you do.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

You are my knight.

GIRAUT

Christ's, my lord, since you lost his Kingdom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GUY dismounts, fluidly. He draws his sword. BALIAN waits for him. GUY moves like lightning and cuts a gash in Balian's face.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN
(smiling at Balian's
seriousness)
Advice for you: only Germans stand
like that.

BALIAN waits. In a quick passage, Guy disarms Balian, who scrambles and picks up his sword again. There is no question: Guy is state of the art, and Balian comparatively utterly incompetent.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)
(walking towards
Balian, sword held
casually)
Yield and I will let you walk away.

BALIAN shakes his head.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)
Even I get tired, Ibelin. It's
beyond the end of everything....
we've both run our course....walk
away.

BALIAN stands waiting. GUY, his face blackening, moves to kill him. BALIAN, outclassed, has his mail slashed through--a blow that puts him on his knee. GUY raises his sword and runs at Balian for the kill. BALIAN gets his guard up, and stands under it. The Men collide, and GUY, spinning away, eludes a backswing, catches the blade, drives it down into the ground, and returns a blow that would have cut off Balian's head--except that Balian parries it, surprising GUY.

KNIGHTS and SARACEN KNIGHTS crowd close, shouting. They know their sport: and out of nowhere they are at the World Cup. GUY, wide eyed, really lays in--state of the art--and Balian, clumsily, meets every blow. The two men go at it for sixty seconds straight in an exhausting high speed flurry of attacks and defenses which includes blows in the face with gloved fists. GUY with a broken nose, breathing hard (presumably seeing stars), takes a low guard, and BALIAN, wounded twice, takes a high one.

A SARACEN KNIGHT makes a detailed bet with a FRANKISH ONE.

EXT. "DAVID STREET". CONTINUOUS

The fight moves (as Balian hacks down at Guy and Guy retires) into the streets of Jerusalem. (Down David Street towards the Latin money exchange). GUY is still surprised by the blood coming from his nose and is repelling Balian almost idly. BALIAN misses a blow and crashes into a wall. Guy's sword striking where Balian's head was a moment before sprays sparks. BALIAN lunges and GUY, letting him pass, crashes the pommel of his sword down on the back of his head. BALIAN sprawls on the cobbles. GUY goes after him, cuts, misses, is wounded in the side by a thrust. The blood comes in its sparkling way through the mail. GUY parries a second blow and stabs BALIAN (we cannot tell where or how badly) and attacks violently, relentlessly. BALIAN stumbles uphill. The fight comes to...

EXT. THE HILL OF "GOLGOTHA". (FALSE GOLGOTHA) DAY.

Blowing dust, The crowds stream up the hill towards the exhausted fighters, who face each other, bleeding, breathless, barely on their feet.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN

Water.

It is given him in a skin by one of his knights as well as a fresh, much larger, armor-cracking, sword.

SALADIN, on his horse, watches BALIAN, who is staggering in the dust.

Refreshed, GUY advances on Balian, who standing above at the top of the hill (against the reddening west) takes the "high guard".

GUY goes forward purposefully, to kill him.

BALIAN, staggering, waits. GUY cuts low, Balian, completely out of breath, barely parries. GUY, pale, advances to kill him. BALIAN, the sunset behind him, waits, at the high guard. BALIAN is cut, badly, in the next pass. BALIAN takes the "high guard" again. He sees a GLINT in the scuffed ground. His wife's CROSS has come unburied. He takes his eyes from it and waits, watching Guy (which is to say his death) advance.

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

(mocking)

"Be brave and upright that God may love thee. Be without fear in the face of your enemies." We've all heard the words. You're the fool who believed them.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY DE LUSIGNAN (CONT'D)

What you are to history, Master
blacksmith, is what I will say.

GUY, finishing laughing, goes for the kill. It's a move we've seen before. BALIAN parries as he once did with Odo but instead of losing his sword to the riposte (as he did long ago in the French wood) he meets it and smashes Guy's sword out of his hands, and cuts down. GUY is cut down from the shoulder to the bottom of the rib-cage. He falls to his knees and looks up at:

BALIAN, above him, raising the sword.

Guy's head flies off his shoulders and his headless trunk pitches forward. BALIAN staggers along the hilltop and falls. GUY'S KNIGHTS stand with their weapons drawn. They go to Balian, GIRAUT with water.

GIRAUT

Lie where you are.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE DAVID GATE. DAY

SIBYLLA is leaving by the main gate of Jerusalem. But she is not leaving as a queen. Her hair is cut off, there is ash on her face, she wears a simple shift and walks barefoot. She is guarded by SARACEN KNIGHTS.

SALADIN

You cannot walk all the way to
Acre. Not in your condition.

SIBYLLA does not reply. We notice something we haven't noticed before: that she is pregnant.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

(to guards)

Protect her.

A very orderly evacuation. CHRISTIANS are paying their dinars to SARACEN CLERKS, who are set up at a guarded table. HERACLIUS pays his ten dinars. As he begins to walk off CHURCH PLATE falls from beneath his robe. He expects to be killed.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

Let him go. You will go beyond the
sea?

HERACLIUS

Yes. As sworn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALADIN

(mildly)
You lie.

But he lets HERACLIUS go...and Heraclius goes, hastily, hurrying with the other refugees.

EXT. THE TEMPLE. DAY

SARACEN ENGINEERS on the top of the building throw down the cross that surmounts it.

It crashes to the stones in front of the Temple and is broken to pieces by Saracens. MUSLIMS are taking possession of the temple.

SALADIN is walking, being cheered. MUSLIMS on rooftops, in the streets, acclaiming Saladin.

A MAD MULLAH

The Saracens shall go on to Rome.

SALADIN

No. I won't live that long.

The MAD MULLAH stares after him: smelling heresy, and then deciding that he must be mistaken.

INT. INSIDE THE TEMPLE. DAY

Rose-water is being splashed on the flags of what has been a Christian church. It is being purified by MULLAHS. SALADIN stands in the doorway with IMAD and IBN JUBAYR.

IBN JUBAYR

God has favored us. All the glory is God's.

SALADIN, very subtly, looks skeptical. He's Saladin after all; but faith is sometimes an act of force. SALADIN, mildly, looks at IBN JUBAYR. He walks away from him. IBN JUBAYR would follow; but IMAD stops him.

SALADIN is washes. He washes alone, preparing to pray alone. We see, and very plainly, that he hesitates in his faith. Saladin, a man before his time, knows the flaw in Islam: the fatal flaw.

He enters the Temple, lays his mat, and, lowering his head, prays.

EXT. THE ROAD TO THE COAST. DAY

THE CHRISTIAN REFUGEES, escorted by Muslim horsemen, trudge through the desert. SIBYLLA walks barefoot on the stony road, now leaving small spots of blood.

Maid

Ride.

SIBYLLA doesn't consent, and walks on. The REFUGEES sing in French, walking through the Holy Land, heading towards the distant sea.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

A HILL. BALIAN, entirely alone, exhausted, completed, sits on the ground, staring in to the light. He is far from Jerusalem, alone in the desert. His horse crops the ground nearby. He raises his face to the sun. He tears the cross from his tunic, but cannot put it on the ground. He folds it into his sleeve.

CLOSE ON BALIAN'S FACE

SNOW falls past his face. He dismounts and we see that he is in France, in the beautiful glade where he buried his wife. PETALS fall from the magnolia tree. BALIAN is dressed as he was before, as a peasant. He has something wrapped in burlap: GODFREY'S SWORD.

BALIAN sticks the sword into the ground. Then he goes to his knees before it, and bows his head in prayer. He crosses himself (for the first time since he was on "GOLGOTHA"), and prays.

ON SOUND:

Horses. BALIAN remains praying. The horses come closer. BALIAN finally stands and looks.

CLOSE ON:

THE LION OF ENGLAND. Gold on a red tunic.

KNIGHT

We have come by this road to find
Balian Count of Ibelin and were
told that he was here.

RICHARD COUER DE LION sits his horse, staring at Balian..
The CRUSADER ARMY passes.

BALIAN

I am the blacksmith.

(CONTINUED)