

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

by

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Early Draft

FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

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 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.

GRAVEDIGGER (OS)

(singing)

I am Francois, to my dismay
(the SPADE digs into the
nearly frozen ground)
Conceived and born in the usual
way...
(throws earth)
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 apple he stares at: A SMALL BODY, wrapped in something like burlap. 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.

The PRIEST, eyeing the crucifix, is for a moment unable to eat his apple. Then he eats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The GRAVEDIGGERS are in rags, dirty, coughing. The GRAVEDIGGER is cleverer than his condition, watching for his opportunity in life long after he should have stopped looking. His right ear is mutilated.

GRAVEDIGGER

(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.

(digs, then:)

Father...

PRIEST

What.

GRAVEDIGGER

The Devil is a practical man. If this be a witch there was poor return on his investments.

PRIEST

What would you know of Logic?

GRAVEDIGGER

(the rising, and vindictive, 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.

The GRAVEDIGGER (a man who will come into his own, has vowed it), digs.

GRAVEDIGGER (OS)

When I was young and so the world/I was as pretty as a girl/I am now a man of gravitas/With a double chin and giant arse...

The PRIEST suddenly (as RAVENS erupt from trees beyond a frozen field) looks in the direction away from the sunrise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PRIEST

(at 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.

A PART OF MOUNTED KNIGHTS AND MEN-AT-ARMS 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. A SQUIRE rides before, in rich, dirty velvet (the livery of IBELIN.) The SQUIRE, who has a cold, and is none too happy at the French weather, comes up on a mudd palfrey, and looks at the gravediggers, the body. A suicide being buried at a crossroads? Normal. The PRIEST bows low.

SQUIRE

(flatly, no conceit)

Clear the road.

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 HOSPITALER, and ENGLISH SERGEANT (not a knight but mounted to fight as one despite inferior armor), a black 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 with a heavy obligation on his mind. He stares down at the body.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GRAVEDIGGER

(to the other gravedigger)

Crusaders.

(a beat)

I can smell the blood and spices.

(resentfully beginning to dig)

I can smell the opportunity.

The second GRAVEDIGGER does not agree about "opportunity". Where he is now is where he will die. He digs. 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). He looks then at: 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 owner's absence) stares out at the passing nights from behind a hedge. The HOSPITALER looks curiously at Godfrey, who is staring towards the forge.

HOSPITALER

You know this place, my lord?

GODFREY

I know all of it.

He spurs on. The TRAVELLERS continue towards...

THE LOCAL CASTLE.

EXT. THE CROSSROADS. CONTINUOUS

The PRIEST is staring after the knights with interest, fear, speculation. The workmen begin to throw the body into the finished grave.

PRIEST
You've forgotten.

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

GRAVEDIGGER
She was your brother's wife.

PRIEST
She was a suicide. Cut off her head.
(hurries away)
And return the axe!

The PRIEST hurries after the KNIGHTS. White ambitious face.

EXT. THE VILLAGE. LATER THAT MORNING

A cloister is being added to an existing town church. The local BISHOP, fat, shrewd, a politician, but fundamentally a decent man, anxiously watches the progress, the PRIEST with hm, both clerics holding up their skirts from the mud.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BISHOP

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

PRIEST

My brother, my lord Bishop, is
 possessed by the Devil, and must
 be...
 (with relish)
 examined.

BISHOP

Talk of the Devil much more and I
 shall begin to wonder how well you
 know him.
 (moving on)
 Your brother is as mad as I am. He
 grieves.
 (a beat)
 Without your brother I cannot
 finish the church. Let him out.
 (as the PRIEST, thwarted,
 submits to this, the
 BISHOP digs in his robes)
 Give him this
 (a chinking fat, PURSE)
 and tell him...that he is at the
 very center of my praters.

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
 kneeling at the edge of a kitchen garden, planting small
 saplings, a LOMBARDY POPLAR, smiling back at her observer...

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 inventor. He is watched by two sympathetic GUARDS.

The PRIEST, entering, 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
 (resentfully)
 The Bishop needs you.
 (as Balian says nothing)
 Release him.

He goes, a man off on his business. BALIAN remains sitting in the straw. He stares at the open DOOR as if not knowing what to do with such a thing as a door.

OLD GUARD
 (to Balian, kindly)
 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.

EXT. CROSSROADS. NIGHT. SNOWING

A whimpering DOG scratches at the forzen ground, already covered with snow. The burial crossroads. BALIAN, drunk, is looking at the stars. Then he falls to his knees, staring at the earth. He touches the ground. It is frozen and his wife is beneath it. As he sobers up,

SOUNDS OS: AND

THE PRIEST comes along, with BOYS and GRAVEDIGGER carrying bundles of fuel and torches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN continues to kneel. The burden-carriers walk on, crossing themselves, in semi-respectful silence (though one of the BOYS laughs, and is swatted by the GRAVEDIGGER). The PRIEST remains behind, and crouches by his brother.

PRIEST

You must take the corss. Crusade.

BALIAN, in an extremity of grief, has nothing to say to this.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

Her grave was here. Or was it there. I am afraid I cannot tell you the exact location. I wasn't present at the burial.

(BALIAN stares at the ground)

Call me a liar. You have reason.

(a beat)

You never fight back.

(slaps Balian's face aside)

You turn the other cheek. Do you think you are Jesus Christ?

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

I think that you conceive yourself without sin. That is a sin.

BALIAN gets up and walks away through the snow. The PRIEST stares after him.

INT. THE GREAT HALL OF THE CASTLE. NIGHT

MUSIC. The travellers from the Holy Land, employing their knives, are dining with GODFREY'S BROTHER (who stayed a poor provincial lord while his brother became a baron in the Holy Land). GODFREY is self-absorbed, thinking, eating reflectively. The HOSPITALER carries the conversation with the GODFREY'S BROTHER and the brother's mendacious, cynical, and worthless SON (Godfrey's nephew), who is drinking as if his guts are on fire.

GODFREY'S BROTHER

And what of Jerusalem?

HOSPITALER

(suavely)

In peril, my lord. As always.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GODFREY'S BROTHER

We have stood there against the Saracens for almost a hundred year.

HOSPITALER

The Saracens, as you call them, have now unified in Egypt, Syria and all Arabia.

(a beat)

The Saracens have someone...

(another suave beat)

new.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

(follows the Crusades like sports)

Saladin. Their king.

HOSPITALER

Yes. Salah Ad-din.

GODFREY'S BROTHER

(belches)

Gibberish.

The Hospitaller smiles mildly, holds up an ornate silver wine cup, and to change the subject:

HOSPITALER

Very fine.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

(picking a fight he couldn't win)

Do you mean, Hospitaller, that 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 HOSPITALER is suave.

HOSPITALER

I mean that it is very fine.

GODFREY'S BROTHER

And yet you do not drink. A knight should be a knight, a monk a monk, not both at once, that is what I say.

(The Hospitaller mildly ignores this.)

But I am old-fashioned.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GODFREY'S BROTHER (CONT'D)

As for the cup, I have an artificer. A blacksmith. Or did have...

GODFREY

(distracted, staring away)
Which son of the blacksmith of my time is the blacksmith now?

GODFREY'S BROTHER

The eldest. Balian.
(as GODFREY after a beat resumes eating)
His child died. His wife fell into a melancholy. She would not listen to reason. She killed herself.
(disinterested, worldly)
It occurs. But what's that to you?

GODFREY

A private matter.

GODFREY'S BROTHER is thick and incurious. Eats. GODFREY, drinking wine, moves to a window and parts the ragged hangings to look, with thoughtful sadness, down into the valley.

GODFREY'S BROTHER

(drunk, and disguising bitterness)

It is six and twenty years since my brother took the cross, and now he returns an actual Baron of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. How is that for the lot of a younger brother?

In his rude hall in his rude castle (as KNIGHTS drink to GODFREY), he laughs and toasts, and murmurs to his SON (Godfrey's nephew, who leans towards him):

GODFREY'S BROTHER (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

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

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

(a sadistic fop, a raper of goose-girls)

Then I thank my stars for my uncle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GODFREY'S POV

We see the lights of the village. 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 sits up in his wifeless bed in the darkened loft. Breaks ice in a stone bowl. Throws water into his face. Goes on into the main living area. A rope still hangs from a rafter. Balian cuts it down. A CRADLE, finely made, stands in the middle of the room. Balian puts it in the fire. A boy (Balian's APPRENTICE) stares at his master.

BALIAN

We shall go to work.

EXT/INT. BALIAN'S FORGE. LATER THAT MORNING

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

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

SQUIRE

YOU are the blacksmith?

(BALIAN nods)

Balian the eldest son of the Balian that was?

BALIAN nods.

SQUIRE (CONT'D)

(as he turns his horse)

Remain.

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 APPRENTICE. The two eat together silently. On SOUND we hear horses.

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
You are an armorer. An artificer.
According to your lord, and this
priest. Have you a woman here?

The PRIEST kicks at his small donkey, riding around the yard.

PRIEST
There is no wife. Yet the matter of
women does dangle about the place.

HOSPITALER
(dismounting)
You have my sympathy and blessing
and your wife's soul is today the
object of my prayers.

BALIAN bows his head. GODFREY watches through the snow.

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
We need the horses shod. All. And
by asking about a woman he means
that we need food and will pay.

EXT. THE FARMYARD. LATER

The TRAVELLERS are lolling in the thick sunlight, eating chicken beneath a tree. The hungry PRIEST has not been invited to eat but is still attempting to ingratiate himself.

PRIEST
He has made great engines for
sieges. He has made war machines to
cast the largest stones...he works
finely in silver...He would be one
of the few on your journey worth
more alive than dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ODO
(eating)
Shut up.

GODFREY is not listening. His wine cup shakes slightly in his hand.

GODFREY, of all things, is nervous He walks across the road into the orchard. In a FLASH of summer we see a dark-haired woman retreating from him, a complex look of fear and, just possibly, invitation.

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

GODFREY
Do you still advise what you
advised upon the road?

HOSPITALER
I do, my lord. But I take no credit
for your contrition. I am merely
your confessor.
(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 calms him, talking to him. BALIAN finishes the last shoe, steps back. ODO is there, eating an apple.

ODO
(to Balian)
Have you been at war?

BALIAN nods. He tries to go back to work.

ODO (CONT'D)
(coming close)
An archer, putting arrows in your
betters?

BALIAN
On horse. And as an engineer, also.

The entering GODFREY is now in earshot. He looks at Balian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ODO

Against whom and for whom did you fight?

BALIAN

For one Lord against another, on a point which cannot be remembered, and which is then or now had no significance.

The PRIEST, looking through a window, listens outraged at his brother's outspoken reply. ODO grins.

ODO

(close to Balian)

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

ODO menaces BALIAN with sword. BALIAN looks at the point, and then u at ODO. Laughter.

PRIEST

(piously opportunistic)

I have been telling him that.

ODO, still eating his apple, sees: a LATIN PHRASE CUT DEEP INTO A BLACKENED BEAM (or painted, like a frieze, onto the plaster). He points with the sword.

ODO

What does that say?

BALIAN

"What man is a man who does not make the world better."

The HOSPITALER smiles, walking: he is beginning to know this man.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

My father cut it there.

The HOSPITALER looks at Godfrey. GODFREY stands, to his duty.

GODFREY

Leave me with this man.

The room empties as if Godfrey's voice is a starter's gun. GODFREY takes up the good sword just put down by ODO.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GODFREY (CONT'D)
Some say Jerusalem is the very
center of the world for asking
forgiveness. For myself, I call it
here...Now.

("sighting" the blade)
You have lost your wife.

BALIAN nods, hollowly.

GODFREY (CONT'D)
God has made us men. We must suffer
all.

GODFREY looks up at the rafters. Wind. Pigeons under the
thatched eaves.

GODFREY (CONT'D)
I knew your...namesake.
(pressing on with it)
I knew your mother.

BALIAN looks up, knowing everything at once. A hammer in one
hand. He is the picture of Godfrey's murderer.

GODFREY (CONT'D)
To be courteous I should say that
it was against her
objections...that I was the lord's
brother and she had no choice...
(noticing that BALIAN is
holding the hammer)
But I did not force her.

GODFREY lays the sword aside. He will accept what comes.

Outside the windows, as the father and son stare at each
other, SNOW magically begins to fall hard. BALIAN puts the
HAMMER down (GODFREY swallows at this). BALIAN turns to the
forge, pumps the bellows, in chaos.

GODFREY (CONT'D)
(nervous, aware he is not
saying anything properly)
I am the Baron of Ibelin. I have a
hundred men at arms in Jerusalem. I
can use an armorer.
(pushing on, brusquely)
If you will come with me you will
have...a living. And you will have
my thanks. There it is.

GODFREY is not giving away the shop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BALIAN

Whoever you are, my lord, and
whatever you are saying, my place
is here.

GODFREY

(gently)
What made it your place is now
dead.

BALIAN shakes his head, with finality.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

You will never see me again. If you
want anything of me, take it now.

BALIAN

I want nothing.

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

GODFREY

Then I have seen you, and you have
seen me, and that is that. I am
sorry for your troubles. God
protect you.

GODFREY goes out from the forge.

EXT. THE TRACK BY THE FORGE. LATER

The party rides out. 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 turns his horse after his party.

INT. THE FORGE. NIGHT

A sword smokes, white-hot, in the coals of the forge. BALIAN
looks up and notices: THE PRIEST, lurking uninvited in the
door. He continues to work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIEST

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 you take my property.

PRIEST

The Church...

BALIAN

You.

PRIEST

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

(grabs Balian's wrist)

I swear that you will have no peace as long you stay. No man ever needed a new world more. Imagine your sin and pain erased. All.

BALIAN looks up slowly in the firelight. He sees around the priest's neck his wife's CRUCIFIX.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

And if you Crusade you may relieve your wife's condition in hell.

(BALIAN looks at his brother)

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, then bursts explosively into flame. As the clothes burn away Balian sees: His wife's crucifix. He grabs it out of the fire. He backs away. COALS have spilled from the forge and the building is catching fire. Balian turns and sees:

The APPRENTICE. The APPRENTICE turns and runs into the snow.

EXT. A ROAD SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE. DAY

GODFREY and his knights are riding. 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. GODFREY spurs forward.

GODFREY

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

(noticing with real concern Balian's distraught condition)

What do you want?

BALIAN

Is it true that in Jerusalem I may erase my sins, and those...of my wife. Is it true?

GODFREY

We'll find out together.

BALIAN

I've done murder.

Father and son look at each other. Godfrey nods.

GODFREY

Haven't we all.

(to the HOSPITALER)

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 HOSPITALER.

HOSPITALER

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

BALIAN, the drug in him, watches as: A falling star glitters and explodes. The men of the camp exclaim at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
 (bemused)
 Perhaps Jerusalem has fallen.

BALIAN stares across the fire at GODFREY, who returns his stare. BALIAN cannot keep his eyes open. He sleeps.

EXT. THE CAMP. MORNING

A SWORD is thrown into the leaf-mould. BALIAN looks up from his porridge at: GODFREY, who leans on another sword.

HOSPITALER
 His hand is hurt, my lord.

GODFREY
 I have fought two days with an
 arrow through a testicle.

Godfrey swings the flat of his sword at Balian, who, favoring his burnt hand parries, clumsily but like lightning and with great force. GODFREY grins: not bad. ODO is watching carefully. BALIAN takes up a "low" guard, in terrible pain. he knows what he's doing on a duffer's level.

He's strong, dangerous, a natural, and Godfrey knows it.

GODFREY (CONT'D)
 Never take a low guard. Watch.
 (He raises the sword above
 his head)
 Like this. This guard by the
 Italians is called la posta di
 falcone...one strikes from high.
 Like this. Do it.

BALIAN duplicates the posture. GODFREY from the high guard swings low and sweeping and BALIAN parries. The great sword hacks into the dirt.

But when Balian strikes at GODFREY...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 not match for a knight. ODO takes the sword from Godfrey.

ODO
 (touches Balian's eyes
 with two fingers)
 Pay attention.
 (to Godfrey)
 I have your leave?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GODFREY, sitting in the leaf-litter, eating dried apricots, nods gravely. We see ODO and BALIAN circling each other, fighting. Steel clangs. As they practice, others of the party are packing to leave. The SQUIRE oils Godfrey's chain mail. FIRUZ, fastidious, washes his knife and plate at the stream. FIRUZ senses something and looks up. GODFREY sets down his bag of apricots.

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. ODO and Balian stop fighting. GODFREY mounts and rides over to the newcomers.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

Uncle.

GODFREY nods.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW (CONT'D)

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

HOSPITALER

(leaning drily forward)

My German friends is a close student of the law.

BALIAN walks up, ready to surrender. Much to his surprise: GODFREY winks at him.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW

He is a murderer.

GODFREY

(slowly, and very dangerous)

So am I. Aren't we all?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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
certainly be among them.

GODFREY'S NEPHEW
(wily, looking at the
very veteran knight)
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 hear 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 HOSPITALER 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 HOSPITALER now is with him. HORSES go down: the to 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 malee. 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) and runs away.

BALIAN, drawing his sword, is being backed among the trees by two scrambling CROSSBOWMEN now using short swords. He kills one, and then gets lucky as the other falls. He hacks down. GODFREY'S NEPHEW emerges through the trees...and 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 white as he rides on a little way and then topples from the saddle. 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 is 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...CUTS THE KNIGHT'S THROAT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ENGLISH SERGEANT
(standing up)
Nothing better in the world than
killing a lord.

The HOSPITALER stares with horror at ODO, tries to move him, realizes that he is dead. GODFREY, looking at the sun through the black French trees, has blood bubbling on his lips. He is helped from the saddle by the ENGLISH SERGEANT and a CROSSBOWMAN. The HOSPITALER examines him. Both the Hospitaler and Godfrey, locking eyes, know that the wound is fatal.

HOSPITALER
The bolt is broken off and cannot
be cut out. If your ribs are broken
the marrow may enter the blood. You
will take a fever and die, or a
cyst will form and you will live.
You are in the hands of God.

GODFREY
Let me walk. Give me a cup of wine.

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

GODFREY (CONT'D)
It was not that they had not right
to take you. It was the way they
asked.

Blood comes from Godfrey's moth. He wipes it away.

BALIAN
They had right to take me.

GODFREY
(clutching Balian for
support)
So do I.

EXT. A GREAT CROSSROADS/PILGRIM CAMP. DAY

Where two roads converge in a field, not far from the sea, we have a great campsite. As our party comes to a juncture of the road we begin to hear a war-song, sung in French). GODFREY is pale, feverish, in agony, barely in the saddle. At a distance an ANGELIC PRIEST preaches from the back of a wagon: truly and innocently believing what he says.

ANGELIC PRIEST (OS)
To kill an infidel, the Pope has
said, is not murder. It is the path
to heaven.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GODFREY'S PARTY rides through. MUSIC. Each PILGRIM wears, in some fashion, the cross. BALIAN has never seen such a carnival. The HOSPITALER speaks to an OLD MAN at the head of a party of Pilgrims.

HOSPITALER
Where do you go?

OLD PILGRIM
To Jerusalem, brother.

HOSPITALER
By which road?

OLD PILGRIM
Someone knows. God knows.

HOSPITALER
(to GODFREY)
We shall never stop this madness.

GODFREY
It will soon be beyond my concern.

EXT. THE PILGRIM CAMP. LATER

Snow and fire. GODFREY lies on a bed made on the ground. The HOSPITALER tends him, washing the wound. BALIAN sits at a distance, watching. GUY DE LUSIGNAN, a splendid knight in the red cross we will associate with extremists in Jerusalem, walks up to Godfrey's fire with a party of knight-recruits.

GUY
(faux solicitous)
No news of reinforcements? If I am
in Jerusalem first, as seems--
(smiles)
Very likely...I will give the news.

GUY looks at Balian.

GUY (CONT'D)
Who is this?

GODFREY
(for the first time)
My son.

GUY, thinking that Godfrey's pending death has removed one of his enemies, finds the place unoccupied.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY

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. Fortunately, you could
not be one of mine.

GUY looks as if he might move on Godfrey: but looks up as
sees the Hospitaler, the English sergeant.

GUY

(to Godfrey)

All will be settled.

He goes off with knights.

EXT. MESSINA. DAY

BELLS ringing in a crumbled belfry. Beyond them: A Medieval
port city, a Crusader launching point. Caravels at anchor.
The Mediterranean winter: whipping wind, a cold blue sea.
GODFREY, now near death, rides in a jolting cart, BALIAN
rides with him.

EXT. THE COURTYARD OF THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN. DAY

The HOSPITALER meets other HOSPITALERS in clerical habit, and
gestures to GODFREY. These men come forward. BALIAN watches
as his father is carried into the building.

INT. THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN. DAY

The HOSPITALER is praying above the sleeping GODFREY. BALIAN
joins him.

HOSPITALER

Do not be deceived by his chances.
He is in the hands of God.

EXT. BALCONY AT THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN. DAY

GODFREY, lying on a couch where he has been set out for air,
looks at the harbor.

GODFREY

Balian.

Balian joins him. Together the two men look at the harbor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GODFREY (CONT'D)

Do you know what lies in the Holy Land? Not what the Church says, but what does lie there?

BALIAN shakes his head slowly "no".

GODFREY (CONT'D)

A new world.

(a beat)

A man who in France had not a house is in the Holy Land the master of a city. He who was the master of a city begs in the gutter. There are the end of the world you are not what you were born, but what you have it in yourself to be.

BALIAN

I hope to find forgiveness there. That is all I know.

GODFREY is wracked by pain. He needs to cough, but is in too much pain. He stares at Balian, and then with great intensity:

GODFREY

Whatever your position, and that I will decide, you are of my house, and that means you will serve the King of Jerusalem.

BALIAN

What might a king ask of a man like me?

GODFREY

This king? A better world than has ever been seen. A kingdom of conscience. A kingdom of heaven.

(a beat)

Peace instead of war...love instead of hate. Did oyu think that lay at the end of "crusade"?

BALIAN shakes his head "no".

GODFREY (CONT'D)

(softly)

It does.

(a beat)

There is peace between Christian and Muslims. We live together.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GODFREY (CONT'D)

Or between Saladin and the King we try.

(turns)

Men still go down to the Holy Land for war, however, and war they will have, for all the good kings and fine intentions in the world.

(a beat)

You will serve the peace, and the King. Swear.

BALIAN

I swear.

GODFREY points at a BOWL OF ORANGES.

GODFREY

(points at oranges)

Good. Get me one of those.

BALIAN does. Godfrey peels the orange. BALIAN allows Godfrey to put the section of fruit (like the host) into his mouth. Quite obviously he has never expected that anything on the earth could taste like this.

GODFREY (CONT'D)

That is the East.

(looks at his son)

You are all that survives me. Do not disappoint me.

EXT. THE PORT OF MESSINA. DAY

BALIAN sitting by the wall with the ENGLISH SERGEANT, is fascinated by the sea-trade. (And there's a lot of it: oranges, spices, silks, being unloaded). CRUSADERS are streaming onto ships.

ENGLISH SERGEANT

Venetians. Genoans. All the trade of the world. When we took the Holy Land we took the Saracen trading ports. So Italian ships carry silks and spices, and pilgrims if they have money, and Italy becomes rich.

(eats sausage off his knife)

As the Savior intended.

As the sound dies Balian becomes aware of a strange sound: Muslims praying. BALIAN looks around and sees: MUSLIM SHIPYARD workers, praying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN
 (astonished, walking
 forward)
 What are those men?

ENGLISH SERGEANT
 (eating)
 Muslims. Saracens.

BALIAN
 They are allowed their prayers?

ENGLISH SERGEANT
 (shrugs)
 If they pay a tax.
 (translates the prayer)
 "Praise be to Go, it is proper to
 praise him."

BALIAN
 It sounds like...our prayers.

The ENGLISH SERGEANT drolly nods: now you're getting it. Destriers ride through the praying Muslims, scattering them. GUY comes up on horseback, 20 drunk men with him. He examines Balian insolently. Horse whirls, snapping.

GUY
 When the King is dead, Jerusalem
 will be no place for friends to the
 Muslims and traitors to Christendom
 like your father.

SHOW GUYS'S MEN. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ACTION.

GUY (CONT'D)
 I am Guy de Lusignan.
 (spits on BALIAN'S tunic:
 Godfrey's livery)
 Remember that name. And me.

He goes to cut Balian across the face with his stick. BALIAN grabs the stick.

GUY (CONT'D)
 Keep it.

BALIAN
 How will you ride, my lord, if you
 cannot beat the horse?

GUY would like to kill Balian on the spot. But his men have ridden on and the English Sergeant is no joke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GUY
I will see you in Jerusalem.

GUY rides his horse past the port, his men clattering after him.

The ENGLISH SERGEANT remains. Peering after Guy, then at Balian.

Balian, white-knuckled, throws the stick aside.

ENGLISH SERGEANT
(goes back to eating)
He will be king in Jerusalem one day.

BALIAN wipes at his defiled tunic, Godfrey's livery, staring after Guy.

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

A fire at the end of the long room. GODFREY, on a couch, is dying. A table of candles. A HOSPITALER is writing to GODFREY'S whispered dictation, which we cannot hear. Our HOSPITALER comes forward from the deathbed.

HOSPITALER
(grim, to ENGLISH SERGEANT)
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 HOSPITALERS 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)
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 HOSPITALER. GODFREY is on his feet, supported by two HOSPITALERS.

HOSPITALER

Get on your knees.

BALIAN complies. 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.

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 if it leads 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. (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 looks up in wonder.

HOSPITALER

Rise a knight, and Baron of Ibelin.

GODFREY is whispering. BALIAN kneels. GODFREY grips Balian's hand. Godfrey is whispering to Balian.

GODFREY

Defend the king. If the king is no more, protect the people.

Hands him his (very distinctive) sword.

HOSPITALER

(softly)

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Are you sorry for all your sins?

GODFREY
For all but one.

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

EXT. THE PORT. LATER

Brutal wind. The HOSPITALER walking towards the docks, with Balian.

HOSPITALER
I leave now with my order. You will go tomorrow by the Genoan ships. If it is God's will that I die at sea, go to Godfrey's house. You will be expected. You will be known.

BALIAN nods. The HOSPITALER embraces him.

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
Each day do right. And no wrong.
(a beat)
God bless you.

THE HOSPITALER walks aboard the galley. BALIAN watches. The ENGLISH SERGEANT joins him.

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

As the sound of the WIND rises on sound:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE COAST OF THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM. MORNING

OPEN ON a beach with wreckage tumbling in the tide race. THE ENGLISH SERGEANT lies drowned, eyes glazed, his mouth full of sand. The wreckage of a shattered galley lies broken on the sand. Birds are screaming overhead, and pecking at the bodies of the drowned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are knights, priests, great ladies and their servants...and (a RAVEN pecking at his head) Balian, who wakes, coughing. GODFREY'S SWORD is strapped to his back. The RAVEN hops away, cawing.

BALIAN wears a simple tunic, hose. He has lost his boots, mail. 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. Staring out to sea he sees:

A HORSE tangled in line, maddened with fear. Balian wades out, then swims to the horse. He pulls his knife and cuts it free, takes the halter, and leads it out of the water. Holding, calming, the horse, he hobbles it deftly with a piece of line. BALIAN is exhausted, thirsty. He rummages among the wreckage and corpses. (The horse is fighting its hobble throughout). He crouches near a DEAD LADY. He closes her eyes, or tries to, and then snaps loose her purse. He finds a knife on a corpse and sticks it through loops on the back of his belt. He finds a lead box containing sodden bread. He stuffs it into his mouth, then spits it out: it's impregnated with salt water. He cuts a strap on a case and pulls out... useless women's clothes, a breviary, rosary beads...In the wavewash he finds...a CORKED BOTTLE. As he does, the horse, skittish throughout, snaps its hobble and gallops off down the beach.

BALIAN chases after it a little way, then gives up. The horse disappears. Balian swigs wine: it's not going to do. He needs water. He looks inland.

BALIAN'S POV:

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

BALIAN walks into the interior.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

BALIAN is walking, sunburnt, desperate to find water. He takes a drink of wine. He comes to the top of a hill and sees:

BALIAN'S POV:

A WADI.

He stumbles, runs, towards the water, and throws himself down on the bank, using a cupped hand to shovel water into his mouth. He lies with his cheek in the mud, looking up at the palms rustling overhead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As he lies there he hears, off, a snort, and a slow clopping. He lies without moving. The horse he lost on the beach skittishly drinks at the pool, eyeing Balian warily. BALIAN moves slightly. The horse edges away.

Warily Balian tries to move again. The horse watches his every move. Finally, though, the horse comes back to drink, and makes his mistake. In two seconds BALIAN has gotten his fingers into the mane and is on the horse's back. The horse tries to throw him. BALIAN hangs on like a madman, whips off his belt, puts it through the halter...and finally, he is riding! He turns the horse and sees: TWO MOUNTED ARABS, staring at him. One (IMAD) is a finely dressed, handsome young man who looks like a scholar. The other is a fantastical Saracen knight with a lance. His helmet drips with chain mail. He wears silk.

SARACEN KNIGHT

(in arabic)

That is my horse.

IMAD

He says, That is his horse.

BALIAN

Why would it be his horse?

IMAD

Because it is on his land.

BALIAN

I took this horse from the sea.

IMAD translates. The Saracen knights says something back.

IMAD

He says you are a great liar, and that though he will not fight you for the horse, because it is his horse, he will fight you because you are a liar. Further, he will fight you because that is simply what he does.

BALIAN

I have no desire to fight.

IMAD

Then you must give him the horse and become his slave. He is old-fashioned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN

No.

The SARACEN KNIGHT immediately charges. BALIAN is thrown from his rearing horse. The SARACEN KNIGHT drives again with his lance, misses. The lance strikes into the ground and snaps. he now takes out his bow, and feels for an arrow. BALIAN runs wildly towards him. The SARACEN KNIGHT keeps his distance, trying to nock an arrow. BALIAN slips in the sand.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Fight me fairly.

IMAD

Why should he?

BALIAN

(just remembering it)

I am the Baron of Ibelin.

IMAD

(translating)

He says that the Baron of Ibelin is old. He knew him at Damascus.

BALIAN

I am the new one.

This is translated. SARACEN KNIGHT considers. He dismounts, and draws his sword. BALIAN takes "the high guard" as shown him by Godfrey. In the fight, Godfrey's good sword snaps the heavy scimitar. The SARACEN KNIGHT scrambles for the business end of his broken 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, BALIAN approaches IMAD. IMAD, sitting up, holds out his arms in a gesture of surrender. 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.

IMAD

(philosophically)

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

IMAD is scholarly, awfully well-dressed for a servant, but Balian has no way to measure this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BALIAN

Take me to Jerusalem.

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

Why?

IMAD

(lying poorly)
I owe money.

BALIAN couldn't care less. BALIAN and the cloaked IMAD enter, past TOWN GUARDS. We follow through into:

EXT. JERUSALEM. CONTINUOUS

A BOOMING MARKETPLACE. Jerusalem is the crossroads of the world, open to all. Arabs, Jews, Syrians, Byzantine Christians, Europeans, Pilgrims walking barefoot with ash on their heads, vast numbers of the mad, naked saints covered with filth. Many, many children. It's almost a city of children. BALIAN and IMAD walk on, leading their horses. The master of a Muslim caravan recognizes Imad: begins, shocked, to speak, to bow; Imad raises a palm and quiets him.

BALIAN

(not having noticed this)
Where did Christ die?

IMAD

(points OS)
That is where the Prophet came down from the sky. I am no expert in the other matter.

BALIAN

(almost frantic)
I must know where Christ died.

IMAD

(bemused)
I thought he did not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN
 (to a DISREPUTABLE
 PASSERBY)
 Where was Christ crucified?

The DISREPUTABLE PASSERBY holds out his hand. BALIAN pays him a coin. The man points solemnly at A HILL. BALIAN starts off up the hill. IMAD, holding the horses, watches him go, bemusedly.

EXT. GOLGOTHA/CALVARY (SUPPOSEDLY). TWILIGHT

Balian climbs "Golgotha" with a desperation, as if he will find every answer, at the top. A ROBBER (turbaned, ghoulish, but originally French) holds up: a nail.

ROBBER
 It is one of the nails that pierced
 Our Lord.

BALIAN starts to move past. The ROBBER in a flash holds a dagger on BALIAN. BALIAN shoves the man aside (the ROBBER stumbles and falls, losing his knife). BALIAN curs off his own purse, throws it at the robber and strides on.

ROBBER (CONT'D)
 That is good. That is Godly.

The ROBBER and his FRIENDS scramble and fight for the purse. BALIAN comes to the apex of the hill and, taking the cross from beneath his shirt, falls to his knees. He looks uncertain. He lays down the sword, and closing his eyes, clutching the CROSS, prays. He waits for an answer. It isn't working. We leave him as dust blows around him in the twilight.

LATER

STARS have come out. BALIAN still is on his knees but his arms are at his side. A picture of sadness, confusion, defeat.

EXT. GOLGOTHA/CALVARY. DAWN

At cock crow, BALIAN wakes up looks into the rising light. He needs water. He remembers where he is. He looks out over Jerusalem. He wipes dirt and tears off his face. A man putting himself back together. In one hand he holds the CROSS and in the other the SWORD. He looks around to see if anyone is observing him, and then quickly scratches a hole and buries the cross, after kissing it. He pats the earth around it. Scatters stones.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN
 (as if to his wife's
 actual grave)
 How could you be in hell if you are
 in my heart?

He puts himself together.

BALIAN (CONT'D)
 Goodbye.

Heads down the hill.

EXT. A STREET IN JERUSALEM. MOMENTS LATER

IMAD is asleep, the reins of the horses wrapped around his
 arm. BALIAN crouches, and wakes Imad.

IMAD
 Did you find what you wanted?

BALIAN
 Take the better horse and be about
 your business.

IMAD
 It is your prize of war. I was the
 servant of the man you killed. I am
 your prisoner. Your slave, should
 you wish.

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.

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

BALIAN
 (seriously)
 I will pray for him.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMAD raising a palm rides out. BALIAN looks around at the Holy City.

Nearby: a BAKER'S STALL. Balian is hungry, but feeling at his belt, realizes that he gave his purse away. He moves on through the city.

EXT. A SQUARE IN JERUSALEM. MORNING

TWO MEN in the same livery Balian wears, lean against a wall outside a wine-shop, checking out the town, and then...something else.

THEIR POV:

BALIAN, wearing tattered Ibelin livery, Godfrey's unmistakable sword strapped to his back, moves through the crowded square.

MOMENTS LATER

BALIAN pays a penny to drink at a dirty, crowded, PILGRIM'S FOUNTAIN, from an iron cup on a chain.

One of GODFREY'S MEN speaks to the other, who departs.

EXT. THE SQUARE IN JERUSALEM. LATER

BALIAN is sitting on the ground, eating dates hungrily from a wrap of cloth. A shadow falls across him. He looks up to see:

SIX OF GODFREY'S MEN. Sergeant. All in livery.

BALIAN draws his sword. ALAMARIC comes forward. Godfrey's number one, top-sergeant of forty-odd, a man with some education.

ALMARIC

Since you wear Godfrey's livery,
you must know him.

BALIAN

Yes.

ALMARIC

A man my size.

BALIAN

No. Taller.

ALMARIC

Indeed. And with green eyes,
notoriously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN
(thinking, remembering)
Blue.

GODFREY'S MEN go onto their knees, and in turn take Balian's hand, kissing it. Almaric takes the sword.

ALMARIC
Come with us. My lord.

EXT./INT. GODFREY'S HOUSE IN JERUSALEM

ESTABLISH GODFREY'S GRATED DOOR. Almaric's first pounds on it. BALIAN moves like a sleepwalker into the COURTYARD. One could no imagine anything greener or more beautiful Falling water. Fruit trees. Birds. We see (as he sees) that Godfrey's house (to one side of the courtyard) is a bit like a firehouse: stables below (with a separate walled yard). The sergeants (now staring out of windows) sleep above. WOMEN OF THE HOUSE come forward, veiled, and gently guide BALIAN where he needs to go.

INT. A LITTLE ROOM IN THE HOUSE. MOMENTS LATER

In a dreamlike sequence Balian, standing naked in a copper bowl, is bathed with sea-sponges by the girls.

INT. GODFREY'S BEDROOM. AFTERNOON

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, giggling.

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.

ALMARIC
(eating, to alarmed
SERGEANTS)
He may be mad.

EXT. THE STABLE COURTYARD. DAY

A clumsy use of a hoof-pick. A horse screams. OPEN UP ON: A BEAUTIFUL WARHORSE is shying from both a YOUNG SERGEANT and an ARAB BLACKSMITH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN comes in and grabs the horse by the halter. With great gentle force. Forearm braced along the head. The horse settles down.

BALIAN
You've hurt him.

The YOUNG SERGEANT and the ARAB BLACKSMITH back away. BALIAN slowly gets loops of line around the frightened horse's neck and back legs, stable-boys helping.

EXT. GALLERY ABOVE THE STABLE COURTYARD. LATER

ALMARIC is staring dubiously out into the yard.

ALMARIC
Will you look at that.

The HOSPITALER comes forward out of the gloom, and looks down, smiling, through lattice. Now in Jerusalem the Hospitaler is not in his stained travel kit, but resplendent, looking more the priest, though in armor.

The Hospitaler looks like God.

EXT. THE STABLE COURTYARD. CONTINUOUS

BALIAN with gentleness and intensity is shoeing the 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 (as hoofbeats sound) looks around as A SURF OF DOGS, WHIPPETS, flood into the courtyard. The horse, eyes rolling white, nearly breaks its back against the restraints. BALIAN, kicking at the snarling dogs, charges out into the courtyard, hammer in his hand.

BALIAN
Who is the fool with these dogs?

He hurls the hammer aside in anger (it sparks off the brick). Stops and stares, stunned at: A beautiful woman sits side saddle on a palfrey.

She wears riding silks, and a turban. The sun behind her. SIBYLLA. She is as startled as Balian. BALIAN stares at her open-mouthed.

SIBYLLA
The fool with the dogs is the
Princess of Jerusalem.

BALIAN perhaps resentfully, bows, serf-low, the only thing he knows how to do in the circumstances.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA rides around him. Horse's hooves, circling him. He watches the horse's hooves out of the corner of his eyes. The dogs still foam around.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)
Will you give me a cup of water?

BALIAN goes to the bucket. He takes out the ladle. Shakes it. It doesn't look to clean. But he fills it anyway and walks the quivering water to the still-mounted Sibylla. She takes the water, eyes locked on Balian's, and drinks. She finishes and hands him the ladle.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)
It is a hot day.

BALIAN
Yes.

SIBYLLA
I thank you for the drink.

BALIAN
Yes.

He can't quite figure out why he has been given her handkerchief with the ladle. He tries to return it and is ignored.

SIBYLLA
If in the course of your work you should see Balian, the son of Godfrey, who is now come from France...tell him that Sibylla called...that I bless his father's name...and that I wept at the news.

SIBYLLA turns horse and gallops out, her dogs tumbling after her.

BALIAN goes to the gate and in deep confusion stares after the splendid figure caroming down the street, scattering merchants like pigeons.

AMALRIC has come down from the gallery and is looking with concern at the potential madman. The HOSPITALER is smiling. BALIAN nods at him: Whoa.

HOSPITALER
I imagine you will become better at dealing with the nobility. Bow no more to equals, my lord.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN
 (gently to agitated
 stableboys)
 When I am working a horse keep the
 gates shut. Thank you.

BALIAN turns and sees the Hospitaler. The Hospitaler embraces him.

INT. BALIAN'S HOUSE, BEDROOM. DAY

The HOSPITALER is eating yogurt, beautiful fruit. Balian is being dressed behind a screen.

HOSPITALER
 How find you Jerusalem?

BALIAN
 God does not speak to me. Not even
 on the hill where Christ died. I am
 outside God's grace.

HOSPITALER
 I have not heard that.

BALIAN
 At any rate, I have lost my
 religion.

BALIAN emerges from behind the screen. He is in armor: the Baron of Ibelin: a knight.

HOSPITALER
 (softly, seeing Godfrey in
 him)
 No matter.
 (as Balian's sword is
 belted on)
 I put no stock in "religion".

BALIAN is surprised. This man has holy orders.

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
 By the word "religion" I have seen
 the lunacy of fanatics of every
 denomination be called the will of
 God. I have seen too much religion
 in the eyes of too many murderers.
 Holiness is in right action, and
 courage in behalf of those who
 cannot defend themselves. Goodness,
 what God desires, is here...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With two fingers he touches Balian's forehead, and then his hear.

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)

And here. By what you decide to do every day you will be a good man or not. Come.

(a beat)

Did you know that you are famous?

EXT. A STREET IN JERUSALEM. LATER

BALIAN and the HOSPITALER ride through the town. BALIAN is in his armor. PEOPLE bow. We hear whispers. PEOPLE (originally from all nations, from Viking lands to the Horn of Africa) stare at BALIAN. Some people follow him through the street. Boys tumbling after. Balian is alarmed at the attention from the street, the BOYS now running beside his horse.

BALIAN looks unnerved and not very happy about this. He sees: Two TEMPLARS, bearded Christian fanatics, their hands tied behind them, ropes around their necks.

HOSPITALER

(explaining)

The King has made a peace with Saladin these six years. He holds Jerusalem as a place for prayer for all faiths, as the Saracens did before we came. These men killed Arabs.

Spectator TEMPLARS (kept back by pikemen wearing the King's livery) roar objections; but still the signal is given. The men are hoisted; hang.

BALIAN

So they are dying for what the Pope and every priest in Europe would command them to do.

HOSPITALER

(simply)

Yes. But not Christ, I think. Nor this king.

INT. OUTSIDE TIBERIAS' ROOMS AT THE PALACE. DAY

VOICES raised in Arabic and English. BALIAN, aware of but helplessly disinterested in the argument, off, stands inspecting a scale model of the city and walls of Jerusalem. He frowns at some problems...moves a section of the wall. He moves it back...but not happily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN
(simply)
That should be there.

He looks as if he's going to go see someone about it. The HOSPITALER watches.

BALIAN (CONT'D)
(with great force and
simplicity)
That's wrong.

BALIAN now crouches to look at a scale model of a SIEGE ENGINE. A SECRETARY stares at him. Balian backs off.

REYNALD (OS)
(shouting)
Who says I raid?

MOVE INSIDE THE ROOM.

TIBERIAS, a plain ferocious knight and noble of fifty-odd, leans over his table.

TIBERIAS (OS)
(shouting)
This witness, all Jerusalem, holy
God, and me.

REYNALD OF CHATILLON, a magnificent old brigand with a handlebar moustache, is on the carpet. He looks at a MUSLIM GRANDEE.

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

TIBERIAS
There will come a day, Reynald of
Chatillon, when you are not
protected by your title.

REYNALD
Oh? When will that be?
(royally amused)
Alert me, Tiberias, when men are
equal, and the Kingdom of Heaven
has arrived.

TIBERIAS
(pointing down into the
square)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

Those Templars have been hung for a
raid I am sure you commanded.

REYNALD

Prove it, Tiberias. I will wait at
Kerak till you do.

TIBERIAS

The king will take your castle of
Kerak, Reynald.

REYNALD

I hold Kerak through France and my
wife. Not this king. Try to take
it, Tiberias. I will be there.

TIBERIAS stares with frustration. REYNALD exits. The MUSLIM
GRANDEE starts shouting in Arabic.

TIBERIAS

(to business)

I cannot protect your caravans
unless you agree to be escorted by
our soldiers.

MUSLIM GRANDEE

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

TIBERIAS holds out GOLD.

TIBERIAS

But you will take Christian gold,
of course.

The GRANDEE, of course, does, instantly.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

You are an ignorant and difficult
bastard.

MUSLIM GRANDEE

(smugly)

Who is ignorant who knows God?

TIBERIAS exhaustedly waves the man out. The MUSLIM GRANDEE
goes, starchily. TIBERIAS, face in hands, sits at his work
table.

HOSPITALER (OS)

My lord.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TIBERIAS looks up and sees: BALIAN. TIBERIAS gets up and walks nearer the table with the model. He holds out both hands and Balian, after a moment of uncertainty, takes them.

TIBERIAS

It is true.

(remarking resemblance)

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

(a beat)

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

HOSPITALER

He has been examining your model.

TIBERIAS

An engineer?

BALIAN nods, peering at the model, almost unable to help himself, and Tiberias notices.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

It was shouted in the streets this morning that you killed a great lord of Syria.

BALIAN

I was fortunate.

TIBERIAS

Saladin himself has written to say your fight was no breach of the peace. That you had a cause.

(a beat)

What know you of Saladin?

BALIAN

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

TIBERIAS

Indeed he does. He has two hundred thousand men at Damascus alone. He might win a war if he goes to war and he is daily given cause for war by the Templars, by fanatics newly from Europe, and by bastards like Reynald. Here from this room I keep the peace, so far as it may be kept. I begin sometimes to wonder if it's worth the trouble.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

But Saladin and the king between them would make...

(exhaustedly)

...a "better world".

(a beat, smiling)

What did your father tell you of your obligations?

BALIAN

That I was to be a good knight.

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

TIBERIAS

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

(a beat)

Have you dined?

INT. THE GREAT HALL OF THE PALACE. NIGHT

In a great hall under a long second-story gallery A DINING TABLE.

TIBERIAS, careworn, is eating slowly. BALIAN is nervous, picking at food. He looks up as two figures come into the room: GUY and SIBYLLA.

Sibylla holds Guy's arm. BALIAN looks down at his plate. GUY seats his wife; and then sits across from Balian and stares at him. Drunk, and pouring wine from a jug.

GUY

You sit at my table?

BALIAN and GUY stare at each other.

BALIAN

It is the king's table. So I am told.

GUY

It is. 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 the docks. Eh?

(rising)

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY (CONT'D)
 (points at Balian)
 This could not inherit. But here
 there are no civilized rules.

He rises to leave. GUY and TIBERIAS stare at each other, an inch from drawing daggers. SIBYLLA sits her face unchanged. BALIAN steals a look at SIBYLLA, who catches him at it: and a world is said though her face does not change.

GUY (CONT'D)
 I have business 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)

TIBERIAS
 Do you go to meet Reynald?

GUY turns at the door.

GUY
 (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...trouble-maker.

He 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 turns hostess and as if this has not happened:

SIBYLLA
 (to BALIAN)
 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)
 Are you married?

BALIAN
 My wife is dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIBYLLA

(dry)

You must be found another.

BALIAN

When I am ready I imagine I will
find her myself.

She smiles at his abruptness. But has reason (Guy) to look careworn. She looks seriously at Balian, who is now eating.

TIBERIAS

(murmuring)

The king.

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

A white, masked, figure on the gallery above.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

(brokenly, careworn, and
now to himself)

The king.

All stand. The KING disappears from the gallery. An Equerry comes forward and whispers in TIBERIAS' ear.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

The King would see Godfrey's son.

SIBYLLA

(smiles)

I will take him.

EXT. A COURTYARD. TWILIGHT

Falling water. The palace is full of shadows, whispers, a desert Elsinore. BALIAN, walking with SIBYLLA, looks around warily. The dinner continues beyond an archway (TIBERIAS talking business).

BALIAN

I spoke without knowing who you
were.

SIBYLLA

(running her fingers over
the plants)

Would knowing who I am make any
difference to the fact that I was
wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

No.

SIBYLLA

I was wrong. I am sorry.

Sibylla walks lightly along.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

I knew who you were. It's
unmistakable. I loved your father.
I shall love you.

BALIAN trips on a stone. Sibylla smiles.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Do you fear being with me?

BALIAN

Yes.

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

SIBYLLA

A woman in my place has two faces.
One for the world, and one which
she wears in privacy.

BALIAN

I have never had more than one
face.

SIBYLLA

That will change with your new
position.

BALIAN

I do not think so.

Sibylla, jolted, looks back at him with great interest.

SIBYLLA

Then with you, I will be only
Sibylla.

A slight sound. A SERVANT susses out the fairly dangerous
sexual situation and disappears behind a pillar.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

Tiberias thinks me unpredictable. I
am unpredictable.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)
 (smiles)
 Come.

She takes BALIAN's hand. Not grandly. Like a girl.

INT. A CORRIDOR IN THE PALACE. MOMENTS LATER

BALIAN and SIBYLLA have come to the king's door, which is guarded.

BALIAN
 You do not come in?

SIBYLLA
 No.
 (with genuine respect)
 I cannot.

She lets go of his hand and 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. 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)
 I warn you before I turn: I wear a mask.

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

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

He turns. What he wears is the most beautiful mas imaginable (possibly representing the face that once was), hammered silver, catching light.

THE KING (CONT'D)
 The man you killed in the desert, though a Saracen, was my father's friend. He taught me to hawk when I was a boy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KING (CONT'D)

He taught me to shoot arrows from horseback as the Saracens do. He was there when my arm was pinched and it was he, not my father's physicians, who noticed that I felt no pain. He wept when he gave my father the news.

(his eyes expressive in the mask)

I am a leper. This disease, the Saracens 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 and lasting.

(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 expect 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.

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. He sits at a table with a CHESS-SET.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Do you play?

BALIAN shakes his head. A CRUSE CHESSPIECE: A PAWN. It is a triangle of ivory. It is touched by an artfully, even beautifully, bandaged hand. BALIAN looks at the BOARD. Dimension after dimension of room for error.

THE KING (OS) (CONT'D)

It is the world.

We see the young king's masked face.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Each move can be the death of you.

(on the CRUDE PAWN)

Do anything except remain in your starting place and you cannot be sure of your end. Were you sure once of your end?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN

I was.

THE KING

What was it?

BALIAN

To be buried a hundred yards from
where I was born.

THE KING

And now?

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Now I am in Jerusalem and look upon
a king.

THE KING (CONT'D)

A King may move a man...a father
may claim a son...a man may move
himself...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.

(the mask, in firelight,
raises)

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. Flickering light. He looks up.

BALIAN

I will.

BALIAN stares at the king. THE KING slides a paper towards
Balian, with a drawing on it (basically it is pretty much
along the ideas that Balian is thinking) - i.e it has the
shape of a cross.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

It is a fortification.

THE KING

(nods)

I have drawn it. What do you think
of it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BALIAN

I have thought, many times, that a castle should be in the shape of a cross.

(A stick of charcoal on the table.)

May I?

THE KING nods, smiling.

THE KING

Improve it.

BALIAN

A cross...or a star. Like this.

(draws a "star fort")

That way, not part of a fortress may be approached without being exposed to fire from another part.

THE KING smiles, and furls the paper. He has made the test.

THE KING

You will go to your house of Ibelin, and protect the pilgrim road. Protect in particular the Jews and the Muslims.

(defiant: the Mask comes up)

All are welcome in Jerusalem. Not because it is expedient, but because it is right.

(a beat: drinks off his cup)

Protect the helpless.

BALIAN takes it seriously.

THE KING (CONT'D)

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

(a beat)

You may go.

BALIAN looks up The glittering mask. Balian nods, goes out. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA'S DOOR still stands open, light falling into the hall.

Balian might well have walked towards the door, but a BOY (Sibylla's son) is standing in the hall, staring at Balian expressionlessly. BALIAN raises his hand. The BOY backs away and disappears into his room. A LEAD EQUESTRIAN KNIGHT on the floor. BALIAN picks it up, weighs it in his hand. The BOY peeps around the corner again. BALIAN smiles experimentally. The BOY disappears. BALIAN fixes the soldier, bending a bent bit back into place, and places the LEAD KNIGHT on the edge of a balustrade. He goes.

EXT. A BARRACKS COURTYARD IN THE PALACE. MORNING

CLOSE ON TIBERIAS.

TIBERIAS

The king has charged you with your tasks. You keep the peace.

(glaring at the men--of

Ibelin, and other houses)

To break the peace, to rob Saracen, Jew or Christian, is death on the instant. Do you understand.

BALIAN nods. His men nod, perhaps more reluctantly.

ALMARIC

Ibelin.

YOUNG SERGEANT

That shithole.

ALMARIC

Ssh.

TIBERIAS comes up to BALIAN, and privately.

TIBERIAS

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

TIBERIAS smiles, and hands BALIAN some rolled parchments bound with ribbon.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

These are my plans of the city defenses.

(Balian hesitates respectfully)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)
Better them if you can. I defend
Jerusalem, not my reputation.

BALIAN nods respectfully. TIBERIAS smiles.

EXT. THE PILGRIM ROAD. VARIOUS

JEWS by a campfire stand and bow as BALIAN, cloaked, rides past with forty of his mounted men, also cloaked. They are very much policemen on patrol. FACES of the pilgrims: the young, the old. They ride on, past more CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS trudging towards the city -- the mad, the penitent, the merely curious, the barely alive. A NAKED MAN crawls...drags himself along, mumbling. BALIAN looks at him and spurs on.

EXT. A CAMP BY THE PILGRIM ROAD. TWILIGHT

Cold men by a fire (still unsure of Balian). A SERGEANT holds out a plate of boiled wheat. BALIAN takes it and eats with his fingers. He is aware of the silence and discomfort and plain curiosity of his men. Some are peering at him. BALIAN puts down his plate, and stands.

BALIAN
I am not my father.

His men, who have been thinking just this, look at each other.

BALIAN (CONT'D)
But I will do my best.

BALIAN walks off alone. He sees: A PROCESSION OF CHILDREN, singing, on their way to Jerusalem.

EXT. ABOVE IBELIN. DAY

They ride into show, reining in.

ALMARIC
There, my lord.

BALIAN rides a little forward.

ALMARIC (CONT'D)
Ibelin.

BALIAN'S POV:

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

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, Saracens, and Arab Christians. The place is desperately poor.

ALMARIC

(embarrassed)

Your father was important. His lands were not.

But to Balian it might as well be paradise.

BALIAN

I have no importance. It will suit me just fine.

Entering the WALLED CASBAH area, BALIAN and his party dismount. PEOPLE stand and stare, keeping their distance. An ARAB goes on his knees before BALIAN and Balian courteously helps him up. The ARAB is stunned.

BALIAN walks on, removing his gloves, beating the dust out of his surcoat. At the steps of the house he stops: An OLD HOUSEMAN in a skullcap is staring at him, open mouth toothless.

BALIAN climbs the stairs. The two men look at each other. The OLD HOUSEMAN searches Balian's face.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Yes?

He plucks at the ensign on his breast. The OLD HOUSEMAN smiles, and kisses both of Balian's cheeks.

The PEOPLE are murmuring, respectfully.

BALIAN, from the steps of his house, takes it all in. HORSES are watering.

INT. THE HOUSE. TWILIGHT

The OLD HOUSEMAN pads ahead through the dark, sunsplintered rooms. Some ruinous furniture, cushions. ALMARIC watches BALIAN warily (still not knowing this guy) as BALIAN takes in his house. The OLD HOUSEMAN runs up with a slopping cup of wine. BALIAN takes it, sips, and keeps walking. He comes to the back of the house, where arched openings give onto the oasis, a green and saline-looking pool under blowing palms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Twilight is coming on. Balian hears, of all things, chickens. Along an ell of the house there are chicken coops.

AN ARAB GIRL, collecting eggs. She turns, sensing that she is being stared at. She is veiled across. She continues to take eggs from beneath the hens. BALIAN, caught in a memory, dissolves in it. We know as he catches his breath that he is alive again, he could have a life here.

ALMARIC

My lord, this is a poor and dusty place.

BALIAN

Is it.

EXT. IBELIN. MORNING

BALIAN and ALMARIC, chased by a horde of children and some more restrained adults, are walking though the farm area. Poor cultivation, dust blowing from cracked dikes.

ALMARIC

We've got Jews...different types of Jews, I think...Fatmid Muslims, and the other...

BALIAN, moving along, jumps up on a dike, and continues, children chasing along.

ALMARIC (CONT'D)

Easter Christians and Roman...

BALIAN stops, windblown, and smiles.

BALIAN

But mainly, we have no water.

EXT. NEAR THE POOL. DAY

Slightly up from the pool, we see that the pool is fed by a marshy trickle. BALIAN crouches, looking at the lie of the land.

EXT. NEAR THE POOL. LATER

PEASANTS are digging, already five or six feet down in the dampish ground. BALIAN is with them in the middle of the pit, using a heavy iron pole to slam deep into the earth...both "sounding" and loosening.

PEASANTS are taking the damp earth and immediately forming bricks with it.

EXT. NEAR THE POOL. LATER

The well is deeper. Now the walls are shored up with timbers. BALIAN slams and slams with his iron bar. The men are ankle deep in seepage, the shoveled earth goes up in leather buckets on ropes. Suddenly, as

BALIAN leans exhausted...

The water level rises evenly. The diggers look at each other.

BALIAN
(exhausted)
Right. Stone the well.

As he comes up from the well, the PEOPLE (Jews, Christians, Saracens) are exultant--and so is BALIAN, at first shy, and then smiling hugely.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY (VARIOUS)

MONTAGE. Irrigation ditches being dug while Balian supervises and pitches in. Clay troughs and pipes being manufactured, molded, and then set in a great kiln. WOMEN working leather into what may be buckets.

BALIAN moves through it all. He crouches with skill-capped ARAB CARPENTERS. He draws in the dirt with a stick while the men nod.

ALMARIC
They are making lords different in
France from when I was there.

EXT. IBELIN. TWILIGHT

Torches are lit on the rough battlements. BALIAN stares out at the desert, satisfied, in his home. On the road, a solitary pilgrim proceeds to Jerusalem on his knees.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

A commotion among the people. They run towards the center of some activity. What they see there is wonderful. CARPENTERS, MEN-AT-ARMS, various helpers, and BALIAN, using brute strength, as well as a rope passing through pulley on a palm, are setting upright...a giant WATERWHEEL.

BALIAN
Brace it, brace it. Almaric, tell
them to brace it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Almaric does. BALIAN makes sure the wheel is secure. He backs away from the work and sees that...

An ARAB is staring pen mouthed at something OS. More PEASANTS stare, and then go to their knees. BALIAN turns and sees: WHIPPETS. They course around in a pack. He looks up and sees: SIBYLLA, mounted.

She is veiled and with a guard of Turcopole lancers. SIBYLLA rides forward through whirling dust and light. She wears a sort of burnoose all her face but her eyes covered with silk.

BALIAN walks towards her, through wind, and, without regard to his filthiness, bows. Not particularly courtly.

SIBYLLA removes her veil, staring at him.

SIBYLLA

I am on my way to Cana. That is where Jesus changed water to wine. A better trick would be to change you to a nobleman.

BALIAN

In France I used to think that with a few yards of silk I could make an aristocrat of any man, so long as he was useless.

Sibylla laughs delightedly. BALIAN smiles.

SERVANTS rush her considerable, fantastical baggage-train forward through the casbah gates.

SIBYLLA

It seems that I ask your hospitality.

BALIAN

(holding her bridle)
It is given.

Sibylla smiles and rides through the gates.

EXT. A ROOM AT IBELIN. DAY

SERVANTS attend SIBYLLA. They take her cloak, her "turban" as she reveals and drops her hair. Her "mask" of office may not be entirely in place. A servant removes SIBYLLA's small velvet shoes. A servant brushes her hair as another removes her riding gear. A SERVANT unpacks a lead-lined box of...snow, and puts it into a silver goblet. Sibylla drinks.

EXT. A POOL BEHIND THE CASBAH AT IBELIN. DAY

SIBYLLA, now in loose Arab muslin, comes along the gallery, SERVANTS with her. She has her silver goblet. SIBYLLA drinks, and looks at Balian. No dialog necessary. She goes to the pool, steps barefoot into it, and washes. Her wrists. Balian looks around at the desert. Sibylla bends forward as a servant pours water over her hair. She moves forward through the water, the muslin wet, and hands Balian her cup. She wrings the end of her muslin wrap, and washes the dust from Balian's face. He catches her wrist, meaning: don't. SERVANTS are watching.

SIBYLLA
 (smiling, and continuing
 to wash his face)
 This isn't adultery, it's washing.

BALIAN looks not so much embarrassed, as embarrassed at being embarrassed.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)
 But if it were adultery, which
 (she wipes his face)
 it isn't, the Commandments are not
 for persons in our positions. They
 are for others.

BALIAN
 (gruffly, remembering that
 he ought to think about
 this)
 Did they give you something to eat?

SIBYLLA
 (a tucked smiles as she
 kicks through the pool)
 Yes. They "gave me something to
 eat".

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 kicking through the water. She stops and looks into the desert. Rippling wind. 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 is gone. She smiles, and kicks on through the water.

INT. THE HOUSE AT IBELIN. AFTERNOON

SIBYLLA watches from the roof terrace as

SIBYLLA'S POV:

Within a crowd of exultant peasants THE WATERWHEEL is lifted (fairly easily now) on its long axle and is fitted into its frame above the new well.

EXT. THE WELL. CONTINUOUS

BALIAN working. BALIAN, intense, turns the wheel by raw force, and watches...buckets come up, full of water. he nods, and lets the wheel drop. MONTAGE details of the gearing being assembled.

INT. THE FORT AT IBELIN. CONTINUOUS

SIBYLLA, watching Balian, leaning against the stones, seems to have come to some decision. Terrible heat.

SIBYLLA

I think we are looking at the one man in the world who is not like another.

The Maidservant lays a damp cloth across her eyes.

MAIDSERVANT

On the contrary, he is common, my lady. Your husband Guy is a man.

SIBYLLA laughs, the cloth over her eyes. She looks like Justice.

EXT. IBELIN. VARIOUS (AS NIGHT FALLS)

MONTAGE the completion of the waterwheel, and its operation. Water gushes through pipes into troughs into ditches, and the paddies begin to flood, the soil darkening.

EXT. BY THE PADDIES. TWILIGHT

Among his dancing subjects, and grinning men-at-arms (ALMARIC even essays to slap his back), BALIAN is lost in thought of...as he looks back at his house...Sibylla, who stands on the roof, watching.

INT. THE GREAT ROOM AT IBELIN. EVENING

BALIAN is drawing. SIBYLLA watches him from behind a gauze curtain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Balian dips his pen in ink. Draws, blots, draws. SIBYLLA comes behind Balian and looks over his shoulder. BALIAN becomes aware of her.

SIBYLLA
You have a guest.

BALIAN looks at her boldly.

BALIAN
I am aware. That I have a guest.

SIBYLLA lowers her eyes and changes the subject.

SIBYLLA
Is this the..."work"...you did in France? What I saw today?

BALIAN
In my work in France the only thing that was mine was the quality.

She looks at his drawings.

SIBYLLA
These are the walls of Jerusalem. You have changed the David Gate.

BALIAN
Yes. It ought to be changed. It is...impractical.

SIBYLLA
Eleven hundred and fifty years ago, Jesus Christ rode through it on a donkey.
(raises palms drolly)
In Jerusalem, as it was, it shall be. Jerusalem is not about what is practical. To say...the least.

BALIAN smiles. He likes this woman. Sibylla and Balian look at each other. Neither are smiling now. At the moment of intolerable sexual tension, a bell rings at the end of the room. BALIAN looks and sees SIBYLLA'S SERVANTS (including the scandalized MAIDSERVANT) laying out a meal. He moves with Sibylla towards the low table. They sit on cushions. A fire burns at the end of the room. Sibylla eats, with knife and fingers, licking her fingers, drinking wine. (No silverware doesn't mean no manners). Sibylla looks up and sees Balian staring at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

What?

BALIAN

It seems years since I have seen a woman eat.

SIBYLLA

The Hospitaler told me what occurred in France.

BALIAN looks up.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

(tearing flat bread)

Had he not told me, I would have had him tortured.

(they both laugh, but then seriously:)

You loved her.

BALIAN

Yes.

(a beat)

I did. Very much. She was melancholy. I loved her.

Quietly, they eat. The drapes blow, the candles flare.

SIBYLLA

I watch you today. You have been given a patch of dust and it almost seems you will build a new Jerusalem here.

BALIAN

It is my house. What would I be if I did not make it better?

Sibylla plays with her glass. She looks carefully at Balian. And then, as if caught staring, looks chaotically down.

INT. A GALLERY AT IBELIN. DEEP TWILIGHT

SIBYLLA and BALIAN are walking. As BALIAN looks at her, there is a MUSLIM CALL TO PRAYER...the last of the day.

SIBYLLA

(off the prayer)

They try to be one: one heart, one morality. One passion. They try to do without our infinite complications.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

(a beat)

Their prophet says "submit". Jesus said "decide".

On "decide" she looks directly at Balian, and is quite clearly in love with him.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

(to change the subject)

Do you pray?

BALIAN

I pray that I may be equal to what has been asked of me. To what has been given me.

SIBYLLA

We all pray that at first. But who stays content when others have more?

BALIAN

(smiles)

I was content, with what you would call nothing. I may be content again. Here.

He looks out over the praying Ibelin Muslims. All in submission to God, bowing in unison.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

They submit...we must decide. They have it easier.

(gently)

You did not decide on Guy.

SIBYLLA

(unhappily, firmly)

My first husband was chosen by my father. I cannot complain, since my son was the result, but that is retrospection. My first husband died before his son was born.

BALIAN

I have seen your son.

SIBYLLA

He is not strong. And he will be the king.

(she thinks sadly about

her son, then presses on)

Guy was chosen by my mother.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

The Kingdom needed new blood. My mother took what was available at the time.

(near tears and wanting to be alone)

I have not decided very much in my days. One learns not to want. They submit to God. I submit to the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Good night.

BALIAN

Good night.

SIBYLLA goes along the gallery. BALIAN watches her go.

EXT. THE FIELDS. MORNING

BALIAN dismounts and, boots in the furrowed dry earth, walks his horse respectfully past the praising MUSLIMS. Squinting against the late sun. A note of paradise. MUSLIMS pray, JEWS and CHRISTIANS work together in the fields. Ibelin is a microcosm of the king's Jerusalem--the better world.

INT. THE GALLERY. DAY

SIBYLLA is sitting in an archway, knees up, looking out at the water.

BALIAN come in, dusty. Brass chimes turn and tinkle in the wind.

SIBYLLA

I could stay here...perhaps not forever... but a little while longer.

BALIAN

This house is yours.

SIBYLLA

(staring into the light)
Why am I here?

BALIAN sits down beside her.

BALIAN

I know that Ibelin is not on the way to Cana.

Sibylla smiles. Her eyes luminous.

SIBYLLA

What else do you know, my lord?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

I know that you are a princess and that I am no lord. Nor do I wish to be.

SIBYLLA

You are a knight.

BALIAN

Not proved.

Sibylla looks up at Balian.

SIBYLLA

I do not stay on here with you because I am bored, or wicked. I am here because... in the East... one may decide...

(a beat)

...because in the East between one person and another there is only light.

BALIAN raises her face and kisses her. He carries her back against a pillar.

INT. THE ROOFTOP "BEDROOM" AT IBELIN. NIGHT

SIBYLLA, sitting in the bed, takes one by one the rings from her hennaed hands.

SIBYLLA

This is from France, which I have not seen...I have never been to France...This for my brother...This to remind us of death...This I bought the day I saw you...

BALIAN

You lie.

SIBYLLA laughs, admitting it, gets up on her knees, puts a ring on a chain she has take from around her neck and puts it around his neck and kisses him. Leaving Balian staring after her she goes to the window, wrapped in silk, and takes up a broken pomegranate from the table. With a silver in she eats the seeds. BALIAN goes and takes the in from her, and sets the POMERGRANATE down.

Sibylla looks up at him.

SIBYLLA

But I'm hungry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He kisses her. Balian's been out of the game for a while. He carries her back to the bed.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAWN

CAMELS laden with dyed goods move along, bells tinkling. Three of the merchant's daughters ride in camel howdahs.

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

A HILLTOP. TWO RIDERS CREST IT.

GUY 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.

REYNALD
(near-sighted)
Do you see them?

GUY
(smoothly)
How could I? I am not here.
(a beat)
This caravan is armed, Reynald.

A CRY FROM BELOW as they are spotted. The MUSLIM FORCE spreads out, arches on horseback, forming a line between the Crusaders and the now hastening caravan. The TEMPLAR MASTER rides up beside them.

Bloodthirsty.

TEMPLAR MASTER
God wills it.

REYNALD draws his sword. A ride detaches and streaks away across the desert. GUY notices.

GUY
A rider got away.

REYNALD
(unconcerned)
It's a broad desert. Nothing will
of it. Nothing...
(laughs)
or the apocalypse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY

I prefer to not be hanged before my wife is queen.

REYNALD

Does that make you king? I have never been sure.

GUY

Close enough.

REYNALD

(riding along the ridge)
Don't worry. Who but Reynald? they will say. It's always me!
(belches)
They will believe it at Jerusalem, I assure you. And Damascus. You were at Nazareth, praying.

GUY

(drawing sword)
You're a clever man.

REYNALD

On the other hand, how long can the leper last? Not long. If the war is to be now or later I would have it now.

GUY nods. He's thinking that as well.

GUY

Now.

The KNIGHTS charge. 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. People trying to surrender are killed. We see the TEMPLARS killing with particular savagery. Leave the fight in the dust, the knights murdering, the camels running, silks and silver spilling...It's over almost at once. GUY, covered with blood, wheels his horse.

REYNALD rides up to: The MUSLIM GRANDEE. The man he paid off at the palace.

REYNALD

You.

He splits him in half.

EXT. THE ROOFTOP BEDROOM AT IBELIN. DAWN

Wind is rising. BALIAN covers Sibylla with more blankets. She stares hauntedly, hollowly. She has been crying. Stares off.

BALIAN
Why do you cry?

SIBYLLA
Because I go in the morning.

BALIAN
Stay.

SIBYLLA
I have a dying brother, and a child
who will be king.

CLOSE ON BALIAN, CONSIDERING THIS ENORMOUS FACT.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)
As for us, the world will decide.
The world always decides.

EXT. COURTYARD AT IBELIN. DAY

A dust storm rising. Wind in the palms. Sibylla's lancers are mounted.

BALIAN helps Sibylla into the saddle. They are awkward, observed, infinitely sad. As she bitterly turns her horse, there is a commotion OS. People pointing. BALIAN leaves Sibylla and moves through the crowd to see:

BALIAN'S POV:

A MUSLIM in a blood-stained gown is stumbling through the palms, crying for water, for help

BALIAN stares as his people rush forward and we go to:

INT. THE THRONE ROOM. JERUSALEM. DAY

An assembly of the powers of the land. Set up like the House of Commons, with Templars and Guy's party on one side, Hospitalers and loyalists on the other. The king wearing a mask of silver, looking at GUY and TIBERIAS, who stand before him.

GUY
Maybe Reynald did attack a caravan.
But what of it? War is inevitable.
Peace...unnatural.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEMPLAR MASTER

(like a man speaking in
tongues)

It was no caravan. It was an army
headed for Bethlehem to desecrate
the birthplace of Our Lord.

TIBERIAS

(exasperated)

Reynald, with the Templars, I am
sure--

TEMPLARS

Lie! Lie!

TIBERIAS

...have broken the king's pledge of
peace. Saladin will come into this
kingdom...

GUY

Tiberias knows more than a
Christian should about Saladin's
intentions.

Uproar among the BARONS. TIBERIAS goes close to GUY.

TIBERIAS

What do you say?

GUY

That you love the Saracens.

A close moment. TIBERIAS very close to Guy.

TIBERIAS

That I would rather live with
people than kill them is certainly
why you are alive.

GUY

That sort of Christianity has its
uses. I suppose.

TIBERIAS

(to court)

We cannot have war with Saladin. We
will not win it. And, yes, we do
not want it.

TEMPLARS

Blaspemy, blasphemy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TEMPLAR MASTER

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

An uproar among the divided parties.

TEMPLAR MASTER (CONT'D)

There must be war. God wills it.

TEMPLARS

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. With two hundred thousand men.

TIBERIAS

He will go first for Kerak.

The king starts to rise.

THE KING

Assemble the Army.

HYSICIAN

Your majesty...If you travel you will die.

GUY, overhearing this, looks pleased.

THE KING

Assemble the Army.

EXT. THE CARAVAN MASSACRE SITE. TWILIGHT

Dust is blowing through the tangled corpses of men and horses. BALIAN'S MEN pick through the wreckage. BALIAN is "solving" the fight. What horses came from which direction. BALIAN dismounts and examines a dead horse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN
(examining it)
That's not a wound. The brand is
cut off.

ALMARIC
Reynald did this. His castle of
Kerak is ten leagues. Fifteen...

A cry OS: A SOLDIER is driving off vultures.

SOLDIER
The Christian bodies hid. Here.

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 and stares equably at the bodies.
What sort of woman is this? A woman of her time. JACKALS are
loping towards the dead.

ALMARIC
We must send a rider to the King.
Unless my lady will take the news
to Jerusalem.

SIBYLLA
No. I am staying with you.

BALIAN
(holding her bridle)
I am going to Kerak. Reynald did
this.

SIBYLLA
Not alone, I think. Not alone.

ON SOUND: A BELL CLANGING ALARM.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF KERAK. DAY

A LINE OF REFUGEES are streaming towards the castle, through
a rubbly village 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 the entire
garrison of Ibelin (50 mounted men). In the distance down the
valley: dust.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMARIC

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

BALIAN looks at the refugees straggling across the desert. As he does he sees: MUSLIM HORSE are coming up the valley. Other parties of calvary appear in all directions. He turns to SIBYLLA.

SIBYLLA

Princesses are not killed.
Somewhere it is written down.

BALIAN

Go into the fortress. Now.

SIBYLLA is a woman of her time: she too has seen the cavalry in every direction: nods. She kisses BALIAN, looks him in the eye, and then gallops off, her lancers with her.

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

EXT. KERAK. DAY

KERAK'S BELL is continuing to peal alarm as SIBYLLA and her TURCOPOLES flash up through the gates.

REYNALD

Visitors!

REYNALD, wearing a festive gown, and eating an orange, stares indifferently at the desert. His personal Priest and confessor (a ragged, long suffering cleric) is with him. MEN AT-ARMS are manning the walls.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

(grabs the priest, to use
him as "binoculars")
How many?

REYNALD'S PRIEST

I can't see yet. Only a dust
cloud...

REYNALD

(hands his goblet to the
priest and pisses against
a buttress)
I serve God. That is what I do. If
God tells me to raid Mecca then by
God I raid Mecca.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNALD (CONT'D)

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. Sweeping up the valley.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS OF KERKA. CONTINUOUS

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

REYNALD

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

SIBYLLA

Knights.

REYNALD

(squints)
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 to 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 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.

BALIAN

(staring towards Muslims)
If we go into the castle, those
people will die.

ALMARIC

We cannot attack that force and
live.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

There must be a lie about how many
Saracens one of us is worth in
battle.

ALMARIC

The commonest is ten.

BALIAN

Are you with me?

ALMARIC nods and makes the sign of the cross. The KNIGHTS and SERGEANTS cross themselves as well. BALIAN rides slowly forward at the head of his men.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS OF KERKA. LATER

REYNALD, now being helped into his armor, stares towards the south, still squinting and using the PRIEST 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
indifferently)

Selah.

(A Hebrew word from the
Psalms, meaning, as he
says it, "So be it".)

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. The Muslims are racing, but in contrast to them (going back to BALIAN) we should not mistake how very dangerous the heavy knights are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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--for the moment.

EXT. KERAK. DAY

REFUGEES stream in.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF KERAK. CONTINUOUS

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.

EXT. THE WALLS OF KERAK. CONTINUOUS

SIBYLLA turns away from what seems to be the imminent execution of Balian.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF KERAK. CONTINUOUS

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. MUSLIMS stare. Do they kill these men? Do they not?

Imad helps Balian to his feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN

You were not that man's servant.

IMAD

No.

A MUSLIM hands BALIAN a waterskin. ALMARIC can't believe this is happening. The MUSLIMS draw back, murmuring. BALIAN nods, and drinks, then, with Imad's nodded permission, takes the water to a wounded man.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS OF KERKA. CONTINUOUS

The PRIEST is watching.

PRIEST

They are letting them live.

REYNALD

(indifferent, swigs wine)
Sometimes they are chivalrous. They learned it from us.

EXT. THE PLAIN BEFORE KERAK. CONTINUOUS

IMAD and BALIAN.

IMAD

You may go into Kerak, but you will die there. My master is here.

BALIAN looks past IMAD to higher ground (to one side of the valley of Kerak) and sees...the arrival of SALADIN'S ARMY. An enormous line of men, mounted and unmounted, in perfect order, each section with its banner.

ALMARIC

And ours, my lord.

IMAD looks in the other direction. Far, far off he sees the glint of steel in dust. IMAD walks apart, staring and gets onto hi horse to see better.

IMAD

Tell my lord Saladin that Jerusalem is come.

THE ARMY OF THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM.

The KING rides in his litter alongside THE HOLY CROSS, covered with gold and jewels, passes through the streaming dust. 500 knights are marching towards the relief of Kerak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They are flanked by and protected by 5,000 SPEARMEN and CROSSBOWMEN. Essentially the army is a moving square, tremendously disciplined. GUY is with the army.

IMAD stares through the dust. A man breaks away from the Muslim line and rides up beside him. A small, slight, figure, unarmored, in simple clothing. He scrutinizes Balian, his bloody men, then Imad.

SALADIN

Pull back your cavalry.

As HORNS blow and the Muslims retire, leaving Balian and his wounded, winded, men in the valley with a perfect view of events...

THE ARMY OF JERUSALEM does an "evolution" and in one movement it is transformed into a fighting line, facing the Muslim Army, about a quarter mile away. Out of the dust rides...in BALIAN'S POV:

THE KING.

THE KING, a brilliant 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 as he arrives before Saladin.

SALADIN rides forward himself, so that they are very close.

THE KING

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 man.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Reynald of Chatillon will be punished. I swear it. Withdraw, or we all die here.

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SALADIN

We have terms.

The masked KING rides back to his army.

EXT. KERAK. LATER

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

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

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.

BALIAN starts for Sibylla. At that moment...THE KING and his party, including TIBERIAS and GUY, gallops through the gates of KERAK.

Unable to go to Sibylla through the crowd, BALIAN pulls her ring on its chain from the throat of his armor, and kisses it. SIBYLLA nods.

REYNALD knows he's in for it. He drinks the last of the wine.

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.

THE KING

I am Jerusalem.

(walks forward, unwrapping
one of his hands)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KING (CONT'D)

Will you give me the kiss of peace,
Reynald?

The King holds out a ruined hand, with a ring on what remains of a finger. REYNALD kisses the hand. The King beats him with a stick.

Again, again, again, as GUY watches--terrified that Reynald might squeal. Guy looks up and sees:

SIBYLLA. He follows her eyeline to:

BALIAN.

And he knows. He unties a glove with his teeth.

PHYSICIANS grab the king, who almost 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 of Chatillon,
you are arrested and condemned.

The KING is laid into his litter. A draught of medicine is poured into the mouthhole of the mask. The king gestures to BALIAN.

THE KING

(gently, almost dreamy)

If you continue as you are I shall
make you Marshal of Jerusalem. What
do you think of that?

Before Balian can respond, the KING'S LITTER is carried off. TIBERIAS is beside BALIAN.

TIBERIAS

When a man says something on the
edge of sleep one may discard it.
When a king says it, it will
happen. Mark you.

BALIAN and TIBERIAS lock eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

Do not return to Ibelin. I need you
in Jerusalem.

SIBYLLA cannot join Balian in public; but she looks at him. GUY observes this. SIBYLLA, noticing her husband, looks at GUY expressionlessly, and retires into an archway and disappears.

A KNIGHT

(still mounted, moving
through the crowd)

Godfrey's son charged ten thousand
with a hundred men.

GUY

Did he...

BALIAN is mobbed...by GUY'S MEN as much as anybody. TIBERIAS watches shrewdly as the shy BALIAN's popularity with the troops becomes more than obvious.

INT. SALADIN'S TENT ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS. NIGHT

SALADIN saturnine, watchful, delicate with his food, is dining with IMAD and a still-astonished MULLAH.

MULLAH

The battle must come. You have
promised to drive the Christians
into the sea. You have not done so.

SALADIN makes no response. He sips tea, staring into flame.

MULLAH (CONT'D)

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

SALADIN

The results of battles are
determined by God. But also by
preparation, numbers, the absence
of disease, and the availability of
water.

(kindly)

One cannot maintain a siege with
the enemy behind.

The MULLAH stares: heresy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

MULLAH

Few enough.

(thinks about the reason)

That is because we were sinful.

SALADIN

It is because you were unprepared.

MULLAH

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

SALADIN

(drily)

When I am not king I quake for
Islam.

(he takes the Mullah's
hands)

Thank you for your visit.

MULLAH

(not leaving)

You promised to return Jerusalem.

SALADIN nods. The MULLAH goes. SALADIN stares into flame.

SALADIN

(softly)

If I do not deliver war, I have no
peace.

IMAD

The king of Jerusalem will die
soon. When he is dead, the boy will
be king, and have no control of the
kingdom. The Christians will make
the war you need.

SALADIN nods, frustrated, condemned. Neither man is happy
with the realpolitik. OS the sounds of the camp, and prayer.

EXT. JERUSALEM. TWILIGHT

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

EXT. A GARDEN. CONTINUOUS

THE BOY KING is riding around a garden on his pony, laughing. SIBYLLA watching, careworn, with love. BELLS.

EXT. A WALL AND GATE OF JERUSALEM. CONTINUOUS

Wind is blowing dust in the faces of spitting workmen who are levering a great stone up a ramp. BALIAN and ALMARIC walk, cloaked, supervising the works. TWO CLOAKED MEN go past, salaaming to the embarrassed Balian. A burkaded woman gives him an orange from her basket: A memory of Godfrey. He smiles. Climbs up the wall. GREAT PIPES (for Greek Fire) are being swayed up. BALIAN watches, supervising.

ALMARIC

My lord?

BALIAN

(still uncomfortable with
the "my lord" business)

Yes.

ALMARIC

It is enough that you ask men-at-arms to push stones, and dig. It is worse to ask them to do it all day and night.

BALIAN

We have a dying king. We need strong walls. As for work, I want every man at arms to learn a trade.

ALMARIC

A trade?

BALIAN

A trade. Shoemaker. Tanner. Carpenter. Joiner. Baker. Blacksmith.

This strikes Almaric as unreasonable.

ALMARIC

It is beneath their condition.

BALIAN

The first man to bring me a respectable pair of shoes I will make a knight.

Smiles. Tosses Almaric the orange.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMARIC

(rationalizing)

Jesus was a tradesman, of course.
Nothing could be more noble.

Balian turns and sees: GUY at the head of his troops. A GREAT LINE OF KNIGHTS AND MEN AT ARMS is parading through the gate, Guy very much at their head, coming in from a brief patrol. It is also a show of force in the city. Fascistic, powerful. An image of Guy's power in the Kingdom. BALIAN, windblown on the wall with his own dusty, hard-working men at arms, and stares down, locking eyes with GUY, as the knights stream past.

INT. HALLWAY IN THE CASTLE. LATER

GUY watches over a cup of wine as PHYSICIANS go into the King's rooms.

INT. THE PALACE DUNGEON. CONTINUOUS

REYNALD is like a snarling lion in the dungeon.

REYNALD

(echoing)

I am Reynald of Chatillon. I am
Reynald of Chatillon!

INT. THE KING'S CHAMBERS. CONTINUOUS

A PILLAR CANDLE is burning. The king, breathing laboriously, is washed by his silent physicians. INCENSE smokes in censers hanging all around the room.

PATRIARCH

The things we have left undone
plague us as death comes. That is
why to the dying there is no
comfort but the Lord.

The MASK turns to the side and the king's haunted eyes glitter at: THE CHESSBOARD.

THE KING

We must announced the boy as my
successor. Go to Tiberias and tell
him to come.

The PATRIARCH nods.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Leave me.

EXT. HALLWAY IN THE CASTLE. CONTINUOUS

The PATRIARCH, coming out, nods at GUY. GUY sips wine, and moves along the hall. He goes to the door of Sibylla's rooms. He hesitates, and then kicks in the door.

INT. SIBYLLA'S ROOMS. CONTINUOUS

The MAIDSERVANT stands in shock. She retreats a little.

GUY
Where is my wife?

The MAIDSERVANT retreats. GUY smiles, and goes after her.

GUY (CONT'D)
You sometimes dream you are my
wife. Let us pretend you are my
wife.

The MAIDSERVANT simpers, ready for it. He rummages on a table and puts a little tiara crookedly on the poor girl's head.

INT. BALIAN'S HOUSE, BEDROOM. NIGHT

A CANDLE lighted from a splinter of wood reveals: SIBYLLA. She is bare-shouldered, her hair down, but careworn.

SIBYLLA
We cannot meet in the city.

BALIAN
Then we will leave it.

SIBYLLA looks at him over her shoulder.

SIBYLLA
Balian...My brother is dying. My
son will be King and I his regent.
I must rule for my son. Not just in
Jerusalem, but Acre, Ascalon,
Beirut...

CLOSE ON Balian as the candles gutter. He is afraid of what he's opened up.

BALIAN
And Guy?

CLOSE ON SIBYLLA, thinking.

INT. SIBYLLA'S ROOMS. LATER

Torchbearers comes in, GUARDS, and then Sibylla, cloaked. She sees first...her boy playing with LEAD SOLDIERS...and then, with a shock, GUY sitting in a chair. A bit worn out. Holding the handle of a dagger.

SIBYLLA

These rooms are not yours.

GUY

One day I will be the husband I was...commissioned to be.

SIBYLLA

And perhaps not.

GUY knows that she refers to Bailian. He smiles thinly, eyes down.

GUY

Your lover has a hundred knights and the love of the king. I, the largest force in the Kingdom...the support of the Templars...and I can do without...the other. But your love...

SIBYLLA knocks away his hand. Her GUARDS are standing there.

GUY (CONT'D)

Soon, we will come to an understanding. You need my knights. Or your son's rule will be bloody and brief.

He leaves the torchlight and the room. SIBYLLA takes of her cloak, face white.

OMITTED

INT. THE DUNGEON. LATER

REYNALD, hair tangled, in soiled linen, is eating porridge with his fingers. He stops to yell his name. The doors open: GUY. Still dusty from riding.

GUY

In the desert, I had a thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNALD

That is what the desert is for. Did you come to kill me for giving your name? Because I haven't. And won't.

GUY

Be as much at peace as you can in here. You will not be here long.

REYNALD

And you? Do you think that the king really wants you at the head of the army when his is gone? Do you?

GUY leans against the wall, thinking.

REYNALD (CONT'D)

Do you think your wife does?

GUY

I have a problem.

REYNALD

I saw him at Kerak. Celebrated.

GUY

Precisely.

REYNALD

You must beware of a popular man. As do, I think, the Templars.

GUY

Precisely.

INT. THE KING'S CHAMBERS. LATER

BALIAN looks down at the dying king.

THE KING

It is time to conclude my affairs.

(a beat)

You are the Marshal of Jerusalem.

(BALIAN looks up)

And you are a peer of this kingdom.

Do you know what that means?

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

THE KING (CONT'D)

No one can rule a kingdom who cannot lead troops in battle. Tiberias will not live forever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The KING sits up, stands, and under his own power goes to his chair.

THE KING (CONT'D)

I cannot die with there being a chance of Guy taking power through my sister. He will make war against the Muslims, who are only too ready to take this Kingdom. Will you protect my nephew when he is king?

BALIAN

Yes.

THE KING

Would you marry Sibylla were she free?

BALIAN stares at the floor for a long time. He has been offered his desires. He finally looks up.

BALIAN

And Guy?

TIBERIAS

He will be executed on the instant you say yes. With all of his knights who do not swear to you.

BALIAN must now give away the woman he loves.

BALIAN

I cannot be the cause of that.

TIBERIAS

You are not in your forge anymore, boy. Do it.

The KING raises his hand for silence. TIBERIAS, exasperated, leaves the room. THE KING watches BALIAN.

BALIAN

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

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

THE KING

...Yes.

BALIAN

You have my love. And my answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN takes the wrapped hands and bows.

INT. THE HALL OUTSIDE THE KING'S ROOMS. MOMENTS LATER

TIBERIAS leans against the wall. BALIAN comes out OS. All on Tiberias as he realizes: Balian possibly isn't going to do it.

TIBERIAS
(coming closer)

BALIAN
He has made me Marshal of Jerusalem. I will protect the kingdom, and the new king. To the rest, I have said no.

TIBERIAS
I understand. I do. But if you do not marry Sibylla--

BALIAN
I will not kill a man in cold blood or for profit.

TIBERIAS
(interrupts, pleading)
Who is he that you save his life? He's a man who hates you, who has insulted you...I play Devil...but for the salvation of this kingdom. Compromise yourself.
(Balian is backing away from him)
Jerusalem does not need "a perfect knight". This is the world.

BALIAN
No...it is his kingdom, and it is my life. And both are kingdoms of conscience, or nothing.

BALIAN moves on. He sees: GUY. GUY (who has not heard the previous) stares at him hollowly.

GUY
A hundred against ten thousand.

Slow clapping from Guy. BALIAN gives the man whose life he has saved a long, long, look, and then continues on his way.

INT. THE COURTYARD AT BALIAN'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS

Moonlight in the pool. BALIAN sits down and looks at the water. PALMS blow overhead, reminiscent of Ibelin. Horse's hooves, OS, and someone comes in behind Balian. BALIAN looks around. It is SIBYLLA, cloaked.

SIBYLLA

I see a man who could be great,
unless he chooses to be "good". If
you do not join with me, I am left
with Guy.

BALIAN

You would see your husband dead.

SIBYLLA

For Jerusalem. For my son. For
love.

BALIAN

What kind of "love" is that?

SIBYLLA

Who are you to refuse a king? You
refuse my son.

BALIAN

I refuse to do murder. Especially
of a man who stands between me and
what I want.

(Sibylla is shaken)

And Jerusalem. Look into your
heart. Do you have any idea of
Jerusalem except that it is yours?

SIBYLLA

(a long pause, and an
honest answer)

It is mine. My grandfather took
Jerusalem in blood. I will keep it
in the same way, or any way I can,
for my family, for my son. I am
what I am. I offer you that, and
the world...you say no.

BALIAN

Do you think I am Guy? That I would
sell my soul for "the world", or
even you? Do you think that I am
a...thing...that can be used?

SIBYLLA looks up at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA

I think you are a man. And I think there will be a day when you wish you had done a little evil, to do a greater good.

SIBYLLA exits. BALIAN stares after her.

INT. SIBYLLA'S ROOMS. LATER

PUSH through the rooms to find SIBYLLA. She crushes a rose, stem and all, and the blood rills down her wrist.

EXT. IBELIN. DAY

THE WATERWHEEL TURNS, spilling water into a ditch which runs off into the fields. BALIAN, covered with dust, looks at the wheel turning. Then at the crops. IBELIN KIDS are staring at him. He wanders out of shot.

INT. SIBYLLA'S ROOMS. NIGHT

SIBYLLA is showing her son a GLOBE of the world.

SIBYLLA

That is England, where Richard is King. And here is France. We have lands there. Very green.

BOY

Will I ever see France?

SIBYLLA

But you must be king. Here.

BOY

Why?

She looks sad and guilty. A sound. SIBYLLA looks at: TIBERIAS. She stands.

TIBERIAS

The king wants you. He needs you.

SIBYLLA

I cannot bear to look at him. He knows this. It does not mean I do not love him.

TIBERIAS

(imploring her)

Go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sibylla nods. It is something she knew she must do anyway. TIBERIAS stays looking at the boy for a moment.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)
May God defend you.

TIBERIAS goes out. The BOY plays with the candle flame. He touches it with one hand-- and draws the hand back, in pain. He touches the flame with his other and (the fingers touching the flame OS) does not draw the hand back.

INT. THE KING'S DEATHCHAMBER. MOMENTS LATER

The KING, wearing his mask, is breathing raggedly. SIBYLLA approaches, down the long room. The King's PHYSICIANS back away. She kneels beside her brother's bed, as if at a coffin at a wake.

THE KING
Do you remember when I was a boy...

SIBYLLA
And when you defeated Saladin. You were sixteen...

She cries.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)
You have never not been beautiful.
In every act. In every word.

THE KING
Remember me as I was.

SIBYLLA
(in tears)
I will. I do.

The mask moves: a nod. SIBYLLA kisses the mask.

EXT. THE HALLWAY. NIGHT

GUY is standing outside as Sibylla comes out. He looks strangely more needy and in love than villainous. SIBYLLA looks at him evenly.

SIBYLLA
If my son has your knights, you have a wife.

GUY
Unless I am made head of the Army we have no bargain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA nods and moves on.

INT. THE KING'S DEATHCHAMBER. TWILIGHT

Move through the columned room. THE KING IS DEAD AND LIES IN STATE.

SIBYLLA kneels at the end of the room. She crosses herself, and stands to leave, but then as if in a dream moves towards the biered, masked, body. She reaches out trembling fingers and removes the mask. Here for the first time we see what leprosy has done to the king, her brother. She stumbles back, and drops the MASK on the stones. Then, as she looks up, it is the Sibylla who will do what must be done. Whatever it may be.

SIBYLLA
Long live the King.

EXT. JERUSALEM STREETS. TWILIGHT

BELLS are tolling, funereally. PEOPLE are wailing in mourning, throwing dust on themselves. A few brighter lights might actually be packing.

INT. THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. CONTINUOUS

Torchlight. All the nobles of the kingdom. The BOY is given scepter and orb, and crowned by the Patriarch. SIBYLLA is on her knees, watching, GUY beside her. The Patriarch turns toward them.

PATRIARCH
Do you swear before God to be his
true regents in peace and war.

SIBYLLA and GUY nod, swearing, and are anointed with oil. GUY is given a baton signifying command of the Army. He looks at it. Then up.

EXT. WHITE DESERT. DAY

A CREOSOTE BUSH. A stone falls near it. Another. The third stone throws a spark, and the bush explodes into flame: the burning bush of Moses.

HOSPITALER (OS)
I do not hear a voice.

BALIAN
Nor I.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As the HOSPITALER walks his horse follows him, almost magically.

HOSPITALER
Do you love her?

BALIAN nods.

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
You've followed your conscience.
Your heart will mend.

Balian stares into the light.

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
You are Marshal of Jerusalem now.
Your duty is with the people of the
city. No matter who is on the
throne.

BALIAN nods. The HOSPITALER mounts.

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
I go to pray.

BALIAN
For what?

HOSPITALER
For the strength to endure what is
to come.

BALIAN
The Muslims will come when he is
dead.

HOSPITALER
The reckoning is to come for what
was done a hundred years before.
The Muslims will never forget. Nor
should they.

The HOSPITALER wanders away into a mirage.

EXT. A GARDEN. DAY

A TURBANED SERVANT is running, leading the BOY'S PONY. THE BOY, his dress now velvet, regal, bounces happily in the saddle. SIBYLLA walks with COUNCILORS.

INT. THE THRONE ROOM. DAY

The BOY sits at a large draped table, swinging his legs, bored.

SIBYLLA, tired, finishes writing-- in Arabic!

PATRIARCH

My lady, are you sure this is wise,
to show your intentions to Saladin.
Better to let him wonder...

SIBYLLA

We keep my brother's peace.

GUY, overhearing this, bored among the courtiers, rolls his eyes.

The KEEPER OF THE SEAL is waiting, with wax hot in a vessel of some sort. SIBYLLA puts the paper in front of the boy and guides his clumsy hand to sign.

DETAIL: "BALDWIN V IERUSALEM"

SIBYLLA nods. The KEEP OF THE SEAL brings the smoking wax to the paper and as he does it dribbles across the BOY'S HAND. SIBYLLA notices that the BOY is staring out at the garden, entranced, oblivious. She covers his hand with her handkerchief. But the PATRIARCH has seen.

SIBYLLA, her "mask of office" in place. The JERUSALEM SEAL is pressed into the wax.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

The king is tired. I thank you all.

INT. THE KING'S ROOMS. NIGHT

Amidst candles, the boy, lying on his back on a draped bed, is examined by MUSLIM PHYSICIANS in black as a servant distracts him with a monkey or a Punchinello puppet. SIBYLLA leans against a wall, breathing sharply as if hyperventilating but holding herself together. She sees her son in the king's rooms, surrounded as the king was by physicians...she is wobbly...ashen-faced. A PHYSICIAN examines the boy's hand (still with the remains of a burn on it) and then moves to the feet. Gently he feels them. Then he sticks a pin into one. The BOY does not react. The PHYSICIAN looks up to SIBYLLA, who begins to tremble. The shadow of the monkey or the puppet on the wall.

INT. SIBYLLA'S ROOMS. NIGHT

SIBYLLA is writing, alone. State papers. TIBERIAS stands out of the shadows. He and SIBYLLA stare at each other.

TIBERIAS

There is a rumor.

SIBYLLA raises her eyes.

SIBYLLA

Call it treason, and kill those who whisper it.

(writes)

Starting with the Patriarch.

TIBERIAS

Does the boy have your brother's disease?

SIBYLLA slowly nods. She stands, and TIBERIAS embraces her. He has known her her entire life.

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

(hollowly)

We must call it a lie. Condemn it outright. Show the boy as active...

SIBYLLA

As you did with my brother? With his reins tied to his hands? How long before he wears a mask? Will you have one made for him?

TIBERIAS

I am sorry.

SIBYLLA

To the Muslims he will deserve it. They will say he deserved it as they said of my brother... How did my boy deserve it?

(a beat)

Jerusalem is dead, Tiberias.

TIBERIAS fears it is true enough.

SIBYLLA (CONT'D)

No kingdom is worth my son alive in hell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS
(finally)

No.

SIBYLLA
I will go to hell instead.

EXT. THE GARDEN. DAY

A brilliant, luminous, day. The BOY is happily riding his pony, holding his LEAD KNIGHT. This time SIBYLLA is leading him. She is stone-faced. She leads him towards a "summer house" at the end of the garden.

EXT. THE SUMMER HOUSE. TWILIGHT

SIBYLLA uncorks a bottle, and pours a cup. Her fingers do not tremble. She holds it to the boy who smiles radiantly at his mother on the best day of his life, and drinks.

LATER

The boy's hand opens and the LEAD KNIGHT falls to the floor.

EXT. THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM (GORGE). DAY

We see: A KNIGHT. It resolves as BALIAN, riding along the road. He dismounts to drink at rocky stream. He wears mail, but no helmet. He looks up and sees (coming down the track by a solitary tree): THREE TEMPLAR KNIGHTS, Guy's assassins, arrayed across the road. They are heavily armed, enigmatic. BALIAN mounts, and rides towards them. One rides slightly forward, with a lance. BALIAN grips his shield. He has no lance, only an undrawn sword. The FIRST TEMPLAR lowers his lance, and charges BALIAN, no time to draw a sword, takes the lance on his shield, shatters it. The TEMPLAR takes out a mace. BALIAN hacks him in the teeth with the edge of the heavy shield, unhorsing him. The SECOND TEMPLAR spears in Balian's horse. BALIAN hits the ground running, his shield lost. He draws the big sword. The SECOND TEMPLAR rides down with sword raised. BALIAN swings the sword and hits the horse in the teeth (which is how a man on foot deals with cavalry). The horse spills its ride. BALIAN runs forward and kills THE SECOND TEMPLAR, and then as he tries to catch the First Templar's horse is cut across the back of the head by a sword blow. His hands slip from the leather. He staggers, ready to fight. The remaining THIRD TEMPLAR rides at him. Horses race wildly around, raising dust. The remaining Templar, dismounted comes walking out of the dust, a MACE swinging.

BALIAN
Is this why you came to the Holy
Land?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The TEMPLAR looks doubtful. BALIAN is aware of the blood he is losing.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Come on.

The MACE hums. BALIAN ducks, and bashes in at the man's face, getting inside the mace. The men fight hand to hand. He crawls to the fallen man and after a close struggle (Balian is losing consciousness) crams his dagger into the eye. He lies across the body of the dead man, bleeding from the back of the head.

EXT. JERUSALEM. NIGHT

Torches flare on the battlements. BELLS gong and echo through the deserted streets.

INT. THE DUNGEON. LATER

The doors open. REYNALD looks up. GUY, stunned by developments, leans against the wall. He holds a sword wrapped in its belt. BELLS on sound.

REYNALD

The boy is in heaven.

(GUY leans against the wall, nods)

Your wife has no more stone than anyone I have known. God protect her. I admire good. I just can't do it.

GUY

She is in the crypt and will not come out.

REYNALD

Have the Templars removed your problem?

GUY nods, hollowly. He gives REYNALD his (Reynald's) sword.

GUY

Give me a war, Reynald.

REYNALD

That is what I do.

GUY walks out leaving the prison door open. BELLS carry over into...

INT. THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. DAY

Torchlight. All the nobles of the kingdom. SIBYLLA, looking beautiful, drugged, is crowned by the Patriarch. She sits on the throne. As the Patriarch backs away she looks aside and sees: GUY'S HAND on her shoulder.

EXT. THE DESERT. 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. REYNALD quire simply cannot help himself.

REYNALD

I am what I am. Someone has to be.

He goes up to a captured MUSLIM WOMAN and...Unveils her. Eyes swerve up.

KNIGHT

That is Saladin's sister.

REYNALD

I know.

OMITTED

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

There will be no quarter.

IMAD

Godfrey's son is lord defender. He is honest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALADIN

If they do not surrender Jerusalem
they die.

SALADIN cuts his palm; and with a finger puts a streak of
blood on his head.

INT. THE THRONE ROOM IN JERUSALEM. NIGHT

GUY is drinking. Not looking very much like being King was
his best idea. He is listening to a SARACEN MESSENGER.

SARACEN MESSENGER

Where is ibn Barzin?

GUY

Who is ibn Barzin?

SARACEN MESSENGER

It is our name for the son of
Godfrey.

GUY

You will speak to me.

SARACEN MESSENGER

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
Jerusalem has now a false king. The
Sultan demands the surrender of
Jerusalem.

GUY

Does he.

The SARACEN MESSENGER nods.

SARACEN MESSENGER

What answer do you give to Saladin?

GUY takes out his dagger.

GUY

This.

He kills the SARACEN MESSENGER, driving point through the
underjaw and into the brain. He lets the body fall.

GUY (CONT'D)

Send the head to Damascus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA in her mourning clothes stands shocked in the doorway, blinking. GUY looks up to her.

GUY (CONT'D)
 (mocking her thoughts)
 "What have I done?"

The TEMPLARS and GUY'S MEN, by prearrangement, kill the PALACE GUARD and HOSPITALERS. GUY walks slowly up to his wife, grabs her face, and kisses her forehead.

GUY (CONT'D)
 You've served your purpose. You
 poisoned the wrong one.

TIBERIAS stepping forward is confronted by Guy's PIKEMEN.

GUY (CONT'D)
 I won't confine you. I leave you
 your power, your knights. You may
 try civil war. But then the
 Saracens would see us divided and
 come in. And so much for Christ's
 kingdom. As they call it in other
 parts of the world.
 (a beat)
 I have the town, I have the palace,
 I have its guard, I have the
 Templars, I have the Patriarch, and
 I have the crown. It's done,
 Tiberias. I am Jerusalem.
 (moving away)
 Assemble the Army.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. DAY

The full ARMY OF THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM is assembled. Enormous ranks of horsemen, each in their "order" before the city walls. Ranks of FOOTSOLDIERS to left and right. TURCOPOLES riding around the fringe, raising dust. The BANNER OF THE HOLY CROSS flies near GUY'S TENT.

INT. GUY'S RED TENT. DAY

An open-sided affair, a full view of the camp. Horses of the nobility of the kingdom held outside. GUY has arranged himself in a thronelike chair at the end of his council table. BARONS in attendance. A commotion outside. GUY goes to the tent opening and we see:

BALIAN, without armor, walks slowly in past the lines of mounted men at arms, who salute him. Commotion among the FOOTSOLDIERS are well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY is too observed to reveal his thoughts on the appearance of Balian. He returns nervously to his chair. BALIAN enters the crowded tent. He looks for a long time at the Templar Master. He and Guy stare at each other.

GUY

Now this assemblage of barons is...
by some loose definition..

(looks up at Balian)
complete. There are those among you
who may disagree with our
succession but it is war and I...am
the king.

(looks up nervously)
We march at once. What say this
council?

ALMOST ALL

Aye.

BALIAN

No.

TIBERIAS looks up and smiles. GUY is not smiling.

GUY

There are barons, and barons, my
lords. This is a curious one.

BALIAN

If you must have a war, this army
must not move away from water.

TIBERIAS

What he says is true. If you march
in the head of this season, you
will kill this army.

BALIAN

You have a chance to hold the city.
But if you move out against
Saladin, this army will be
destroyed and the city left
defenseless.

GUY

When I wish a blacksmith as my
advisor in war I will let him know.
You will not join this army.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN

Saladin wants you to come out. He is waiting for you to make that mistake. He knows his man.

BALIAN goes out. Guy staring after him.

TEMPLAR MASTER

We should meet the enemies of God.

GUY

So we shall.

TIBERIAS

You do so without my knights.

GUY

Then I will have the glory. You've had yours, years and years ago, Tiberias. It is time for mine.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. MOMENTS LATER

TIBERIAS joins BALIAN, and they walk towards the city gates, moving through the ARMY. BALIAN'S MEN and TIBERIAS' MEN separate from the army. Reaction on the faces of the men.

TIBERIAS

The boy is dead.

BALIAN

Did Guy kill him?

TIBERIAS

No.

(Balian looks at him)

He was a leper like his uncle. His mother gave him peace.

(Balian starts to speak and cannot, nearly stumbles, and Tiberias holds him)

She "let him go"-- and Jerusalem with him.

BALIAN, shattered, nods, and walks on.

BALIAN

We must look to the defenses. When Saladin destroys Guy he will come.

TIBERIAS nods. BALIAN sees: the HOSPITALER, mounted, among other knights of his order. The HOSPITALER rides out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN (CONT'D)
You go with the Army?

HOSPITALER
With my Order. Have I lived? Will you remember me? What I have said to you?

BALIAN nods.

HOSPITALER (CONT'D)
I will tell Godfrey what I have seen you become.

They clasp hands. Responding to an order OS the HOSPITALER turns horse and rides off with the other knights.

INT. THE PALACE. NIGHT

BALIAN moves along the hall, with Almaric and his men. A TEMPLAR GUARD interposes. BALIAN kills him. Another TEMPLAR begins to draw his sword. BALIAN disarms him and backs him against the wall, dagger point at his throat. The PATRIARCH sees him. BALIAN hands over the TEMPLAR GUARD to Almaric and grabs the Patriarch by the throat.

BALIAN
Where is the Queen of Jerusalem?

PATRIARCH
Guy is head of the army...and of course a husband has rights, even over a Queen...

UNDECIDED GUARDS appear. BALIAN cuts the Patriarch's purse, and throws the purse to the UNDECIDED GUARDS...who now decide which way the wind is blowing, take the money, and retreat.

BALIAN
Are you a man, my lord bishop, who looks to his own interest? You have that reputation.

The PATRIARCH nods. Yes yes yes.

BALIAN (CONT'D)
If you obstruct me, I will kill you. There it is.

INT. THE CRYPT. MOMENTS LATER

SIBYLLA is praying. A key clanks in the lock. She turns and sees:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN, framed in the doorway. She stands, and lowers her eyes. BALIAN comes forward.

BALIAN

It does not matter what you have done. What matters is what we do now.

Sibylla looks up.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Guy will lose the army. I must prepare to defend the city.

SIBYLLA

Open the gates...If Saladin comes in his full strength we are not defensible. Not even if the army were here.

BALIAN

I have...decided otherwise. When they come, they will not get in.

SIBYLLA looks up as BALIAN moves fast out of the room. The doorway is now empty.

EXT. JERUSALEM. VARIOUS. DAY

MONTAGE of BALIAN, unarmored, directing the arrangement of defenses. A broken wall swarming with MASONS. CITIZENS are armed with PIKES and SPEARS. BALIAN supervises the placement of a BALLISTA. ETC, ETC.

EXT. PALACE BALCONY. CONTINUOUS

SIBYLLA watches from a high window.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

A HUGE SHOT of the desert. At a distance of about a mile, we see the ARMY OF JERUSALEM. It is straggling across the plain, below two hills understood to be the Horns of Hattin. It is no fine "hedgehog" but a rabble baking in the sun. Into the shot, a BOOTED FOOT in a stirrup.

REVERSE IT to reveal: SALADIN. He is staring, veiled across. Beside him, IMAD. The MULLAH rides up.

MULLAH

God wills it.

SALADIN nods. MUSLIM HORSE ride up the hill.

EXT. THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. TWILIGHT

TIBERIAS, staring intently out into the desert, comes along to find BALIAN, sitting rigidly on the ramparts, drinking water from a skin.

BALIAN
Can you sense it?

BALIAN stands and looks out into the desert himself.

TIBERIAS
I know at least that no riders have
come...

BALIAN nods.

EXT. HATTIN. DAY (HELICOPTER OR CABLE)

In THICK SMOKE (obscuring distances), 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).

EXT. HATTIN. CONTINUOUS

SALADIN, stone-faced, walks over the battlefield. IMAD is with him.

SALADIN
Kill the knights of the religious
orders.

IMAD looks taken aback.

SALADIN (CONT'D)
They are fanatics and no peace will
ever be made with them. They will
think one thing their entire lives,
and they will never stop thinking
it.
(bitterly, staring across
the battlefield)
Kill them.

SALADIN walks on through the smoke.

EXT. HATTIN. LATER

The TEMPLARS and HOSPITALERS are being butchered one by one by MULLAHS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. Our HOSPITALER is brought forward onto the bloody ground.

MULLAH

There is no god but God.

The HOSPITALER looks up at his executioner and smiles.

HOSPITALER

I know.

The MULLAH after a moment of confusion slashes down.

EXT. THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. CONTINUOUS

BALIAN lowers his head. Wind and dust. As if he is aware of what has happened. He is still bowing when Tiberias' hand touches his shoulder.

TIBERIAS

Come one.

INT. SALADIN'S TENT. LATER

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.

REYNALD

(undisturbed, drinks the
last drop)

I drink water for what it is.

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 touches his fingers in REYNALD's blood and puts a mark in blood upon his own forehead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYNALD is dragged out and (as the crowd screams) butchered. GUY, 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

Were you not close enough to a great king to see how to imitate one? Could you not learn by example?

GUY knows he has destroyed the world. Eyes luminous in smoke blackened face.

EXT. THE DESERT. MORNING

TIBERIAS and BALIAN are galloping with a handful of men in Godfrey's livery. BALIAN reins in, staring ahead. He raises his arm, and points.

BALIAN

There.

THEIR POV:

THE SKY IS BLACK WITH VULTURES.

They ride slowly on, and as they crest a hill, we see, as they do:

THE BATTLEGROUND. Ten thousand men lied dead. Dead horses and men are torn by vultures. Saladin's army has moved on. BALIAN and TIBERIAS stare. A mound of executed Templars and Hospitalers has attracted the most vultures. TIBERIAS slowly makes the sign of the cross. He lowers his head. When he raises his face, he is a new man.

TIBERIAS

I have given Jerusalem my whole life. All. There is no more.

BALIAN

Tiberias...

TIBERIAS takes hold of the cross on his surcoat and tears it off. He rides a little to the side, staring towards the 10,000 dead.

TIBERIAS

First I thought I fought for God.
Then I realized I fought for money
and land.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIBERIAS (CONT'D)

And then I was ashamed and the King came to me and said: let us try a better world. A better world has been tried and is now impossible.

BALIAN

Tiberias!

TIBERIAS looks at him as if for a moment he does not recognize him.

TIBERIAS

There is no more "Jerusalem". I go to Cyprus. Will you come.

BALIAN

No.

TIBERIAS

Saladin must move his army from water to water. You have four days. Perhaps five. God be with you. You are the son of your father. Be without fear. God does love you. He has finished with me.

BALIAN takes his hand. TIBERIAS rides off. After him, with looks of apology at BALIAN, so do, one by one, all the men. Balian sits his horse alone.

EXT. THE DESERT. DAY

BALIAN is riding back, hard, to Jerusalem. Out of the low ground before him come--twenty MUSLIM RIDERS, all in white, as if in death-shrouds.

BALIAN turns his horse to the right (nearly putting the animal down), and sees: MORE WHITE RIDERS. Within an instant he is surrounded:

SALADIN'S GUARD. BALIAN does not bother drawing a weapon. He looks for a breakout as the circle closes...but then he sees: SALADIN. SALADIN rides forward, holding up his palm. The men look at each other. Horses circling. SALADIN is veiled, unreadable.

SALADIN

I knew your father.

(a beat)

He nearly killed me in Lebanon. On a great horse he crashed through my guard, and scattered them.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALADIN (CONT'D)

He was not five paces from me when an arrow struck through the eye of his horse. I knew his face...and his quality. We called him ibn Barzin. I did not know he had a son.

BALIAN

He did. He does.

WHITE RIDERS come closer. SALADIN disarms BALIAN, taking Godfrey's sword.

SALADIN

If you promise to fight no more against the Muslims, you may go.

BALIAN

If you march on Jerusalem I cannot promise.

SALADIN

I do march on Jerusalem. I will take it as it was taken, in blood. Commoners, court and Queen will die. Every soul.

BALIAN

Then I cannot promise not to fight you.

SALADIN

Your choice is death, or that promise.

BALIAN

I cannot promise.

SALADIN

Then your sentence is death.

BALIAN waits for it. Instead of death his is given: GODFREY'S SWORD. Politely.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

Every man dies.

(he mounts)

I will take Jerusalem. I cannot do otherwise. Understand.

BALIAN

I must defend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SALADIN nods, and canters away, his guard galloping after, leaving Balian in the dust.

EXT. THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. DAY

MANGONELS are being hoisted to the towers by Papal troops. A GATE is being blocked up by Masons, etc. MONTAGE of SIEGE PREPARATIONS, supervised by Balian.

EXT. JERUSALEM. A SQUARE. TWILIGHT

CATTLE and FOOD are coming into the town. BALIAN, in a fury, is checking his organized defences. ARMS are being distributed to a crowd.

PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

We must quit the city.

BALIAN

And be massacred on the open road?
Saladin's cavalry is between us and
the sea.

PATRIARCH

I do not mean the people. I mean
us.

BALIAN moves on.

PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

(dancing after Balian)

We have not enough knights.

BALIAN

(furious)

Truly?

BALIAN turns to a PEASANT BOY, perhaps of 16.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

What is your condition?

BOY

I am servant to the Patriarch.

PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

You are a slave. That is my slave!

BALIAN

Is he.

BALIAN jumps up on the steps of the Holy Sepulcher.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN (CONT'D)

You know who I am.

(the crowd goes silent)

None of us took this city from Muslims. No Muslim of the great army now coming against us was alive when it was lost. We fight over an offense we did not give, against those who were not alive to be offended. What is Jerusalem? Your holy places overlay the Jewish temple which the Romans pulled down. The Muslim places overlay yours. Which is more holy? The wall? The mosque? This sepulcher? Who has claim? NO ONE has claim... All have claim.

PATRIARCH

Blasphemy.

BALIAN

We defend the city not to defend these stones, which are either meaningless or have too many meanings, but the people living in these walls who will die unless we do not defend them. Unless we kill the army coming against us every person in Jerusalem will die. Say that God is with you if you want, but I will trust in each of you. Trust in me. I swear not to God but to each of you that with your help I will kill Saladin's army in front of these walls.

No cheering. He jumps down. To the BOY, holding him.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

You are a slave?

(the BOY nods)

Kneel.

The BOY kneels. The PATRIARCH is aghast.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Every man of arms or capable of bearing them, kneel.

The CROWD kneels, BOYS, SERGEANTS, MERCHANTS, OLD PEASANTS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Be without fear in the face of your enemies. Be brave and upright, that God may love thee. Speak the truth even if it leads to your death. Safeguard the helpless. That is your oath.

The BOY can't believe is. BALIAN hits him.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

(to the BOY alone)

And that's so you remember it.

BALIAN goes to raise the next guy. The Man's face raises, and we see:

THE GRAVEDIGGER, now battle-scarred, rich. Balian smiles.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Rise a knight.

GRAVEDIGGER

Master Blacksmith.

BALIAN

Master Gravedigger. You have come to the right place.

He moves on out of the murmuring (and emboldened) crowd. The PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM staring after him.

PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

(nearly crying)

Does making a man a knight make him a fight better?

BALIAN is surprised by the question.

BALIAN

(very simply)

Yes.

SIBYLLA has seen it all.

EXT. JERUSALEM. DAWN

Tents are everywhere on the hills. The SARACEN ARMY is surrounding the city--at prayer. Hundreds of thousands of men bow and vocalize in unison. ENGINES are in place. Their crews praying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jerusalem's ARCHES AND SPEARMEN stare out from the walls at the enormous enemy.

BALIAN stands on the walls, at a tower. He looks to his side and sees:

SIBYLLA. They stand together, windblown, looking out at their deaths.

The prayer still continues. Allahu akhbar. Thousands bowing as one.

SIBYLLA

Forgive me.

BALIAN

I do.

SIBYLLA

Save the people from what I have done.

BALIAN

I will.

SIBYLLA kisses him. BALIAN looks at her heartbroken.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

You had better go.

SIBYLLA

If you wanted the world more, I would love you less.

Sibylla moves along the wall. BALIAN looks chaotically out at the MUSLIM army. As prayer stops...A solitary figure becomes distinct on a hill: SALADIN. He raises his palm. BALIAN, on the wall, does the same.

PATRIARCH

For God's sake, talk terms.

BALIAN

There are none.

(moving along the "line",
checking machines, men)

Keep your heads down. Take cover
when the barrage begins...

PATRIARCH

One may convert to Islam, and
repent later. It can be done. There
is dispensation in these cases...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Balian looks at the cross on the Patriarch's breast. Then so does the Patriarch.

BALIAN

You have taught me a great deal
about religion.

We hear tinkling bells, and laughter. GUY, tied backwards on a tiny donkey, with a conical dunce cap on his head, is driven on display along the front of the Muslim Army, below the walls of Jerusalem. He keeps his dignity as much as possible. SIBYLLA watches.

BALIAN now with ALMARIC watches from the walls as SALADIN rides alone onto a hill, with his guard. He looks towards the city. Almaric crosses himself as one cry of Allahu Akhbar rings out.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

Here it comes.

The enormous BOMBARDMENT commences. DEFENDERS, as Balian instructed, take cover on the walls. SARACEN ENGINES execute one of the largest bombardments of the day.

INT. SIBYLLA'S ROOMS. MOMENTS LATER

SIBYLLA has seen it all. She removes her jewels. Then begins to remove her fine, complicated, clothes. She puts on a gray shift, staring into nothingness.

EXT. BEFORE JERUSALEM. DAY

MUSLIM INFANTRY (with LADDERMEN) moves forward, slowly, and then at a run. CROSSBOWMEN slaughter the men below.

ENGINES FIRE and as the MUSLIM ARMY screams and Saracen drums beat, a SIEGE TOWER, ARCHES 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 WALLS OF JERUSALEM. LATER

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 at the center of the repulse catches an arrow through the left wrist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN
(clutching the arm)
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. BALIAN watches: and nods at Almaric.

INT. CATACOMBS. NIGHT

BALIAN moves through the rows of wounded and dead. A PHYSICIAN cuts the jugular of a smashed man and the blood is caught in a basin. BALIAN sits to have his hand bound. The FINGER is parted from the hand, and put in a basin. The hand is washed, and wrapped. A CLOAKED WOMAN does the bandaging. She raises her eyes. Sibylla. BALIAN looks at her evenly. Then wordlessly he embraces her, staring past her bent head, SIBYLLA weeping.

EXT. THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. DAY

SPEARMEN knock over the ladders that have been gotten up. A melee along the walls. BALIAN, moving through smoke, waves his arm, and GREEK FIRE is flung straight down into the infantry. As hundreds of Saracens burn...CROSSBOWMEN en masse come forward to crowd the walls and begin to slaughter the Saracens.

EXT. ANOTHER WALL OF JERUSALEM. LATER

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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.

EXT. INSIDE THE BROKEN WALL. CONTINUOUS

A SHIELD WALL forms, BALIAN directing it. Defenders (all the knights there are, including the first BOY made Knight) go shield to shield.

ARCHES 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: THE GRAVEDIGGER. They nod at each other. The SARACEN ARCHES fire a volley of arrows and the INFANTRY charges. 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. We see that the line of defense is marked by immense piles of dead. Saracens tangled with Europeans inside the breach in the wall. Hundreds of dead: thousands perhaps. The defense of the breach has nearly killed the Saladin's infantry. BALIAN wanders, stumbling, among the bodies. The GRAVEDIGGER lies dead, hacked across the face.

BALIAN

Remember me in France.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

ALMARIC
(covered with blood)
They will ask for terms. They will
ask for terms.

EXT. BEFORE SALADIN'S TENT. DAY

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. GUY, no longer tied to the donkey, is being treated as Saladin's guest. Rubbing his wrists and staring at Balian with a strange look of hatred and admiration mixed.

SALADIN
We must discuss Jerusalem. It's
King
(nods at Guy)
has surrendered it but there seems
to be a difficulty.

BALIAN
You offered no quarter and we ask
one. What has changed?

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 that
drives men mad.

SALADIN
I wonder if it would not be better
if you did.
(looks reflectively at the
city)
You will destroy it?

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALIAN (CONT'D)

I swear to God that to take this city will be the end of you.

SALADIN

You cannot stand another assault.

BALIAN

Make one, and we will see.

GUY is watching, fascinated, what he might have been.

SALADIN

Your city is full of women, and children. 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? I ask none.

SALADIN walks apart. Long pause. Then he turns.

SALADIN

I will give every soul safe-conduct to Christian lands. Every soul. The women, the children, the old, and all your knights and soldiers. Your Queen. Your King...

(GUY tenses)

I leave to what God will make of him.

MULLAHS object. BALIAN staring at SALADIN stares at Balian with hatred.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

No one will be robbed or harmed, I swear to God.

BALIAN

The Christians butchered every Muslim within the walls when they took this city.

SALADIN

I am not those men. I am Saladin.

BALIAN

Then on these terms I surrender Jerusalem.

EXT. THE GATE. DAY

BALIAN comes back in through the gate. SIBYLLA stands there in her simple clothing.

BALIAN

We surrender the city in the morning, and will be safely escorted to the sea.

SIBYLLA

The nobles...

BALIAN

Everyone is safe to go. I would not have surrendered otherwise.

SIBYLLA looks distraught at Jerusalem.

BALIAN (CONT'D)

If this is God's kingdom he can dispose of it as he likes. Your brother's kingdom was here.

(he touches her heart)

That kingdom is not surrendered.

EXT. INSIDE THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. LATER

In the square before the palace Christians with their goods loaded are forming caravans. BALIAN, moving among them, mounted, suddenly looks around as...GUY, fully armed, leaps a destrier over some baggage and slams at a gallop into Balian's horse. BALIAN'S horse goes down screaming. BALIAN rolls in the dust. Guy rides around him.

GUY

They say now you are beloved by God. How much of that am I to take? There is already a song about Jerusalem and its false and wicked king.

GUY takes a battle axe from a retainer.

GUY (CONT'D)

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

(smiles)

I am not a bad man. I am only a man making my way.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY (CONT'D)

I am simply making my way. As all men are...except for you. Do you think you are a perfect knight? Do you? Do you?

BALIAN

I am not the man who lost the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

As Balian walks away, GUY turns his horse to ride him down.

A CHORUS OF KNIGHTS dismount and fight him.

GUY realizes he must. He dismounts. He draws his sword. BALIAN waits for him. GUY moves like lightning and cuts a gash in Balian's face.

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. BALIAN stands waiting. GUY moves to kill him. The Men collide, and GUY, spinning away, eludes a backswing, catches the blade with his hand, 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 MUSLIMS crowd close, shouting. They know their sport: and out of nowhere they are at the World Cup. GUY 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 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 CHRISTIAN ONE. GUY is still surprised by the blood coming from his nose and is repelling Balian almost idly. BALIAN missed a blow and crashes into a wall. Guy's sword striking where Balian's head was a moment before. BALIAN lunges and GUY, letting him pass, crashes the pommel of his sword down on the back of hi head. BALIAN sprawls on the cobbles. GUY goes after him, cuts, misses, is wounded in the side by a thrust. GUY parries a second blow and stabs BALIAN (we cannot tell where or how badly) and attacks violently, relentlessly.

The crowd follows the exhausted fighters, who face each other, bleeding, breathless, barely on their feet.

GUY

Water.

It is given him in a skin by one of his knights. GUY goes forward purposefully, to kill BALIAN. BALIAN, staggering, waits. GUY cuts low, Balian, out of breath, barely parries. GUY advances to kill him. BALIAN waits, at the high guard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN is cut, badly, in the next pass. BALIAN takes the "high guard" again. He watches Guy (which is to say his death) advance.

GUY (CONT'D)

(advancing)

"Be brave and upright that God may love thee. Be without fear in the face of your enemies." We've all heard the words. How dare you believe them. How dare you.

GUY goes for the kill in a move we've seen before. BALIAN parries as he once did with GODFREY but instead of losing his sword as he did long ago in the French wood he meets the next blow and then cuts Guy across the throat.

GUY falls to his knees, trying to speak. He pitches forward. BALIAN, holding Godfrey's sword, stares down at him.

INT. THE PALACE. DAY

BALIAN, his wounds bound by MUSLIM PHYSICIANS, stands. The PHYSICIANS back away respectfully. He moves into the corridor. MUSLIMS are moving through the palace, taking possession. BALIAN looks into TIBERIAS' ROOM. The room is now all MUSLIM CLERKS, going through papers. Balian looks around and sees that SALADIN is standing beside him, alone.

SALADIN

So.

BALIAN

My lord.

SALADIN

I admire the Franks for their courage. It is said that I have learned chivalry from them. Have you heard this?

BALIAN laughs. Saladin smiles.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

"Chivalry". It is like faith. When it is true it is good.

(hands on Balian's shoulder)

I like nothing better than an honorable man.

Starts to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAIL

What is Jerusalem worth?

SALADIN

Nothing.

SALADIN is now walking back along the hall of the captured palace.

SALADIN (CONT'D)

Everything.

INT. SIBYLLA'S ROOMS. MOMENTS LATER

SIBYLLA is sitting before a dressing-mirror. A distorting sheet of polished metal. Staring at an image which is unclear. She is aware of Balian behind her.

SIBYLLA

I am still the Queen of Acre, of Tripolis, of Ascalon.

BALIAN

And I am still a knight. And that is all.

She stands, and looks at him. BALIAN stares at her.

SIBYLLA

What shall I decide?

BALIAN

It is simple. Decide not to be a Queen and I will come to you.

BALIAN has come to the end of the room. He hesitates; and then goes out through the curtains.

EXT. THE DAVID GATE. DAY

A very orderly Christian evacuation. BALIAN joins it, on foot. IMAD appears, holding the magnificent horse that Balian gave him some time ago.

IMAD

(warily)

It is not a very good horse. I will not keep it.

(Balian takes the bridle)

We will meet again.

BALIAN

If we do not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMAD

Taking it poorly bakes no bread.

IMAD walks away into the crowd. Balian leads his horse saddened; but free. GUY'S KNIGHTS trudge past and each of them salute Balian. He returns the nod; rides along the huge stream of refugees...all of whom he has saved. As he begins to be recognized...he pulls the hood of his cloak over his head. As he looks back at Jerusalem...

SARACEN ENGINEERS on top of the church 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.

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 the MULLAH.

MULLAH

God has favored us with victory.
All the glory is God's.

SALADIN walks away from the Mullah. The MULLAH would follow; but IMAD stops him. SALADIN washes, preparing to pray alone. He lays his mat, and, lowering his head, prays.

EXT. THE ROAD TO THE COAST. DAY (ENDING ONE)

The city is no longer visible. THE CHRISTIAN REFUGEES, escorted by Muslim horsemen, trudge through the desert. A WOMAN walks along the edge of the stony road. BALIAN moves along the line. At first he almost passes the woman. He rides alongside her for a while. Then dismounts. BALIAN walks his horse beside the dusty figure.

BALIAN

A Queen never walks.

SIBYLLA

No.
(a beat)
And yet I am walking.

BALIAN

Some say that Jerusalem is the center of the world for forgiveness. For myself, I call it here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIBYLLA nods, and keeps walking beside him. BALIAN leads his horse on, exhausted. They walk together towards the sea. The REFUGEES sing in French, walking through the Holy Land, heading towards the distant sea.

BALIAN tears the cross from his tunic but cannot throw it on the ground. He puts it in his sleeve. Fantastical SARACEN KNIGHTS ride along the column, silk billowing, singing their own song in Arabic.

BALIAN watches them pass, then rides on, hooded, head down. In a perfect MATCH, SNOW begins to fly past his bent head. He turns his horse, dismounts, and we see that he is at the forge. He stands, looking around at the land, the orchard. ON SOUND: HORSES. BALIAN finally stands and looks, raising his hood. CRUSADERS. THE LION OF ENGLAND. Gold on a red tunic.

RICHARD'S KNIGHT

We crusade to recover the Kingdom
of Jerusalem.

BALIAN

You go to where the men speak
Italian and then continue till they
speak something else.

RICHARD'S KNIGHT

We have come by this road to find
the lord who was defender of
Jerusalem.

BALIAN

(bowing)
I am the blacksmith.

RICHARD COUER DE LION sits his horse, staring at Balian. The CRUSADERS pass behind.

RICHARD

And I am the king of England.

BALIAN

I am the blacksmith.

He bows. RICHARD COUER DE LION looks at Balian knowing very well who he is. (He sees the armor lashed to a packhorse). But he nods and rides on. BALIAN turns from the passing Crusaders and enters his old kitchen garden to see A YOUNG TREE. It is one of the trees planted by his wife. He touches the leaves. Balian raises his hood against the falling snow, and moves on to turns to see, at a distance, SIBYLLA, watching him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BALIAN walks his horse to join her.

EXT. THE CROSSROADS. LATER

BALIAN AND SIBYLLA canter through the crossroads and past the local lord's castle without looking back.

BLACK.