

AND THEN THERE WAS SILENCE

By

Michael Bruno

AND THEN THERE WAS SILENCE

FADE IN:

EXT. MEDIEVAL CITY - EVENING

Fading daylight falls over the city of Aldmere, bathing the white buildings with an orange glow as stars begin to wheel overhead.

Lanterns are starting to turn on along the sides of the streets, illuminating the masses of people moving in and out of buildings. Their clothes are ragged, their fair faces covered in dirt, much like the bottoms of the buildings they enter and exit, the white bricks stained with black, brown, and red. They hand each other pieces of brittle cheese, followed by small hard loaves of bread.

Passing over the rooftops, the squalor dissipates until any sign of strife is gone. Lines run between the rooftops, circular lanterns of blues, purples, and greens hanging off of them. Their lights grows stronger as the last rays of sunlight disappear, the rooftops darkening all save for one.

EXT. ROOFTOP - EVENING

People mill about on the rooftop between torso-high rows of hedges, wearing lavish multicolored cloaks and dresses. Tables are set up at the ends of the roof, adorned with meats, cheeses, fruits, and vegetables.

The people stand in groups, all with GLASSES of wine in hand, though most remain almost entirely full.

Around the rooftop, robed figures stand, waving their hands in wild patterns. Small orbs of fire spin around them, trails flying behind, creating spirals through the air. Many people on the roof watch.

One MAGE ENTERTAINER looses control of a fire orb, and it flies into a small, decorative tree a few feet away. Many people rush over to help him put it out.

A man, NOBLE MAN ONE, steps up to the table, and after brief deliberation, picks up a small piece of meat. He places it in his mouth and chews it briefly before a look of revulsion comes over his face, and he spits it over the side of the roof.

(CONTINUED)

At the other end of the roof, King SARIAS(54) is seated with his son LUCRUS(19) and his daughter AILEEN(23). Lucrus is leaning to one side, speaking with General MENDEX(28), while Sarias and Aileen speak to each other.

Sarias has a full head of white hair, trimmed neatly under a gold crown. Though dignified, he looks kind, yet overwhelmed with fatigue.

Lucrus and Mendex carrying themselves similarly. Both look like warriors, ready to fight at a moments notice, though Mendex looks far more capable.

Aileen has the kind look of her father, and her red hair falls just past her shoulders

Ahead of the royal family a small group of people are speaking to each other. The circle listens as LORD KAYREN(60s) is speaking.

LORD KAYREN

(emphatically)

Do they really expect us to eat this food? It's absolutely revolting, and an insult to our social standing.

LADY KAYREN

And this wine isn't much better. At this point I believe the commoners eat better than we do.

LADY KAYREN(50s) turns towards the edge of the wall, where she sets her goblet.

ALERIC

Mother, from what I've overheard at the garrison, the commoners are not eating better than we are.

Lady Kayren turns to ALERIC(27), not looking pleased.

ALERIC(CONT)

Besides, the trade with the other cities ended when the Artelyans took over, and this valley isn't fertile enough to sustain a whole city.

LORD KAYREN

(sharply)

We are all aware of that Aleric. But we are the cities elite,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LORD KAYREN (cont'd)  
attending a party thrown by the  
royal family. If any occasion  
called for fresh food, it is this  
one.

ALERIC  
Even then, the Artelyans could be  
here any day. It does no good to  
complain about trivialities.

LADY KAYREN  
(derisive)  
We have nothing to worry about from  
the Artelyans. This valley has  
never been breached by an opposing  
force.

LORD KAYREN  
(agreeing)  
The Artelyans haven't posed a  
threat to us since they arrived  
fifteen years ago; there is no  
merit to believing they do now.

Aleric turns away from his parents and their companions,  
leaning against the edge of the roof, gazing out over the  
city. The pale glow of moonlight is beginning to shine over  
the city as it rises above the water to the east.

He is tall, clean shaven, with bright blue eyes. He wears a  
sword at his hip.

Looking west, Aleric notices a faint glow around the peaks  
of the mountains many leagues to the west. Shifting for a  
better view of the mountains, his hand knocks into the wine  
goblet his mother set there.

Deep red wine runs down the side of the building, most of it  
falling to the street below before Aleric can wipe it down  
with part of his cloak.

Noticing Aleric's retreat from his companions, Princess  
Aileen excuses herself from her father and walks over the  
Aleric.

Aleric turns his head briefly to see who is approaching  
before returning to his vigil.

ALERIC  
There is fire on the horizon.

(CONTINUED)

AILEEN

What?

ALERIC

Beyond the mountains. At first I thought it was the last rays of sunlight, but there should be no sun at this hour.

AILEEN

(looking at the mountains)  
I see it now. It has a fluidity to it, as if not from a constant source.

As they watch the mountains, a single column of red light explodes from within, shooting up to the sky.

AILEEN

(shocked)  
That's one of the sky beacons.

ALERIC

The one at the second gate if I'm not mistaken.

The beacon lingers for only a moment longer before blinking out.

The low rumble of conversation suddenly begins to dwindle as two new men, PAGE, and SCOUT GAILIAN, make their way towards the king. Gailian looks tired and winded.

PAGE

(bowing)  
Your Grace. This is Scout Gailian of the Third Garrison. He arri...

Page is about to say something else, but Gailian pushes past him, interrupting.

GAILIAN

Your Grace, the Artelyans have found the hidden pass. The first gate has fallen, and by the now the second probably has as well.

A gasp emanates from half the people on the roof, the other half too shocked to make any sound.

SARIAS

How did you come to know this?

(CONTINUED)

GAILIAN

I'm a scout of the Third Garrison.  
We got word early yesterday morning  
that the first gate had been taken.  
I've been riding hard since to  
bring the news.

SARIAS

And you believe the second has  
fallen as well?

GAILIAN

Your Grace, the second gate was  
undermanned after many of the men  
there went to reinforce the first.  
The report I heard spoke of a  
slaughter; I expect by now much the  
same has happened at the second.

MENDEX

(questioningly)

If the first gate was under attack,  
why did we not see their sky  
beacon?

GAILIAN

Sir, the Artelyans attacked in the  
darkness, and from what I've heard  
they knew where to strike first and  
exactly how many men were needed to  
do it properly. My guess is that  
they attacked the beacon first to  
prevent them from activating it.

AILEEN

The second gate's beacon was just  
activated.

SARIAS

(shocked)

What? Are you sure?

AILEEN

(nodding her head)

Absolutely, I saw it with my own  
eyes.

ALERIC

What the princess says is true, I  
saw it as well.

No one speaks for a moment, and all eyes turn to the king.

(CONTINUED)

SARIAS

Gailian, how long before the  
Artelyans arrive?

GAILIAN

With the third gate still standing  
and the burden of as large an army  
as they have, I would say five days  
before they reach the Synna. The  
river crossing should slow them,  
but they'll likely be here by weeks  
end next.

Panic erupts through the party goers. They start racing  
towards stairs leading off of the roof. Prince Lucrus,  
Mendex, Aleric, Aileen, Page, and Gailian stand around  
Sarias.

LUCRUS

Father?

SARIAS

Not now, I need time to think.

Lucrus steps back. Aleric looks at Aileen, and they share a  
look of worry

INT. KING'S PALACE - MORNING

King Sarias is seated on his throne, head resting in one  
hand. Lucrus, Mendex, Aileen, Aleric, and Gailian stand  
before him, along with a handful of other soldiers and  
nobles.

LUCRUS

Father, have you made a decision?

Sarias waits a moment before responding.

SARIAS

General Mendex will oversee the  
defenses of the city, starting  
immediately. Lucrus, you and  
Captain Kayren, will lead a company  
of outriders, and attempt to escort  
as many of the people living in the  
outlying villages as possible back  
to the city.

All the men nod and begin to leave the room.

(CONTINUED)

SARIAS  
Captain Kayren, come here.

Aleric turns and approaches the throne.

SARIAS(CONT)  
Look after my son.

ALERIC  
I will Your Grace.

SARIAS  
(nodding)  
Good, good.

Sarias breaks into a coughing fit. Aleric steps forward and puts a hand on his shoulder.

SARIAS  
I'm fine, I'm fine.

Aleric turns and walks towards the door.

AILEEN  
Aleric.

He walks over to the princess.

ALERIC  
Aileen?

AILEEN  
Be safe out there.

She looks about to say more, but instead takes a cloth bracelet from her wrist and hands it to him.

AILEEN(CONT)  
For good luck.

ALERIC  
(smiling)  
Thank you.

He places the bracelet in the pocket of his cloak and exits the palace.



EXT. GATE SQUARE - LATE MORNING

Aleric sits atop his horse, next to Lucrus. The prince is adorned in full battle armor, whereas Aleric has a simple leather tunic over a chainmail shirt. At his hip are his marshaling horn and his sword, and tied around the end of the hilt is Aileen's bracelet.

A company of outriders, numbering close to two hundred, is lined up in rows inside the square. Most of the soldiers are dressed similarly to Aleric.

ALERIC

What is the plan, my lord?

LUCRUS

We'll stay together until we reach Hadlon's Fork. At that point I will take half the men south, you'll take the other half north. We'll meet again after we cross the Synna.

ALERIC

Wouldn't it be better if we stayed together? If we run into any Artelyans one hundred men is probably not enough.

LUCRUS

And you think two hundred is? If half of what I grew up hearing about these brutes is true the amount of men we have wont matter if we run into them. And traveling in smaller numbers reduces our chances of being seen.

ALERIC

As you say, my lord.

LUCRUS

Excellent. Now Captain, ready your men.

Aleric nods and wheels his horse towards the left column of outriders. The horsemen begin to move, the first rows heading for the gate.

## EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

Aleric sits his horse at the side of a dirt road as the outriders under his command move past him. The land is mostly flat and barren, though the road is lined with trees. Off in the distance he can see Lucrus leading his outriders down the south road.

As Gailian passes by, Aleric waves him over.

GAILIAN

Yes, Captain?

ALERIC

Did you pass through any villages on your way to Aldmere?

GAILIAN

Oh, certainly Captain, however I rode straight through most of them.

ALERIC

So none of them have been warned yet?

GAILIAN

Not by me.

ALERIC

Thank you Scout.

Gailian nods and rides off. Aleric turns west, looking towards the mountains. A storm is rolling down over the peaks.

## EXT. ROAD - EVENING

The outriders slowly make their way down the road, approaching the village whose lights are now visible ahead. Aleric rides at the back of the column with Gailian, both lost in their thoughts, until a blue light bathes the land.

Aleric turns west, as do the outriders, to see a shaft of blue light shooting into the sky.

GAILIAN

They've reached the third gate.

ALERIC

Then we'd best hurry.

Aleric takes raises a horn to his lips, sounding three quick blasts. The outriders begin riding towards the village at a quicker pace than before.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Villagers are scrambling throughout the central yard of the village, piling crates of things onto the back of wagons and tying sacks to horses.

Outriders mill about the townsfolk, helping them organize their belongings.

Rain is pouring down, and thunder can be heard in the distance.

Aleric is standing next to his horse under a awning, surrounded by the officers in his company, HANON, SHAKES, KILROY, and VANEK.

ALERIC

Sergeant Vanek, take ten of the men with you and escort these villagers back to Aldmere. I wouldn't expect trouble, so go as slow as you need to.

VANEK

(nodding)

Sir.

He salutes, fist over heart, and leaves the gathering. Gailian approaches the officers as Vanek departs.

GAILIAN

Captain, if I may have a word.

ALERIC

(opening a map)

Go ahead.

GAILIAN

The Artelyans are moving faster than I expected. I'd wager no more than five days before they're within sight of Aldmere, and that's assuming they have no special plan for crossing the Synna quicker than usual.

Hanon, Shakes, and Kilroy exchange startled glances. Aleric studies his map as he responds.

(CONTINUED)

ALERIC

In that case, we need to move quicker. Possibly even split up.

GAILIAN

I agree, but this also means we cannot get to any of the villages on the far side of the Synna before the Artelyans do.

ALERIC

We're going to damn well try. I won't leave any villages I don't have to in the hands of those barbarians.

GAILIAN

(annoyed)

Captain, this is not a matter of pride or determination. If we cross the Synna the Artelyans will slaughter us before we can reach the first village.

Aleric looks up from his map and stares at Gailian, before looking to Hanon, Shakes, and Kilroy.

ALERIC

What do you three think of the Scout's revelations?

HANON

I don't like what he has to say, but I cannot find fault with his reasoning.

KILROY

Nor I.

SHAKES

(shaking)

If there is anything that can be done for the villagers on the other side of the Synna we must do it. I'm not convinced the Artelyans can move as fast as the Scout says. I say we continue on as planned.

GAILIAN

At least spur the men to move faster from now on. If we continue as we did today the Artelyans will have crossed the Synna by the time we get there.

(CONTINUED)

Aleric looks at the Scout before returning to his map.

ALERIC  
Is that all?

GAILIAN  
Yes Captain

ALERIC  
Very well, you may go.

Gailian departs, followed shortly by Hanon, Shakes, and Kilroy.

EXT. ROAD - NOON

The outriders travel down another road, the ground now hillier than before, though still lined with trees. They are moving at a considerably faster pace than before, and there numbers have dwindled.

Up ahead as another village, and beyond, the banks of the River Synna. Aleric and Gailian ride in the second row of riders, watching as a group of five push ahead to prepare the villagers.

On the far side of the river smoke is billowing from various places dotting the countryside.

ALERIC  
Your advice was sound Scout. We've managed to get to all the villages this side of the Synna.

GAILIAN  
(pointing towards the smoke)  
And not with much time to spare it seems.

Aleric nods, displeasure on his face.

GAILIAN(CONT)  
Will we head back for Aldmere after clearing this village?

ALERIC  
That seems the right course of action, but I hesitate. We do not know how Lucrus and his company fare.

(CONTINUED)

GAILIAN

We cannot afford to wait here  
Captain. I would guess the  
Artelyans will be within site of  
the village by nightfall.

Aleric looks off over the river towards the ravaged  
countryside.

ALERIC

Take heart Scout, they haven't  
crossed the river yet.

Gailian lets out a small sigh, then points down the road as  
two of the riders are returning, riding hard.

GAILIAN

News?

ALERIC

Let's go find out.

Aleric spurs his horse forward to meet the returning men,  
Gailian following him. He freezes, his horse neighing under  
the stress, as an arrow takes one of the two men in the  
chest.

The other rider turns to see his companion fall, just before  
another arrow pierces his neck.

ALERIC

Fan out! Fan out! Off the road!

The outriders leave their column, riding down the hills on  
the side of the road. Up ahead a small group of warriors,  
brandishing axes, shortswords, and shields appear.

ALERIC

Left flank, split off and charge  
the bastards! Right, stick with me,  
search every gods-damned tree and  
rock for those archers.

The left flank rushes down the hill towards the men moving  
out of the village, now numbering around forty. They start  
banging their weapons against their shields, chanting in  
rhythm. The outriders charge straight for the center of the  
Artelyans, until they are within fifty feet, then they split  
down the center, wheeling to attack in two separate strikes.

The Artelyans continue their chanting, and two men, dressed  
like the others but without shields step forward. They raise  
their hands.

(CONTINUED)

The two columns of outriders crumble as the earth is ripped apart beneath them. Horses fall, crushing riders and other horses, blood fountaining out of the carnage. By the time the ground settles again, none of the outriders are moving.

Aleric averts his gaze from the destruction, back towards the men he is with. Gailian is riding next to him.

GAILIAN  
(shouting)  
Captain, we have to turn back.

Aleric nods and takes out his horn, sounding it four times. The remaining outriders turn from their positions and begin galloping away from the village. The lead rider begins the ascent to the road, and stops when his horse takes a spear to the chest.

A band of fifteen Artelyans step up over the crest of the hill. Dressed like the others, some carry spears while others hold bows.

GAILIAN  
We need to spread out. They'll kill  
us all before we reach the top if  
we charge straight at them.

ALERIC  
We're all dead already if those  
mages catch up to us.

GAILIAN  
Luckily I don't think this new band  
has any, and the others still have  
to go up a hill to reach us.

ALERIC  
Right.

He raises his horn to his lips, blows three long and two short blasts. The outriders peel off from the uphill charge and run parallel to the road. Arrows and spears rain down on them as the ride, but none of them hit.

ALERIC  
We'll out distance them before they  
can hit us enough to stop us.

GAILIAN  
Gods I hope you're right, Captain.

Reaching down, Aleric takes Aileen's bracelet off his sword hilt and clasps it in his hand. The outriders ride hard,

(CONTINUED)

gradually ascending up to the level of the road. The Artelyans are pursuing, but cannot keep up. Aleric turns towards the front of the company and signals for them keep moving. A sudden cry behind him causes him to wheel around.

Gailian is on the ground, pinned under the weight of his horse, which is squirming as blood pours from around the spear in its neck.

ALERIC

Gailian!

GAILIAN

(in pain)

No! Leave me! Go back... warn...  
warn the King!

Aleric stays motionless for a second, before turning his horse and galloping to the rest of the outriders. As he rejoins them he turns back to see the Artelyans ceasing their pursuit as a sword is driven into Gailian's neck.

EXT. CITY GATE - NOON

Aldmere's gates slowly open as the ragged band of outriders rides into the city. Aleric rides up to a GUARD standing outside the gatehouse.

ALERIC

Where is the King?

GUARD

He should be in his palace.

Aleric leaves the guard, and rides towards the palace.

INT. THRONE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Sarias sits his throne, and he does not look well. Mendex stands before him dressed in leather and mail, his sword at his hip.

MENDEX

(insistently)

Your Grace...

Sarias raises his hand, cutting off Mendex. He sighs deeply, and turns as the doors to the throne room open. A GUARD hurries in.

(CONTINUED)



GUARD

(bowing)

Your Grace. General. Captain Kayren  
has returned and seeks audience.

Sarias looks up at the guard. He opens his mouth to speak,  
but his overcome by coughing. As he fights off the fit, he  
nods and waves Aleric in.

Aleric enters the throne room and approaches the King.

ALERIC

(bowing quickly)

Your Grace, the Artelyans have  
crossed the Synna.

Sarias has stopped coughing, and looks unwaveringly at  
Aleric. Mendex does the same.

ALERIC(CONT)

We fought them near the banks not  
three days past, and most of my men  
were killed. They are moving much  
faster than we anticipated.

MENDEX

Lucrus must have encountered them  
as well.

ALERIC

Where is the prince?

There is silence. Mendex looks at Sarias, who puts his head  
in his hands.

ALERIC

(shocked)

He has not returned?

Mendex shakes his head.

ALERIC(CONT)

Surely some of his men must have  
made it back?

Mendex shakes his head again.

SARIAS

If they have we have not seen them.

MENDEX

(heated)

It would seem that the mission was  
a failure.

(CONTINUED)

He looks at Aleric, anger and pain in his eyes.

ALERIC

Then you best make sure the city's defenses are sound.

MENDEX

(angry)

Know your place captain!

ALERIC

The Artelyans will be here by weeks end, and if the defenses can't hold we might as well leave the gates open.

MENDEX

This city has never fallen before...

ALERIC

And for a thousand years before last week this valley had never been breached by an invading army.

Mendex narrows his eyes, staring hard at Aleric.

ALERIC(CONT)

We have grown complacent in our solitude, oblivious to our empire falling apart after Zaakk's Folly tore this continent asunder. We cannot be complacent any more.

Sarias looks up from his hands.

ALERIC(CONT)

Halvarg the Unifier is as much a god in the eyes of the Artelyans as those he claims gave him his divine purpose are to him. If we are not strong, nothing will save Aldmere from his reckoning.

There is a long silence, broken when the doors to the throne room open and Aileen enters. She approaches her father, bowing slightly as she arrives. Sarias looks at her for a moment.

SARIAS

Aileen, Aleric has given his report about the ranging, and although we cannot be sure, it seems that Lucrus is not coming back.

(CONTINUED)

Aileen begins to cry, and Mendex turns away, raising a hand to his eyes. Aleric hesitantly puts a hand on her shoulder which she grabs and pulls down, gripping tightly in both of hers.

SARIAS(CONT)

Without Lucrus, it will be up to you to carry on my legacy. More than that, the legacy of our people. It is time for you too marry.

Mendex turns around, looking intrigued through his red-rimmed eyes. Tears still roll down her face, but Aileen nods.

SARIAS(CONT)

(kindly)

I would not have grief cloud your judgment. We will speak more on it tomorrow...

Sarias begins coughing and waves the three of them out of the room. As they leave, the cough grows worse.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The street is dark, the only light coming from windows and doors that remain open. Many people occupy the street, wearing well-worn farmer's clothing. Most remain still, huddled together against the buildings for warmth and shelter. The largest group congregates outside a tavern, hoping to receive something to eat.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Mendex sits silently at a table surrounded by soldiers who are engaging in revelry. Before him are numerous empty mugs. He grabs for the one closest to him and pulls it up to his lips. Finding it empty, he slams it back down on the table, but no one seems to notice.

He places his head in his hands and sits unmoving. The man next to him, in a fit of raucous laughter, bumps into him. Grabbing the mug, Mendex stands and throws it against a wall. The tavern grows silent as he walks out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The crowd outside the tavern shuffles towards Mendex as he exits, though he pays no attention to them. Many back away from him when they see the sword at his hip.

INT. TAVERN STABLES - NIGHT

Mendex enters the stables, and with only a brief gesture sends a STABLE BOY running to get his horse.

As he waits, Mendex leans against the wall, arms crossed across his chest, his eyes unmoving from the ground.

The stable boy returns with Mendex's horse. Without looking Mendex forcefully slams a small amount of coins into the stable boy's hands and mounts his horse.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The crowd gathers around Mendex, pushing against his horse, many with arms raised up towards him. A RAGGED MAN speaks.

RAGGED MAN

(raspy)

Please sir, anything you  
have...We're starvin.

RAGGED WOMAN

Food, money, I don't matter.

Mendex moves his horse through the crowd as best he can, but they do not relent. More and more people begin raising cries of anguish

RAGGED MAN TWO

Not for me sir, for my boy. He's  
been sick somethin' awful for days  
now.

RAGGED WOMAN TWO

We lost everything on the journey  
to the city.

As more and more people crowd around his horse, Mendex begins kicking them away. Ripples of motion are sent through the crowd as bodies collide, and many fall, knocking even more over.

A MAN falls in front of the horse, and with nowhere to go, is trampled.

Those around the man grow quiet while others further away grow louder. Without looking back Mendex spurs his horse forward, and the crowd begins to disperse. Many still shout after him as he rides away.

INT. AILEEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark, illuminated only by pale moonlight streaming in through the lone window.

A mouse, looking very thin, silently scurries around the dark wood floor. From under a small table it darts under the bed, before exiting through a hole in the wall.

Aileen sleeps in the bed, wrapped tightly in thick wool blankets.

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. COUNCIL CHAMBER - NIGHT

The chamber is round, sloping down towards the center. White pillars mark the edge of the room, and beyond there is nothing but clouds. The pillars themselves extend upward until their tops cannot be seen.

At the center of the chamber is a pit sunk deep into the marble floor, and a fire is blazing, the only source of light in the area. Eight pedestals line one side of the fire, with empty thrones on top.

Aileen stands at the edge of the chamber facing inward, between two of the pillars, wearing the white nightgown that she was sleeping in. She turns, and looks down from the ledge.

Beneath the clouds a city is sprawled, a city much larger than Aldmere. At its center, rising almost to the height of the chamber is a volcano, its top faintly glowing.

Aileen turns back towards the center of the chamber and begins walking towards down a ramp that leads towards the center.

EXT. CHAMBER CENTER - NIGHT

The pedestals are massive, standing at least twice as tall as Aileen. As she passes them, she sees that each is engraved with scenes.

## SERIES OF SHOTS

She passes one, depicting a man brandishing a staff surrounded by a burst of light.

One depicts a feminine figure standing atop a mountain, orating to a crowd of millions.

A figure, human shaped but with faint wings behind him, raises a sword above an anvil and holds a hammer in his other hand.

A woman holds a book, her figure surrounded by runes which glow slightly.

A woman stands above a road, holding a spear, as a procession of a thousand figures all in chains moves before her.

An army stands at attention, and a man, this one more draconian than the others, stands before them as they face their enemy, which appears to be a storm.

The two pedestals in the middle are conjoined, and surrounding them is an engraving of two figures, one male and one female, sitting atop shining thrones, as all the other figures surrounded them, and millions stand below, eyes and arms raised in reverence.

## EXT. CHAMBER CENTER - NIGHT

Aileen moves towards the fire and raises her hands to feel its warmth. She edges closer as far as she dares before, pulling back and rubbing her arms.

JACTUYADES

It gives no warmth. It has not for many years.

Aileen, startled, turns towards the voice. Atop the pedestal engraved with the book and runes sits JACTUYADES. Her presence is ethereal. Her hair is tied back, and she wears a glowing bright robe that would be blinding had she fully formed.

JACTUYADES(CONT)

The fire of the Dragons lives in so few hearts these days. Soon it may not burn at all.

A soft smile comes to her elderly face, and her eyes close in reminiscence.

(CONTINUED)

Aileen steps towards the pedestal.

AILEEN

Where am I?

TRYNDED'G

(softly)

A place of two worlds, and of none.  
A place time forgot, yet where all  
time is visible.

Aileen turns towards the TRYNDED'G, who sits at the far left end, glowing staff in hand. His glowing white eyes are narrow with sleep, and his mouth is perpetually curved into a small smile. His robe is black, accented by white designs around the hems.

HYLLDARAGARON

(forcefully)

She did not ask for a riddle  
Trynded'g.

One by one the thrones are filed, and all the figures have an ethereal quality to them.

To Trynded'g's right is YLLAMANON. Her hair hangs straight and close to her dignified face. She wears a deep purple dress and holds a glass scepter.

Next to her is ILGRASH, his hands blackened and calloused. His hair is tied back, and he has a thick beard. At his side is a blacksmith's hammer.

Atop the two conjoined thrones are a man and a woman. The man, UVECHLYON wears a golden crown studded with a rainbow of gems. His robes are white and his staff appears to be made of crystal, though it radiates a full spectrum of colored light.

NYN'TALESH sits beside him, with a crown similar to her husband's staff. Pale red hair falls to her shoulders, and her eyes seem to change color the longer you look at them. Her dress is gold, and around her neck is a necklace of small spheres filled with fire.

After that is Jactuyades, who is speaking to the woman next to her, HYLLDARAGARON. Most of her face is obscured by the helmet, and she wears a suit of steel armor.

Finally there is KEEL'JEPTOSEY on the far right. His dark hair hangs to his shoulders around his clean shaven face. He wears a black overcoat over a shirt of chainmail, and a single edged blade is where his left hand should be.

(CONTINUED)

Aileen looks at them all in turn.

AILEEN  
Is this real?

NYN'TALESH  
Not as you know reality child, but  
that does not make what we have to  
say any less important.

AILEEN  
You are the Eight Dragons aren't  
you?

None of them respond.

AILEEN(CONT)  
I was taught that you all died  
centuries ago, after we stopped  
believing in you.

JACTUYADES  
We are beings of two worlds, and  
although our power in yours has  
diminished, we still live on fully  
in our own.

AILEEN  
So is that where we are? In your  
world?

TRYNDED'G  
As I said, this is a place of two  
worlds. Enough of our world is  
present for us to manifest, but not  
enough for us to be here in truth.

UVECHLYON  
Enough. This holds no importance to  
the matter at hand.

There is a pause as the eight deities grow silent. Aileen  
looks towards Uvechlyon, who is looking between the others.

UVECHLYON(CONT)  
The legacy of the Dragon Knights,  
of everything that we eight kindled  
hangs in the balance.

He looks down at Aileen.

(CONTINUED)



UVECHLYON(CONT)

Halvarg the Unifier is marching on Aldmere, this you know. If you stay in the city, all of you will die.

AILEEN

Why? Are we not safer within the walls than outside them?

ILGRASH

Aldmere is dying, and with every new refugee that arrives it comes closer to destroying itself.

TRYNDED'G

But more than that, there are divine powers at work in this war. Halvarg has been given purpose by his gods, and although they, like us, are no longer present in your world, their servants are.

KEEL'JEPTOSEY

What do you know of Ozymandius child?

AILEEN

Only rumors. They say he is the true steel behind this war, as ruthless a commander as ever there was, and only Halvarg himself has the power to rein him in.

KEEL'JEPTOSEY

(shaking his head)

No longer. He has set aside his command and brought gods to the godless, fashioned a faith where before there was only whispers.

HYLLDARAGARON

What was before an invasion of ambition thinly justified by spirituality is now a holy war.

KEEL'JEPTOSEY

And for our people that is much worse.

There is silence. Aileen looks at each of the gods in turn,

(CONTINUED)

AILEEN

What would you have me do?

NYN'TALESH

You must convince the people to leave the city. There is land far to east, though not so far as to be unreachable. Take your ships and sail until you reach it.

UVECHLYON

The empire of the Dragon Knights died a century ago in Zaakk's Folly...

There is a loud roaring from behind, and Aileen turns. A pillar of white light shoots into the sky from the top of the volcano. It grows until the valley is illuminated as if by daylight. The roar grows louder, then suddenly ceases. Everything beyond the chamber is white.

There is a deafening boom and everything starts to shake. Aileen turns towards the eight dragons, who sit as if nothing is happening. Trynded'g's staff is glowing brightly.

She turns back. The white is gone. A wave of fire rolls over the land as it undulates wildly. The stars are veiled by smoke.

And then there is silence.

The stars return overhead, much brighter than before. Aileen looks over the edge and steps back in shock. The chamber now sits far above the surface of the world, and below three continents are in place. A cloud of smoke billows out of a nondescript place in the middle of the sea.

ILGRASH

(sadly)

Thus your world was riven, and the slow decay of our empire began.

UVECHLYON

Let our legacy live on across the sea. We would not have it crumble at the hands of a madman any more than it already has.

Aileen stares at the gods, tears in her eyes.

JACTUYADES

Go child, it is almost dawn. Tell your father what we have said.

(CONTINUED)

Aileen nods as the figures begin to disappear.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. THRONE ROOM - MORNING

Sarias sits his throne, looking tired and sick. Mendex stands next to him, looking even worse. The doors to the throne room open and Aleric walks in.

He approaches the throne, bows, and moves to the side Mendex is not on.

There are guards lining the wall standing at attention. The windows are open and the faded tapestries hanging from the ceiling are blowing in the wind. Shouts can be heard from outside.

ALERIC

The city grows restless.

MENDEX

The commoners beg for any help we can give. Do they not understand we need it as much as they do?

ALERIC

Most are the refugees from the outlying villages who have no idea what life has been like in the city recently.

Mendex shakes his head and looks down the hall.

MENDEX

How much longer must we wait?

SARIAS

She'll be here. Soon, I hope.

Beat.

SARIAS(CONT)

Are the defenses ready General?

MENDEX

As ready as they can be Your Grace. Oil is prepared along the walls, the gates have been barricaded and the walls reinforced where necessary.

Aleric looks over at Mendex.

(CONTINUED)

MENDEX(CONT)

Morale is low, but that is to be expected.

Sarias nods and fights off a cough. The doors to the throne room open and Aileen walks in.

Mendex stands up straighter, running a hand through his hair. Sarias looks up and smiles as she approaches. Aleric simply stands there and watches.

SARIAS

Ah daughter, I hope the night proved help...

AILEEN

Father I need to speak to you.

SARIAS

(confused)

Well yes, that's why you're here isn't it?

AILEEN

No, not about that.

Sarias leans back with confusion on his face, and Aleric and Mendex share a similar look.

INT. MEETING CHAMBER - LATE MORNING

Sarias, Mendex, Aleric, and Aileen stand around a wooden table, looking down at a map of the city and surrounding valley. A single window illuminates the room. There are two DOOR GUARDS standing on either side of the door.

SARIAS

The gods told you, in a dream, that if we stay in Aldmere we will die...

AILEEN

Yes, how many times must I say it.

SARIAS

This is not something that can be simply understood, Aileen.

MENDEX

How do we know we can even believe them.

Everyone looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

MEDEX (CONT)

Our ancestors cast them out when they failed to answer in a time of need. Why would they do so now, when no one is asking?

AILEEN

They said they don't want to see their legacy crumble and decay anymore than it already has.

MEDEX

By sailing halfway around the world to a continent that may or may not be there? They've had centuries to devise the cruelest possible revenge for us, and there is none crueler than false hope.

ALERIC

Godly designs aside, do we have enough ships to carry the entire population of Aldmere?

Mendex looks down at the map.

MEDEX

A year ago we might have, but with nowhere for them to go we began dismantling them; using them for reinforcement on gates and giving them out to people for firewood.

Sarias looks down at the map, and the others all look between each other. It is a moment before Sarias speaks.

SARIAS

There will be those who wish to sail east, and I am of a mind to let them.

He is overcome by coughing. Aileen goes to his side and steadies him.

SARIAS (CONT)

There is mention of a land to the east in some old manuscripts, though they predate the shattering of the world.

MEDEX

Your Grace, if you let them go they certainly will not come back.

(CONTINUED)

ALERIC

And if they stay here what  
guarantee is it that they will  
survive? If they wish to leave, it  
is their choice.

Sarias motions for one of the Door Guards to come forward.

SARIAS

Tell the page to gather the city  
outside the palace. I will  
addresses them soon.

DOOR GUARD ONE

At once Your Grace.

He bows and leaves the room.

SARIAS

Aileen, have you thought about what  
we discussed yesterday.

AILEEN

Not enough to have a decision  
father. The night proved stressful  
enough without having to think  
about marriage.

SARIAS

(nodding)

Think on it today, there is not  
much time.

AILEEN

Yes father.

Aileen looks at Aleric and Mendex, both of whom are looking  
at each other.

EXT. PALACE GATE - AFTERNOON

A crowd has gathered in the streets below the palace, and a  
line of heavily armored guards, wearing full battle armor  
and using heavy shields, stands between them and the  
grounds.

There as a loud murmur running through the crowd as they  
wait. A soft rain is falling on the crowd, which does little  
to settle them.

Aleric, Aileen, and Mendex stand with other nobles against  
the wall over looking the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

Sarias makes his way to the edge of the palace, accompanied by COURT MAGE. After arriving at the wall, Sarias nods at Court Mage, and he begins waving his hands. A translucent horn is formed, which he hands to Sarias. Raising it to his mouth, he begins to speak.

SARIAS

People of Aldmere, there have for a long time been rumors of a land across the sea to the east. It has been decided that what ships remain in port will sail for this land.

A mumble rolls the crowd as people take in what the king is saying.

SARIAS(CONT)

However, there are not enough ships to carry the entire population. If you wish to depart, speak with Admiral Hallen at the docks later today and tomorrow.

A few groups in the crowd begin moving out of the square, heading for the docks.

SARIAS(CONT)

Understand that there can be no returning. If the city still stands after this siege, our people will live on. But if not, you will be all that's left, and you will be alone. That is all.

Sarias hands the horn back to Court Mage, who makes it disappear with a wave of his hand.

EXT. ALDMERE DOCKS - LATE AFTERNOON

Twelve ships are docked in the harbor, and guards are desperately trying to maintain order amongst the thousands of people that have showed up.

There are checkpoints at the end of the each dock, and slowly people are let on to the ships. Most of the people are dressed in dirty shirts and cloaks.

A commotion erupts from the crowd as people are pushed aside as a train of wagon moves through. Behind them on horses ride many NOBLES, among them Lord and Lady Kayren all wearing fine silks of bright colors. They are surrounded by their own guards, who have their weapons out.

(CONTINUED)

Angry shouts are raised from the crowd as large swaths are knocked down, and some never get back up. A wagon is over turned, the chests it is carrying toppling over and opening, sending clothes, books, and other belongings everywhere.

NOBLE ONE  
(pointing to the wagon)  
Guards! Guards!

A group of guards moves through the crowd, knocking people who attempt to impede their advance down with their shields.

Aleric stands above the docks, watching the commotion. The clothes from the wagon begin tearing as people grab it for themselves.

The nobles burst out of the crowd and ride up to the first checkpoint. Quick words are exchanged before the DOCKMASTER places a thick bag of coins under his cloak and points for them to proceed to the ships. He steps forward

DOCKMASTER  
Ships one through five are now  
full!

The guards push through the crowd, almost making it to the overturned wagon before the first one is torn down by the crowd. The other guards turn and begin lashing out with their spears.

Cries erupt from the crowd, and Aleric watches as blood begins to spray as the riot grows more violent. Another train of nobles approaches the docks, but the guards they have with them halt them and draw their weapons.

People in the back end of the crowd turn and see the new nobles, and many start charging. The guards prepare their spears, and stop many of them, but are quickly overwhelmed.

Aleric runs along the wall as groups of soldiers run past him towards the riot. ONE stops as he runs by.

SOLDIER  
Captain, what's going on here?

ALERIC  
Some nobles pushed through and  
bribed the dockmaster to let them  
on the ships. After that things got  
out of hand quickly.

(CONTINUED)



SOLDIER

Where are you going?

ALERIC

To the barracks. We're going to need a lot more men if we want to stop this quickly and with as few losses as possible.

The soldier nods and continues after his company, and Aleric starts running again.

INT. THRONE ROOM - EVENING

Sarias sits his throne, his head resting in one of his hands. Mendex stands before him.

MENDEX

Captain Kayren reports that after he returned with more soldiers from the barracks, the riot had been mostly quieted, and they just stepped in to calm everyone down.

Sarias sighs, leaning back against his throne.

SARIAS

You knew this was a bad idea.

MENDEX

Your Grace, I had many reasons for opposing this plan, but I never thought this would happen.

Sarias nods.

SARIAS

How many ships are left to fill?

MENDEX

It appears that some of the nobles used the commotion to sneak through to the ships. Only two are left with any room.

SARIAS

(chuckling)

Now that I should have seen coming.

They look at each other in silence. Sarias puts his head in his hands and sighs deeply. Mendex stands straightens his posture and clears his throat.

(CONTINUED)

MENDEX  
                  (hesitant)  
          Your...Your Grace...has Aileen  
          decided yet?

Sarias looks up at Mendex.

                  SARIAS  
          She has.

The doors to the throne room open and Aileen walks in next to Aleric. They are enthralled in their conversation and do not stop at the throne as they walk by and out of the room. Mendex's eyes follow them the whole way.

                  SARIAS  
          I'm sorry Mendex.

Mendex makes no response to the king, and walks out of the throne room.

INT. PALACE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The palace is quiet, and the hallway is empty. Moonlight streams in from the windows, casting deep shadows all around.

Aileen walks down the hallway alone rubbing her hands together as she does. She walks around a corner and stops as she hears a voice.

                  MENDEX  
                  (slurred)  
          You just had to pick him didn't  
          you?

Mendex walks out of the shadows. His eyes are red rimmed, his hair is a mess, and he reeks of alcohol. In his hand is a skin of wine.

                  AILEEN  
          Mendex?

She steps closer to him.

                  AILEEN(CONT)  
          What are you talking about?

                  MENDEX  
          It was always him wasn't it?

The throws the skin against he ground.

(CONTINUED)

MENDEX(CONT)  
I never had a chance.

Beat.

                  MENDEX(CONT)  
                  (starting to cry)  
After Lucrus disappeared I thought  
you would turn to me. No one else  
knew him like we did.

She steps towards him, raising her hand to put it on his  
shoulder.

                  AILEEN  
Mendex...

                  MENDEX  
No! Get away from me.

Aileen backs away, frightened.

                  MENDEX(CONT)  
                  (spitefully)  
Just leave, go find Aleric. I'm  
sure he's worried about you.

                  AILEEN  
I'm worried about you. You're drunk  
and I...

                  MENDEX  
                  (shouting)  
Just go!

She turns and begins to walk away.

                  AILEEN  
I'm sorry Mendex.

He crosses the distance between them in an instant. One hand  
on her shoulder, the other over her mouth, he shoves her up  
against the wall.

He leans in to kiss her, pulling at her dress as he does so.  
Her right arm is pinned against the wall by his shoulder,  
her left fails about as she tries to hit him. He removes his  
hand from her mouth and begins kissing her. She swings at  
his head, but he is not deterred.

Her legs kick out, battering against his shins. Her dress  
begins to rip. He starts reaching for her chest. In that  
moment she manages to push him off her.

(CONTINUED)

AILEEN  
Help! Help!

Mendex grabs her again, this time throwing her to the ground. There is blood dribbling down her face, mixing with tears before it gets caught in Mendex's beard. She tries to scream again but he covers her mouth harder this time. His other hand moves down to pull up her dress.

After a while Aileen grows still, no sounds coming from her body. Mendex leans back and brushes his hair out of his face.

He looks up as he hears footsteps approaching.

A GUARD walks into the hall.

GUARD TWO  
I heard shouting...

He stops as he sees what has happened.

GUARD TWO(CONT)  
(panicked)  
Gods...

Mendex sits unmoving over Aileen's motionless body, and as the guard moves towards him, he begins to weep.

INT. KING'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Sarias sits on his bed, head in his hands. Aleric stands near him, rubbing his hands together, the bracelet that Aileen gave him passing between them.

SARIAS  
(muffled)  
How could this happen?

Aleric just shakes his head.

The door to the chamber opens, and Court Mage walks in. Sarias looks up at him.

COURT MAGE  
I'm sorry Your Grace...She is dead.

There is a moment before Sarias begins weeping. Aleric closes his eyes, pain on his face.

(CONTINUED)

ALERIC

And Mendex?

COURT MAGE

He is in the dungeon awaiting the King's decision.

ALERIC

Surely he must hang for this.

Sarias nods through his weeping.

SARIAS

Not until the morning. I would not want grief to veil my vision of it.

Aleric looks at the king and nods.

SARIAS(CONT)

Aleric, this sickness has grown stronger. With Lucrus missing, and what transpired tonight, I'm asking you to take charge of the city if something should happen to me.

Shock overwhelms Aleric's face. He looks at Court Mage, who gives him a slight smile.

ALERIC

As you wish Your Grace.

SARIAS

Good, now leave me. I must rest.

Aleric moves towards the door, but Court Mage raises a hand.

COURT MAGE

Actually Your Grace, there is more news.

SARIAS

I'll hear it in the morning.

COURT MAGE

It is most important, Your Grace.

SARIAS

All the more reason to hear it in the morning. Now go.

Court Mage looks to speak again, but nods and heads for the door. Aleric follows him.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The torches have long gone out; only moonlight illuminates the hallway. As Aleric walks away Court Mage calls to him.

COURT MAGE  
The King will not last long.

Aleric nods.

ALERIC  
It seems that way.

Beat.

ALERIC(CONT)  
What was it you meant to tell the King.

Court Mage clears his throat.

COURT MAGE  
The Artelyans have been spotted from the walls. By morning the city will be surrounded.

Aleric closes his eyes and sighs deeply.

COURT MAGE(CONT)  
Get some rest Captain. Come the morrow you'll have a city to look after.

Aleric nods and departs, and Court Mage leaves in the other direction. The door to the King's bedroom finally fully closes.

EXT.WALLS - MORNING

Aleric stands on the walls of the city, looking out over the army before him. Hundreds of thousands of tents surround the city, with catapults, ladders, and towers in between. Smoke billows from cookfires, and people mill about throughout the camps.

Aleric holds Aileen's bracelet in his hand, his eyes focused on the object of everyone's attention. One hundred yards from the wall stands a crude wooden post, and hanging from that post is the body of Prince Lucrus.

Aleric turns back from the wall as PAGE approaches him.

(CONTINUED)

PAGE  
Captain Kayren.

ALERIC  
News of the King?

PAGE  
He has not awoken yet. He still  
breathes, but the Mages say he  
won't be waking anytime soon.

Aleric nods and looks back out across the the Artelyans.

ALERIC  
What of General Mendex?

PAGE  
He waits in prison. Waits for your  
word. The city is yours, Captain  
Kayren.

ALERIC  
(nodding)  
Aye, so it is.

PAGE  
What shall be done with Mendex?

ALERIC  
Leave him for now, we may need him.

The page looks taken aback.

PAGE  
Need him?

ALERIC  
He's the best military mind we  
have, and we'll need every military  
mind in the city to get through  
this.

The page still has reservations about Aleric's decision, but  
nods.

PAGE  
As you say Captain.

He leaves, and Aleric looks out over the army again.

ALERIC  
So it begins...

FADE OUT.

EXT. ALDMERE WALLS - NIGHT

FADE IN:

Braziers haphazardly line the wall, providing intermittent light on the faded white stones.

In the distance fires blaze from the Artelyan camp, providing silhouettes of towers, catapults, and other siege equipment. The area around Aldmere has been deforested, and stumps cover the plain.

GUARDS patrol back and forth along the walls, dressed in iron armor under purple tunics, holding long spears and wearing shortswords at their waists. GUARD THREE quickly weaves his way through the patrols, heading for a guard tower.

INT. GUARD TOWER - NIGHT

The tower is filled with SOLDIERS, some standing around checking and preparing their weapons, others speaking with each other. Aleric and his officers stand around a table at the center of the room. There is a large map of the city, held down in the corners by books, surrounded by various pieces of armor and small weapons.

Aleric is looking down at the table as pieces of variously shaped, colored wood is moved along the walls.

GUARD THREE enters through the door and stops, his eyes scanning the gathered soldiers. Finding Aleric, he moves towards the table.

ALERIC

I want you to move anyone living  
within fifty yards of the wall  
deeper into the city.

VANEK

(hesitant)

Do we have enough room for all of  
them?

ALERIC

Make room, Sergeant; I don't want  
any unnecessary casualties once  
those trebuchets start firing.

Guard Three moves up to the table, trying to get Aleric's attention.

(CONTINUED)



GUARD THREE  
(softly)  
Capt...

ALERIC  
Janen, are the mages ready?

First Cadre Leader JANEN(35)'s head is immobile, her eyes rolled back, the gold-banded crystal ring on her finger shimmering. At Aleric's question she returns to the present, smoothing her midnight blue robe.

JANEN  
The Court Mage is organizing them now, but most are still at the western bulwark. They should be at their posts within the hour.

ALERIC  
Good, make sure they start placing their wards as soon as possible.

Janen nods before her eyes roll back again.

GUARD THREE  
(louder)  
Captain K...

HANON  
The Alchemists have finished setting up the oil at the gate houses, Captain.

Aleric nods, his eyes darting around the map.

GUARD THREE  
Captain Kayren!

ALERIC  
(without looking up)  
What is it soldier?

GUARD THREE  
Sir, we've lost the Windblown.

Silence takes over the room as all those around the table except Aleric turn to stare at Guard Three. Slowly Aleric straightens and turns to him.

ALERIC  
What do you mean 'We've lost the Windblown?'

(CONTINUED)

GUARD THREE

They were at the North Gate, as you commanded, but once word reached them that General Mendex had been imprisoned they all left.

ALERIC

And where are they now?

VANEK

Probably at a tavern, waiting to crawl out after we're all dead.

GUARD THREE

It's possible; I got here as fast as I could so I've heard nothing more.

ALERIC

Janen, is there anyone you can speak to at the North Gate?

JANEN

Hold on.

Her eyes roll back, and she stands rigid for a moment before nodding and opening her eyes.

JANEN(CONT)

Corporal Brax said the Third Cadre hasn't heard anything about them since they disappeared.

Aleric leans back over the table, grabbing a line of four purple triangles from the north gate. He turns it over in his hand as the rest of the room watches him. Standing straight, he tosses it to the side.

ALERIC

We don't need them.

A universal breath is taken in the room, and many eyes are closed in acceptance.

HANON

They're the best we have, Captain. We're already outnumbered...

ALERIC

And now even more so. Nonetheless, the Windblown alone are not enough to change our fate. Maybe once they were, but no longer.

Bells are heard ringing out through the night. Everyone in the room grows silent as Aleric moves towards the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GUARD HOUSE - NIGHT

The city is dark; most of the lanterns strung between the buildings have gone out or been torn down.

A bonfire blazes from the tallest tower of the King's Palace, which is silhouetted against the moon.

Aleric sighs deeply.

ALERIC  
The king is dead.

The heads of those around him droop, and many look at each other with desperation.

VANEK  
And soon we will join him.

Vanek quickly walks away from the tower and everyone's eyes follow him as he walks away.

Aleric continues to stare at the palace, and long after everyone has looked to him he silently turns and walks back into the guard tower.

FADE OUT.

SUPER: THE FIRST DAY

EXT. WESTERN GATE HOUSE - MORNING

FADE IN:

Soldiers shepherd citizens living close to the wall deeper into the city, and some lead able-bodied citizens towards the barracks.

Aleric stands on the wall, staring out at the Artelyans. Their lines are set, and siege towers and catapults stand above them.

Janen stands to Aleric's right, Hanon to his left. The walls are fully lined with soldiers, the armor gleaming in the sunlight. Battle cries are raised from the Artelyans, muted only by distance.

(CONTINUED)

Janen turns, startled, as a red light shoots into the sky by the south gate.

JANEN

They're attacking from the south!

Another red light cuts through the sky from the north.

HANON

The north as well.

The sound of a hundred catapults is heard, and Aleric turns as stones wrapped in flame arc through the air towards the city.

Janen raises her hands, and the stones heading towards the wall are disintegrated as they pass through an invisible wall. Violent shakes run through her body as every stone hits the wall. Those not aiming for the wall fly into the city beyond, turning buildings to rubble, and lighting any wood they can find on fire.

As the initial bombardment ends, Janen falls back, but Aleric catches her before she hits the ground.

ALERIC

I need a healer!

Two robed figures, First Cadre Healer RIETY(36), and MAGE ONE, approach. Immediately Mage One begins weaving wards around their position, bracing himself for the next round of fire. Aleric lowers Janen to the ground as Riety kneels down over her.

RIETY

She'll be alright.

Aleric nods and stands back up, as fire rages throughout the city and screams carry from within and along the walls.

MAGE ONE

I don't think those stones were ever meant to hit the walls.

ALERIC

What do you mean?

MAGE ONE

My guess is they were enchanted; they knew we'd have wards and needed a way to break them.

(CONTINUED)

The second bombardment begins. In addition to flaming stones, barrels are now flung through the air, and when they land among the flaming rubble within Aldmere explosions echo against the walls. The stones collide with Mage One's wards, and after only a few his body crumples. Stones fly through towards the wall, collapsing crenels and soldiers alike.

The first trebuchets from within Aldmere begin firing, many of the stones vanishing against the Artelyans own wards. Some make it through, trampling swaths of soldiers as they roll.

A siege tower is hit, and it splinters and shatters.

Riety lightly places Janen's body on a flat piece of wood, and with the help of another SOLDIER, carries her from the wall towards the guard tower.

#### EXT. NORTH GATE - MORNING

Siege towers close in on the walls. CORPORAL BRAX(29), slightly overweight and looking out of place with iron armor over his robe, stands behind a line of soldiers, spears facing the towers. Whips of translucent light lash out from his hands, striking the sides of the closest tower to little effect.

The tower doors slam down onto the wall, creating a wall of dust as stones are crushed. Artelyans rush out onto the wall, many of those in the front being quickly speared or knocked the side.

A cone of flame bursts from Brax's hands, the force sending a group of Artelyans, arms flailing wildly, over the side of the wall.

The soldier to Brax's left jerks the blunt end of his spear into the side of an Artelyan, who falls screaming into the city streets below. Another Artelyan runs up, and as the soldiers readies a spear his head is split by an axe.

Brax stumbles backwards, tripping over a body as blood sprays over him. The axe-wielding Artelyan, covered in blood, rips his axe from the soldier's head and moves towards Brax, who wildly scrambles backwards on hands and knees.

The Artelyan raises the axe, but stumbles back as a crossbow quarrel takes him in the shoulder. Brax throws his arm forward, and a shimmering lance shoots out, knocking the Artelyan off his feet and into a group of his allies.

A SOLDIER reaches down and helps Brax to his feet.

(CONTINUED)

BRAX

Thank you.

SOLDIER

Thank me later, mage.

Brax, panting, nods as the soldier turns and joins in pushing the Artelyans back into the towers. He hesitates, shaking, before he grabs a dead-man's spear and joins the soldiers.

EXT. WESTERN GATE HOUSE - NOON

Aleric knocks an Artelyan's sword away with his own, pushing the Artelyan to the side before dragging his sword behind the man's knee. He stumbles as the blade splits his tendon, and gags as it pierces his chest.

A spear brushes against Aleric's side, and he wheels around, jumping back as the Artleyan wielding it lunges for his chest. He reaches out his mailed hand and grabs the shaft of the spear, freezing as a bolt of white light shoots into the sky from the south.

The Artelyan tries to shake the spear free, but Aleric pulls it forward, hooking it under his arm, the force of the pull dragging the Artelyan onto Aleric's waiting sword.

He pulls free, but the Artelyan twists Aleric's sword as he falls, and Aleric loses his grip on it, sending it cascading over the wall. Jumping over the body, he runs towards the guard tower.

EXT. NORTH GATE - NOON

Only a few Artelyan's remain along the wall, and most of those are in no condition to fight. Brax looks out across the city, noting the white beacon at the south gate.

He walks among the injured soldiers, doing what he can to heal them. Those who are well lean against the wall, aiming their crossbows into the fleeing Artelyan's, while others gather bodies into a pile to be burnt.

Brax weaves his hand, and a burst of white light flies upward. Sergeant Shakes approaches, coat covered in blood, and standing perfectly still.

SHAKES

Good work corporal, we've held them off.

(CONTINUED)

BRAX

Only for today, Sir, and it looks like they're still fighting at the western gate.

Shakes squints as he looks over at the western gate. The walls are a blur of motion, and the view is obscured by smoke rising from within the city.

SHAKES

So it is.

He looks at Brax.

SHAKES(CONT)

Go to them, Corporal.

BRAX

(nodding)

Sir.

Brax turns from Shakes and begins weaving a spell.

EXT. GUARD TOWER - AFTERNOON

Aleric stands atop the guard tower, looking down over the wall below him. Archers to his left and right rain arrows down onto the Artelyans, who are still pushing hard against the defenders.

Arcs of light slam into both sides of the battle, throwing soldiers aside, lighting them on fire, some simply making them crumple.

One of the siege towers is ablaze, and a semi-circle of soldiers is pushing a group of Artelyans against the wall. Many are shoved against the white stone, and stain it red as they slide down.

Aleric turns as he hears a popping sound behind him. Brax stands in the middle of the tower, looking winded.

ALERIC

(confused)

Who are you?

BRAX

(panting)

Corporal Brax, Sir. Third Cadre. I was at the north gate. We pushed them back, and I thought I might be able to help here.

(CONTINUED)

ALERIC  
We're slowly pushing them back, and  
we we aren't taking too many  
casualties anymore.

Brax narrows his eyes at Aleric, then slowly nods.

ALERIC(CONT)  
Do you have any skill with healing,  
Corporal?

BRAX  
A fair bit, Captain. More than most  
non healers.

ALERIC  
Good; this tower is filled with  
injured soldiers, go see what you  
can do for them.

BRAX  
(nodding)  
Yes, Captain.

Brax turns and hurries down the stairs into the guard tower,  
and Aleric looks back over the wall, as the Artelyans  
continue to be pushed back.

INT. GUARD TOWER - AFTERNOON

The guard tower is filled with people and sounds. Healers in  
white robes, most stained red, mill about, and soldiers  
wrapped in all sorts of bandages occupy stools all along the  
edges.

In the center of the room, on top of the table, lies Janen,  
still unconscious. Riety stands at her side, hovering a hand  
an inch over her head, eyes closed, muttering to himself.

Brax approaches, standing opposite Riety.

BRAX  
What happened to her, Lieutenant?

Riety opens his eyes, and without moving his head, looks up  
at Brax.

RIETY  
She absorbed the full force of a  
bombardment through one of her  
wards this morning.

(CONTINUED)



BRAX

Gods...and you haven't been able to wake her?

RIETY

(shaking his head)

Not even for a few moments.

He leans back from the table and runs a hand through his hair. He pulls a cloth from inside his robe and whips it across his brow.

RIETY(CONT)

I'm starting to think those enchanted stones did more than shatter our wards.

BRAX

What do you mean?

Riety puts away the cloth and looks down at Janen.

RIETY

It's as if they've stolen her agency. Whatever those stone did to her, she's no longer capable of willing herself to live.

BRAX

Maybe something is repressing that willpower?

RIETY

(shaking his head)

I've tried searching for any ties to another force, but there's nothing. Physically she's fine, barring a few bruises, but mentally there is a block, keeping her from waking, and whatever it is, it's internal.

Brax takes a step back from the table, raising a hand to his chin in thought. Riety continues to stare down at Janen, holding her right hand tightly in his own.

The door to the guard tower burst open, and a SOLDIER runs in.

SOLDIER

(shouting)

We need a mage out here!

(CONTINUED)

Brax looks across at Riety, who nods towards the door. Brax rushes over to the soldier.

BRAX  
Corporal Brax. Third Cadre.

SOLDIER  
Come with me.

Brax follows the soldier out onto the wall.

EXT. WESTERN GATE - AFTERNOON

Suspended above the wall, five soldiers hang. Translucent orbs hover around them, jolting towards anyone who comes close to them. The Artelyans are back in the siege towers, firing arrows at the soldiers unable to engage them.

SOLDIER  
(pointing to the floating  
bodies)  
What is going on with them?

BRAX  
(startled)  
I was hoping you could tell me.

SOLDIER  
I'm no mage. All I know is they  
were on the wall one second, the  
next they were up there, and those  
orbs were causing anyone who got  
too close to shatter.

BRAX  
Shatter?

SOLDIER  
Like glass, Corporal.

Brax slowly nods. Planting his feet firmly on the ground, he closes his eyes and raises his hands.

Pale beams coil out from him, threading through the soldiers, brushing against the orbs.

A violent shock runs through Brax's body, and the soldier catches him.

SOLDIER  
Corporal?

(CONTINUED)

BRAX

There's an Artelyan mage in that tower. Kill him, and I expect the orbs will go away.

SOLDIER

Can you do anything about him?

BRAX

Normally I could, but I've been fighting all day, and just teleported here. I'm spent.

SOLDIER

(annoyed)

Then what do you suggest we do?

BRAX

I don't know, blow it up.

At hearing Brax's words, the soldier smiles darkly. He runs over to the edge of the wall and shouts back into the city.

SOLDIER

Get me an Alchemist.

A moment later a MAN in a black robe waddles up to Brax and the soldier.

BRAX

What's your name?

TALLOR

Tallor, Corporal.

SOLDIER

Never mind that. See that tower.

He points to the tower. Tallor peers around the wall and nods.

SOLDIER(CON'T)

I want you to blow it up. Can you do that.

TALLOR

That depends. How good is your arm, soldier?

The soldier laughs.

(CONTINUED)

SOLDIER

Good enough.

Tallor nods, then takes a small round vial out from his robe. It is filled with black liquid. From another pocket he takes out a small oil-drenched piece of robe. He uncorks the vial, then puts the rope inside so part is hanging out.

TALLOR

Corporal, can you light this?

BRAX

I should be able to.

Tallor hands the vial to the soldier, who holds it out for Brax. He raises a hand, snapping his fingers over the end of the rope. The first time nothing happens. Brax looks between the two men. He tries again. This time sparks fly from the end of his fingers, and the rope catches.

The soldier turns around quickly and lobs the vial towards the tower. As it hits the wood it shatters, and the tower is engulfed in flames. Artelyans are thrown from the tower by the blast.

As panic grips the Artelyans, arrows begin to fly wildly. Brax steps out onto the wall. The suspended men are still hanging, but the orbs holding them shatter as soldiers prod at them with their spears.

Brax turns back towards the soldier, who smiles as he runs past towards the fighting. Brax head back towards the guard tower, but lurches forward as an arrow rips through him. He stumbles, skidding on the floor, grasping for the wall.

Another arrow pierces his lower back, and he falls to the ground, blood slowly pooling underneath his body.

FADE OUT.

SUPER: THE SECOND DAY

EXT. ALDMERE WALL - EARLY MORNING

FADE IN:

The sun is still far from rising. Broken siege towers stand against the wall, the top of which is as covered in debris as the ground beneath it.

(CONTINUED)

Soldiers move along the wall, picking up weapons from the fallen. Alchemists dart between them, carrying cauldrons of oil, refiling the pots lining the edge of the wall.

Aleric looks out across the field at the Artelyan camp. Small fires blaze throughout, and soldiers can be seen moving between tents. Shakes walks up to stand next to him. He salutes.

SHAKES  
(shaking)  
Captain.

Aleric nods absentmindedly.

SHAKES(CON'T)  
(shaking)  
The mages should be done setting up  
their wards shortly.

ALERIC  
Good.

He looks out at the camp, then closer, to the ground fifty yards from the wall.

ALERIC(CON'T)  
Sergeant.

SHAKES  
(shaking)  
Yes, Captain?

ALERIC  
Find me an alchemist.

Shakes looks confused and looks out towards where Aleric is staring.

He looks back at Aleric and salutes.

SHAKES  
(shaking)  
At once, sir.

He heads towards the guard tower, leaving Aleric alone, still staring out at the camp.

INT. TAVERN - EARLY MORNING

Despite the time, the tavern is filled with people, most of them soldiers of some kind. They lounge in their chairs, armor piled on the ground next to them, weapons, still sheathed, leaning against the chairs.

The only person in the tavern who looks tired is the owner, who spends the precious moments between having to complete orders resting his head on a fist, which is in turn resting on a tall, wooden counter.

Shakes enters and his eyes scan the tavern. Eventually the fall on a table in the back. This table is occupied by a group of five, the ALCHEMISTS, Tallor included. It is covered in empty mugs.

Shakes makes his way over to the table.

They look up at him as he approaches.

ALCHEMIST ONE

No.

SHAKES

(shaking)

No?

ALCHEMIST TWO

We don't want any.

SHAKES

(shaking)

Any what?

ALCHEMIST THREE

Whatever it is you're selling.

SHAKES

(shaking)

I'm not selling anything.

TALLOR

Why did you say you were here?

SHAKES

(shaking)

I didn't.

ALCHEMIST FIVE

You don't make any sense.

Shakes stares between the Alchemists, who all stare back at him.

(CONTINUED)

A SERVER walks up to the table carrying a tray of five mugs. Shakes steps to the side as the Alchemist receive their mugs. They all take long drinks, and when they've all finished, they continue staring at Shakes.

ALCHEMIST THREE

Are you going to tell us why you're here or not?

SHAKES

(shaking)

Captain Kayren told me to find an Alchemist.

The Alchemists' eyes dart between each other quickly, and they all take another drink.

ALCHEMIST TWO

Why?

SHAKES

(shaking and exasperated)

I don't know.

ALCHEMIST ONE

Sounds dangerous.

ALCHEMIST FIVE

Possibly even deadly.

TALLOR

I'm intrigued.

They all nod rather quickly.

ALCHEMIST TWO

Tell me, soldier, what's better than an alchemist?

SHAKES

(shaking)

Anything?

ALCHEMIST ONE

How droll.

They all laugh.

ALCHEMIST THREE

Nay, soldier, not anything. The only thing better than an alchemist... is more alchemists!

(CONTINUED)

All five of them get up from the table and make for the door. Shakes just stares at the table.

TALLOR  
(from the door)  
Hey! Soldier! You coming or what?

Shakes looks at them. He rubs his eyes, shakes his head, and follows them out.

EXT. GUARD TOWER - EARLY MORNING

Aleric turns at the sound of footsteps. Shakes and the five Alchemists walk across towards him.

SHAKES  
(shaking)  
Captain, the Alchemists.

ALERIC  
I only asked for one.

SHAKES  
(shaking)  
So did I.

Aleric moves past Shakes to look at the Alchemists. They stare at him ,perfectly still.

ALERIC  
Which one of you is in charge?

They look between each other, looking uncomfortable.

ALCHEMIST ONE  
Well...

ALCHEMIST TWO  
That's a tough question to answer,  
Captain.

ALERIC  
It is?

ALCHEMIST THREE  
We can't find out leader.

Aleric narrows his eyes, looking very confused, and slightly irritated.

(CONTINUED)



ALERIC  
Can't find him?

TALLOR  
I know! It's not like him to just  
wander off like this.

ALCHEMIST FIVE  
Maybe it is, and that's why we  
haven't seen him in a while.

The other four look at Alchemist Five, then all start  
nodding. Aleric turns towards Shakes, who shrugs his  
shoulders and shakes his head.

Aleric turns back towards the Alchemists, who are staring at  
him. He points towards Tallor.

ALERIC  
You, what's your name?

TALLOR  
Tallor, sir.

ALERIC  
Excellent. Tallor, you're in  
charge.

ALCHEMIST FIVE  
Why him?

ALCHEMIST TWO  
Yeah, he's the least qualified.

TALLOR  
Quiet, I'll have none of that from  
you two.

ALERIC  
We don't have time for this.

They all stop talking and look at Aleric.

ALERIC(CON'T)  
The Artelyans will attack again  
with the morning.

TALLOR  
What does that have to do with us?

Aleric smiles.

(CONTINUED)

ALERIC

You are instrumental to my plan.  
Tell me, how much oil do you have  
in reserve...

The Alchemists' eyes light up as Aleric continues speaking.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - EARLY MORNING

The sun has still not risen. Tallor leads the Alchemists, who are pulling a cart behind them. On the cart are large barrels, and the barrels in the back have been opened slightly to allow a trickle to flow out.

SERIES OF SHOTS

They stumble along in dark, tripping over each other more than once.

The wagon gets stuck in a rut.

As the sun rises, they Alchemists near the front gate, leaving the wagon along the path, the remaining barrels hidden under the wagon.

EXT. GUARD TOWER - MORNING

Aleric, Tallor, and the other Alchemists stand on the tower, looking out at the advancing army. Stones flung from catapults arc through the air towards the city. Most are disintegrated as they pass through the wards, but some make it through.

Screams echo throughout the city. The Artelyan army approaches, battle cries growing louder and louder as they get closer.

Aleric looks back and gestures for ARCHER ONE to join him. Archer One is wearing tanned leather, and carrying a long bow. There is a barrel of oil in front of him and a lit brazier on in the corner of the tower

He nocks an arrow and dips it into the oil, then moves over towards the brazier.

The Artelyans approach the wagon.

Archer One dips his arrow into the brazier.

He takes aim.

(CONTINUED)

Artelyans in the front notice the barrels, and some turn and start running.

Archer One looses the arrow.

It arcs, flaming head burning against a cloudless, blue sky.

It hits one of the barrels.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - MORNING

Artelyans are sent flying as the barrels explode. Shrapnel from the wagon shoots out, shredding some Artelyans, impaling others.

The trail of oil laid out by the Alchemists lights, creating a short wall of fire in a semi-circle around the city. Areas of concentration, and places where empty barrels were dropped, erupt in small explosions, sending Artelyans skyward.

EXT. GUARD TOWER - MORNING

Tallor smiles as he looks out at the carnage. The other alchemists look between each other, very pleased with themselves.

The screams coming from the Artelyans drown out those from within Aldmere as flaming bodies run from the conflagration.

All at once, the approaching army turns and heads back to the camp.

TALLOR

They are retreating!

Stones continue arc through the air towards the city, turning buildings to rubble.

ALERIC

Get me Sergeant Shakes.

Tallor looks at Aleric, then to the other Alchemists. He looks back at Aleric and nods, running off down into the lower part of the tower.

Aleric watches the Artelyans retreat as the wall of fire still burns. Bodies still writhe on the ground.

Tallor arrives back on the top of the tower, Shakes following quickly behind him.

(CONTINUED)

Aleric turns to speak to them.

SHAKES  
(shaking)  
You wanted me, Captain?

ALERIC  
The Artelyans are retreating, but I expect the bombardment will continue all day. I'll keep the garrison on the wall, but I want you to go through the destroyed parts of the city and search for any survivors.

SHAKES  
(shaking)  
As you wish, sir.

ALERIC  
Take as many men with you as you need.

Shakes nods and motions for Tallor and the Alchemists to follow him.

EXT. ALDMERE - NIGHT

Stones still fly towards the city. The areas immediately behind it are now completely destroyed; even the rubble has been decimated.

Fires burn through the city, and soldiers rush around trying to move people out of the fires. Alchemists throw vials of water and potions on the fires, while blankets of water descend from the hands of mages.

EXT. GUARD TOWER - NIGHT

Aleric watches as the remains of the wall of fire smolder. The catapults make a half-ring around the city, and beyond figures move around the Artleyan camp.

INT. RUINED HOUSE - NIGHT

Shakes, Tallor, and the four Alchemists move around a house. Less ruined than the others around it, it is still mostly intact. Part of a wall is destroyed, and the remains of a table and chairs is piled on the center of the floor.

In the corner of the room a small staircase leads up to the roof. Shakes heads towards the stairs. Tallor follows him.

EXT. RUINED HOUSE - NIGHT

The roof is still intact, as are the crates resting on it. Shakes opens one to find fabrics of many colors.

Tallor opens another crate, finding more cloth. They open them all, finding nothing.

SHAKES  
(shaking)  
Shall we move on?

Tallor nods, and heads for the stairs. Shakes looks up and sees a flaming stone flying straight for the building. He runs straight for Tallor, tackling him, sending the two of them pitching off the side of the house.

The stone collides with the house. The roof caves in and the walls begin to crumble.

Tallor pushes Shakes off of him and scrambles to his feet. The house is aflame, and the bodies of the four Alchemists are crushed under the fallen debris.

Soldiers are running towards the house. Shakes stands up, his legs wobbling as he does so. He braces himself on crumbled wall.

Tallor crawls towards the house, but soldiers grab him and pull him away from the conflagration. Shakes looks around, his eyes finding it hard to focus. A soldier runs up to him, but his words are not heard, and Shakes falls.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: THE THIRD DAY

INT. GUARD TOWER - EARLY MORNING

FADE IN:

Riety stands over the body of Shakes, whose is lying on a table, breathing shallowly. Riety runs his hands over Shakes's body, applying ointments to his muscles and burns, muttering incantations as he works. His eyes are closed.

(CONTINUED)

Aleric stands off to the side of the table. He rests his hand in his palm, looking around the room at the all the injured soldiers.

Shakes groans, and Riety stops muttering. He opens his eyes, and places two fingers against Shakes's neck. After a few seconds, he nods and takes his hand away.

He looks up at Aleric, whose eyes are now closed.

RIETY

Go Captain, get some rest. He'll be fine.

Aleric opens his eyes and looks at Riety, then nods. He heads out of the guard tower.

Riety rubs his hands on a towel, wiping the excess ointment off them. He walks over towards HEALER TWO

RIETY

I'm leaving. Watch over everyone.

HEALER TWO

Yes, Lieutenant.

He takes his robe from where it hangs on the wall and wraps it around himself. Faint sounds of the catapult bombardment echo from somewhere in the city. He leaves the tower.

EXT. STREET - EARLY MORNING

A SOLDIER leads Riety's horse from the stables towards where the healer stands. He mounts up and begins riding down the street.

Soldiers move in and out of ruined buildings, some carrying the bodies of others.

Many times the street is partially blocked by fallen rubble, and Riety has to carefully maneuver his horse to avoid stumbling.

As Riety continues down the street, the buildings become more and more intact, and the frequency of seeing soldiers dwindles. He dismounts when he arrives at a relatively nondescript building.

## EXT. HOSPITAL - EARLY MORNING

The only entrance to the hospital is through an open arch of white stone. A make shift stable has been set up in an alley next to the entrance, and as Riety approaches a STABLEBOY runs up to him to take his horse.

Riety enters the hospital.

## INT. HOSPITAL STORAGE - EARLY MORNING

Beyond the white arch is a small room filled with crates of supplies. A thick oak door separates the storage room from the main room of the hospital.

Riety places his cloak on a hook, then enters the main room.

## INT. HOSPITAL MAIN ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Rows of beds line the room lengthwise, making a pathway running down the middle of the room. Healers move in and out of smaller paths leading to individual beds.

Soldiers occupy almost all of the beds, most sleeping peacefully, though some thrash around. Screams can be heard from the back of the room, where healers are administering intensive healing.

Riety makes his way towards a bed halfway down the room where Janen is lying peacefully. He picks up a leather notebook from the table next to her bed opens it up. LOYET walks up to the other side of the bed.

RIETY  
(without looking up)  
No change?

LOYET  
None, sir.

RIETY  
(pointing in the book)  
What's this about Halyn?

LOYET  
He thought he was close to  
isolating the problem, but I  
haven't heard anything since.

Riety looks up at Loyet.

(CONTINUED)

RIETY  
Where is he now?

LOYET  
(gesturing)  
In the back. He was needed for an  
amputation.

Riety puts the book down on the table.

RIETY  
Thank you.

Loyet nods and walks away. Riety looks down at Janen. After a moment, he softly takes hold of her hand.

INT. BARRACKS - MORNING

A loud knock on the door causes Aleric to sit up in bed. He rubs his eyes, then moves towards the door.

Kilroy stands on the other side.

ALERIC  
(groggy)  
What is it, Sergeant?

KILROY  
Sorry to wake you, Captain, but you  
should see this.

Aleric nods. He grabs his sword from where it rests next to the bed, then follows Kilroy out of the barracks.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Many soldiers are running out of the barracks, heading for the wall. Kilroy leads Aleric away from the traffic running up the stairs towards the wall, and heads for the guard tower.

Singing can be heard from the other side of the wall.

INT. GUARD TOWER - MORNING

Injured soldiers sleep slumped against the wall of the tower, but apart from some healers, there is no one else to be found.

Aleric and Kilroy swiftly move through the tower and head for the stairs.



EXT. GUARD TOWER - MORNING

Soldiers line the edge of the tower, two or three bodies thick at places.

KILROY  
Make way for the Captain!

Soldiers turn, and move aside as Aleric approaches.

Out in the field, Artelyans carry the burned corpses of their fallen brethren back towards the camp. As they do so, they sing.

ALERIC  
What are they saying?

KILROY  
No idea, Captain.

ARCHER TWO(O.S)  
They ask for their gods' mercy.

Many people turn to look at ARCHER TWO.

ARCHER TWO(CON'T)  
In their eyes they are at fault for the dead, and believe only their gods' can vindicate them.

Aleric looks back out at the field. In the distance, just outside the Artelyan camp, soldiers are moving towards Aldmere, concealing something within the mass.

ALERIC  
What do you think they're doing?

KILROY  
Not sure, Captain, but they are forming their lines.

ALERIC  
(nodding)  
So they are. We shall get no respite.

KILROY  
Seems not, sir.

ALERIC  
Organize your men, and keep an eye on whatever those men are carrying.

(CONTINUED)

KILROY

Yes, sir.

Kilroy runs off back into the guard tower. Aleric looks back out as the Artelyans form their lines.

INT. HOSPITAL MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Riety pushes aside the curtain leading into the part of the room where the intensive healing is occurring. HALYN stands over a bed, while two other healers hold down the squirming body on the bed.

Halyn looks up as Riety enters

HALYN

Riety! Get over here, I need you to calm him down.

Riety moves over to the bed, seeing for the first time the patient. A YOUNG BOY, his right side covered in burns, the lower leg bone on his right leg stick out just below the knee. Tears are running down his face.

The two healers hold down the boy's shoulders, but he is trying to break free. Riety moves forward and places his hand on the boy's forehead.

Riety closes his eyes, and shortly the boy does to. He stops squirming, and Halyn moves towards him, bone saw in hand.

Riety moves away, and winces as he puts pressure on his right leg. He moves to sit down in a chair pushed against the wall.

Halyn places the bone saw down and wipes his forehead on the sleeve of his robe. One of the healers picks up the amputated leg and carries it out of the room. The other calls for another healer to help him carry the boy.

Halyn walks over to Riety.

HALYN

You don't look well.

RIETY

I siphoned some of the pain in the boys leg into my own. Once it subsides I'll be fine.

Halyn nods, wiping his hands on a wet towel.

(CONTINUED)

RIETY(CON'T)

How is she?

HALYN

Physically she's still fine, but we haven't been able to do anything for her mental state.

RIETY

Loyet said you were close to isolating the problem.

Halyn looks off into the other room.

HALYN

Follow me.

Riety gets up from the chair and follows Halyn. As he walks he gains more strength in his leg, and he limps less.

They arrive at Janen's bed. She is unchanged.

Halyn places a hand on Janen's temple.

HALYN

I couldn't find anything at first. But I realized that I wasn't looking at it the right way.

RIETY

What do you mean?

HALYN

She warded her mind against whatever is in there. She's not letting herself wake up because she doesn't want it to spread.

Halyn takes his hand off of Janen's temple, and motions for Riety to put his there.

He stands still for a moment after he puts his hand on her temple, then closes his eyes.

RIETY

Ah, I feel the ward now.

HALYN

Can you do anything about it?

RIETY

I'm not sure. I...

(CONTINUED)

A spasm runs through Riety's left arm, and he yelps in pain. Halyn moves over and grabs Riety by the shoulders. Thick, pulsating, purple veins are moving sinuously up his arm.

Others in the room have turned to look at what is going on. With a struggle, Halyn pulls Riety's hand away from Janen. He sets him down so he is sitting on the ground.

Riety lets out a long breath, then looks down at his arm. His hand has turned completely purple, and the veins are moving slowly up the rest of his arm. He raises his right hand to touch it.

JANEN

I wouldn't do that.

Riety stops and looks up at Janen.

JANEN(CON'T)

Let me.

He raises his arm up to her, and she reaches down to touch it. She does so, and quickly pulls away her hand. She looks down at him, then hovers her hand right above his arm. She mutters something.

A pale, blue mist settles over the arm, and the veins stop pulsating as quickly, and move no further up his arm.

JANEN(CON'T)

That should hold it for a little while. I'll have to take another look at it later.

HALYN

What about you? Are you going to be alright.

JANEN

I'll be fine. Enough of the enchantment passed into Riety's arm that I can stop it from spreading while conscious.

Riety is staring at his hand, turning it back and forth. Janen stands up and reaches down to grab his other hand. He puts his left down on the ground to push himself up, but as he puts pressure on it he shrieks in pain.

Halyn puts his arms underneath Riety's and pulls him up, laying him down on an empty bed.

(CONTINUED)

HALYN  
You need to rest.

Riety nods, and closes his eyes as Janen gently grabs his right hand and Halyn walks away.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATE - NOON

Aleric sidesteps as a spear lunges towards his face. His leg catches on a stone and stumbles. The Artelyan swipes his spear at Aleric's ankles, knocking him to the ground.

He moves over Aleric raising his spear. Aleric kicks him in the knee, shattering it. He screams in pain as he falls to ground, and stops when Aleric stabs him in the chest.

A volley of arrows descends into the melee from the wall above. Artelyans raise thick wooden shields to block them, though more than a few make it through and hit their targets.

The mass of Artelyans at the center of the fight break, charging forward jabbing forward with their spears. Aleric looks towards what they were concealing.

Eight Artelyans, bigger than the others, carry a large battering ram towards the gate. Aleric turns towards the wall. He waves his sword, attempting to the attention of the archers.

EXT. THE WALL - NOON

Archer One looks down at the carnage below. He notices Aleric, waving his sword in the air, pointing towards that gate. An Artelyan rushes into Aleric, knocking him to the ground.

Archer One draws an arrow, and takes aim. He looses it, and knocks the Artelyan back enough for Aleric to regain his footing.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATE - NOON

Aleric raises his sword, lunging forward at the Artelyan, who is still dazed from the arrow. A quick cut across the chest and the Artelyan falls.

Aleric looks up at the wall, notices Archer One, and waves in thanks.

EXT. THE WALL - NOON

Archer One raises his hand in salute as Aleric runs off. He turns to the soldiers next to him.

ARCHER ONE  
Come with me.

He leads them towards the gatehouse.

EXT. GATEHOUSE - NOON

Archer One and the other soldiers line up above the gate, where Alchemists are pouring fresh oil into pots. The Battering ram is inching closer to the gate. The Artelyans around it have locked shields, protecting the ram, jabbing out with their spears at anyone who get's close.

Arrows fly down into the Artelyans, but the ones carrying the ram push through the pain and continue forward.

The ram arrives at the gate. A violent shake runs through the gatehouse. The Alchemists knock over the pots.

Scalding oil falls onto the Artelyans below, sending them running.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATE - NOON

Aleric moves into the space in front of the gate, where the Artelyans are running, many of them aflame. He readies his sword, cutting through the fleeing men.

Something hits him from behind, sending him sprawling forward. He rights himself and turns around. A huge Artelyan stands there, wielding an axe.

Aleric loosens his stance, bouncing back and forth on the balls of his feet. The Artelyan swings his axe out in an arc. Aleric jumps back, sliding in the dirt. He looks up, rolling out of the way as the Artelyan charges at him.

He slices out with his sword, clipping the Artelyan's leg. His sword glances off his armor.

Aleric springs to his feet. The Artelyan wheels around, jabbing the end of his axe towards Aleric. He slams his arm down on the blunt side of the axe, pushing it towards the ground. The Artelyan pushes against Aleric, knocking the axe up into his face.

(CONTINUED)

Aleric sprawls backwards as the Artelyan charges into him. He raises his sword, but the Artelyan slams his axe into Aleric's wrist, forcing the sword out of his hand.

Aleric lunges back, but not fast enough. The axe connects, cutting into his left shoulder, sending him on his back.

EXT. GATEHOUSE - NOON

Archer One watches as the axe splits Aleric's shoulder. He nocks and arrow, and looses it. The Artelyan falls as the arrow pierces his neck.

ARCHER

We need a healer, now! Captain  
Kayren has been injured.

Soldiers scramble from the gate house, running in all directions.

INT. HOSPITAL MAIN ROOM - AFTERNOON

Janen sits in a chair next to Riety's bed. He is asleep. Her eyes are closed. Halyn moves about the room, attending to patients.

Raised voices overwhelm the room as a group of soldiers push into the hospital, carrying a body on a board.

SOLDIER

It's Captain Kayren, he's been  
injured.

Halyn rushes over towards the group of people, and Janen's eyes snap open. She stands up and moves towards the bed where Aleric has been put.

His shoulder is wrapped in a thick layer of bandages, and his left arm hangs limp at his side.

Halyn is ordering people around, organizing them so he can get right next to Aleric. He places a hand on his chest.

HALYN

He's barely breathing.

Janen moves forward, pushing her way through the crowd.

HALYN(CON'T)

Everyone, move aside! You have  
other patients to attend to.

(CONTINUED)

Janen places her hand on Aleric's chest and closes her eyes. Halyn's hand rests in his chin as he watches Janen. She takes her hand away and opens her eyes,

JANEN

I have done what I can, but he has lost a lot of blood. Maybe too much.

HALYN

Dammit, I know that!

Janen looks at Halyn, then down at Aleric. Across the room, Riety sits up.

RIETY

What's going on?

Halyn looks up at Janen, then motions with his head for her to go to him.

She walks over to Riety

RIETY(CON'T)

Has something happened?

JANEN

Aleric has been injured. Badly.

RIETY

Help me up.

He pushes himself up from the bed. He stand up on his own. Janen puts a hand against his chest.

JANEN

There is nothing you can do, especially not with one hand.

Riety looks across the room with pain in his eyes, he looks back a Janen, who moves her hand from his chest to his arm.

Riety pulls her close to him, holding her tightly. She does the same to him.

FADE OUT.



SUPER: THE EIGHTH DAY

INT. GUARD TOWER - NIGHT

FADE IN:

Bodies of wounded soldiers line the walls of the room, bandages, many soaked through with blood, wrapped tightly around arms and legs. Healers kneel beside some of them, administering ointments and poultices, while others lay fully wrapped bodies on boards to be taken away.

Aleric stands at the table in the center, watching the room in silence. His left arm rests unmoving on the table, and he winces as he adjusts the bandages around his shoulder.

Screams of pain arise from many soldiers around the room, while others wrap their arms around themselves and cry.

Aleric, pushing through the pain, drags his left arm from the table, and walks towards the stairs leading to the top of the tower. Many soldiers reach out to him as he passes, and with a pained expression, he ignores them.

EXT. GUARD TOWER - NIGHT

More soldiers, looking marginally healthier than the ones below, stand at attention around the edge of the tower. Their armor is stained and cracked, cloaks torn and frayed, and many drag whetstones across their blades as they watch the night.

Aleric walks towards the far edge, where Riety, Janen, and Tallor stand, looking out at the Artelyans. Monstrous fires rage through the night, and chanting can faintly be heard coming from the camp.

RIETY

Listen, Captain. They sing their victory. We've nothing left, and they know it.

JANEN

We cannot hold out another day.

Aleric stares out at the fires. Shadows dance across the scorched and torn up field.

TALLOR

They will not attack tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

Aleric, Riety, and Janen turn to look at Tallor. He spits off the side of the tower.

TALLOR(CON'T)

No, they've bled us enough; now  
they leave us the chance to watch  
ourselves die.

Tallor pulls out a vial from his robe, uncorks it, and takes a long drink. As he puts it away he turns and leaves.

Aleric turns back towards the camp. He sighs deeply.

ALERIC

How are you doing, Riety?

Riety looks down at his hand, the purple veins pulsating quickly.

RIETY

The malediction has stopped  
spreading, but I doubt I'll ever be  
able to use this hand again.

Janen puts a hand on his arm and smiles.

JANEN

You may yet.

Riety smiles back at her. Aleric clears his throat.

ALERIC

Stay vigilant you two. I need you  
to watch the city tomorrow.

They both turn towards him.

RIETY

(worried)

Captain, where are you going?

Aleric looks between the two of them, then nods his head forward.

ALERIC

They mean to let us bleed out. I  
mean to save us.

Riety and Janen look at each other, then out across the field towards the camp.

EXT. GATE SQUARE - MORNING

Aleric sits atop his horse, readjusting the sling on his arm, Janen and Riety stand next to each other near the gate. The square is empty otherwise.

Aleric nods at them, then raises his right hand. A GATEKEEPER shouts from atop the wall.

GATEKEEPER  
Open the gate!

Slowly the gate creaks open, and Aleric rides out.

EXT. FIELD - MORNING

Clouds fill the sky, and the ground is covered in broken siege equipment and weapons and armor beyond repair.

The trees that once lined the road are now just stumps. The spike holding Lucrus's body is still intact, although the body has begun to decay, and crows sit on and around the pole.

Outriders from the camp ride out to meet Aleric as he nears. Their horses are bigger than his, and their leather armor is untarnished.

As they approach Aleric raises up his hands.

ALERIC  
I come unarmed.

OUTRIDER ONE  
What do you want?

ALERIC  
I wish to speak with Halvarg.

The outriders look between each other, then nod.

OUTRIDER TWO  
Follow us.

They pull up behind Aleric and lead him into the camp.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE THE ARTELYAN CAMP - MORNING

Just outside the camp are massive holes, filled with blackened remains. Aleric raises a hand to cover his nose, and averts his eyes from the pits.

EXT. ARTELYAN CAMP - MORNING

Tents of blue and white are organized in long, straight rows. Soldiers sit outside their tents, many moving towards communal sitting areas where fires are being prepared for breakfast. Other soldiers rub down their horses, and some sharpen weapons and polish armor.

Banners of all colors flap in the wind, and below each is a white banner with a gold octagon.

As Aleric and the outriders approach the command tent, it begins to rain.

EXT. COMMAND TENT - MORNING

The tri-peaked, blue and white stripped tent sits atop a small hill. Guards in gold steel armor stand outside the entrance.

Aleric and the outriders dismount and approach the tent.

TENT GUARD ONE

Who's this?

The outriders looks at each other, then at Aleric.

OUTRIDER ONE

Who are you?

ALERIC

Captain Aleric Kayren.

The outriders look back at the guards.

TENT GUARD TWO

What business do you have here,  
Captain?

ALERIC

I desire a meeting with Halvarg.

The guards look at each other, then let out a laugh. They do not move.

(CONTINUED)

HALVARG(O.S)  
Let him in.

The guards move to the side and Aleric enters the tent.

INT. COMMAND TENT - MORNING

A table stands at the center of the tent. At one end is a map of the valley, marked with colored wooden blocks of different shapes and sizes. At the other end is a large plate of meats, cheeses, and breads.

Two men stand near the food, HALVARG(43) and OZYMANDIUS(39).

Halvarg's hair is long, pale, and tied back. A beard covers his face. He has a sword at his waist, and his hands are calloused.

Ozymandius is short and slight, and wears a white and gold robe. His dark hair frames his clean shaven face.

As Aleric approaches, Halvarg gestures towards the food. Aleric looks down at the plate, then back up at Halvarg.

                  HALVARG  
I already hold your life in my  
hand. If I wanted to kill you, I  
would not poison you.

Aleric hesitates, then sits at the table and begins eating. Halvarg sits across from him.

                  HALVARG(CON'T)  
Ozymandius, get some wine, then  
join us.

Ozymandius nods and moves towards a table in the corner. He returns with a glass bottle filled with dark red wine. He begins pouring it into three cups.

                  OZYMANDIUS  
From the vineyards of Oralia. A  
gift from the Southern Kingdoms.

Ozymandius sits at the table and takes a sip from the wine. He takes time to savor the flavor.

                  OZYMANDIUS(CON'T)  
Truly a shame they were burned.

Aleric stops mid sip and looks at the two men. He then continues to drink.

(CONTINUED)

HALVARG  
My condolences for your fallen  
king.

Aleric looks across the table at him, but doesn't stop  
eating.

HALVARG(CON'T)  
Who has commanded the city against  
us?

Aleric takes a sips of wine, then clears his throat.

ALERIC  
I have.

Halvarg leans back in his chair.

HALVARG  
Last night we gathered the fallen  
from the field, ours and yours, and  
commended them to our gods.

ALERIC  
We did the same in the early days  
of the siege, though I cannot speak  
for any gods.

Halvarg grins, then takes a drink.

OZYMANDIUS  
Why are you here, Captain?

ALERIC  
Aldmere is on the verge of dying. I  
am here to stop it from falling.

HALVARG  
You wish to prevent anymore death?

ALERIC  
I do.

There is a pause, as Halvarg looks at Aleric. He takes  
another sip of wine.

HALVARG  
I share your desires.

Aleric breathes deeply.

HALVARG(CON'T)  
Ozymandius, what do the gods say?

OZYMANDIUS  
I will require time to fully  
consult them, but I imagine they  
will assent.

Halvarg nods, then turns towards Aleric.

HALVARG  
What would you suggest?

ALERIC  
I have conditions, but if they are  
met, Aldmere is yours.

OZYMANDIUS  
Conditions? You are not really in a  
position to have conditions.

Aleric opens his mouth to speak, but Halvarg does so first.

HALVARG  
What are they?

ALERIC  
Just these: no one shall be harmed  
in the transition of power, and  
anyone who wishes to leave the city  
to start a new life outside the  
walls will be allowed to do so.

Halvarg looks at Ozymandius, then back at Aleric.

HALVARG  
Agreed. But I require the same from  
you. If this is a trap, and any of  
my men are unduly harmed, I will  
burn the city to the ground.

Halvarg reaches his hand across the table, and after a  
moment, Aleric shakes it.

#### SERIES OF SHOTS

Aleric, Riety, Janen, Halvarg, and Ozymandius sit atop their  
horses outside the gate as Artelyans slowly move into the  
city.

Crowds have gathered on top of the wall and behind the gate  
to watch the proceedings.

(CONTINUED)

From the door of a tavern, the Windblown watch the Artelyans enter the city. WINDBLOWN CAPTAIN gestures for them to stop watching. They slam the door.

Somewhere underground, Mendex sits slumped against a wall, his hair long and matted, his beard scraggly. Light shines in through a hole in through grate in the ceiling, blocked every now and then by people walking over it.

Night has fallen outside. In the palace, new blue and white banners are being hung up as Halvarg walks towards the throne.

INT. THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Halvarg approaches the throne, Aleric walking with him. Artelyan guards line the sides of the room, and Ozymandius stands a few feet back from Halvarg and Aleric, a grin on his face.

Aleric gestures to the throne.

ALERIC

The city is yours, Halvarg.

Halvarg walks up to the throne, running his hand along it. He looks off into the distance, nodding his head.

HALVARG

No.

ALERIC

(confused)

No?

HALVARG

I have no need for Aldmere. My city  
is far away from here.

He backs away, pointing to the throne.

HALVARG(CON'T)

The city is yours, Lord Kayren.

Aleric stares at Halvarg, then back at Ozymandius, whose expression does not change. He looks back at the throne and approaches it.

He hesitates for a moment, then sits on the throne.

(CONTINUED)



HALVARG

I will honor your second request,  
Lord Kayren. Anyone who wishes to  
leave the city can do so unopposed.

Aleric nods. Halvarg turns and leaves, Ozymandius taking  
stride at his side.

EXT. ALDMERE GATE - NOON

The gate sits wide open as people slowly move out of the  
city. Most are on foot, though some children sit on top of  
carts filled with possessions. A group of Artelyan guards  
stand on either side of the gate, directing the travelers.

Aleric stands off to the side, watching as the citizens of  
Aldmere depart. Riety and Janen are at his side.

RIETY

Are you sure this is wise? You've  
just been made lord of Aldmere.

ALERIC

That is why I must go. I promised  
King Sarias I would look after his  
people, and now that they are my  
people I intend to do no different.

Riety looks as if he is about to speak again, but doesn't.

JANEN

Just be safe, Aleric. You got us  
through the war, now lead us  
through the peace.

Aleric smiles genuinely, then motions for his horse. A GUARD  
walks over holding the reins of Aleric's horse. He mounts  
up, and with a look back at the city, he rides out through  
the gate alongside the travelers. Riety and Janen follow on  
their horses.

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

Mendex sleeps against a cold stone wall. His clothes are  
dirty, and his hair is matted down. Bones are scattered  
around the room, which is illuminated by the moonlight  
coming in the grate above and a single torch on the wall  
outside the cell.

There is a loud thud outside the door to the cell, and it  
opens. Windblown Captain and three Windblown soldiers walk  
in. One of them is holding a key.

(CONTINUED)

Mendex jolts awake at the sound of the door opening.

MEDEX

(hoarse)

What's going on?

WINDBLOWN CAPTAIN

We're getting you out of here, sir.

MEDEX

Why? What has happened?

WINDBLOWN ONE

Captain Kayren surrendered the city  
to the Artelyans!

WINDBLOWN THREE

Quiet!

Windblown One unlocks Mendex's shackles, then, with  
Windblown Two's help, lifts him up.

MEDEX

Where are we going?

WINDBLOWN CAPTAIN

Out of Aldmere. After that who  
knows.

The help Mendex out of the cell, and he slowly regains his  
strength. As the pass other cells, prisoners shout, asking  
to be let out.

A PRISON GUARD rounds the corner and stops moving. Windblown  
Two knocks him aside as Windblown Three drives a knife  
through his chest.

WINDBLOWN CAPTAIN

Go!

They begin to move faster, heading towards the stairs at the  
end of the hall.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Mendex and the Windblown burst out of the door onto the  
street. The rest of the Windblown are outside, weapons  
drawn, standing off with a group of Artelyan soldiers.

An ARTELYAN CAPTAIN rides up on a horse.

(CONTINUED)

ARTELYAN CAPTAIN  
What's going on here?

WINDBLOWN CAPTAIN  
We're just trying to get out of the city.

ARTELYAN CAPTAIN  
(pointing to Mendex)  
Who's he?

WINDBLOWN CAPTAIN  
Our commander.

ARTELYAN CAPTAIN  
What was he in there for?

WINDBLOWN CAPTAIN  
Doesn't matter. The people who put him in there are dead.

Artelyan Captain looks between the two sets of men.

ARTELYAN CAPTAIN  
Stand down, men. We don't want any bloodshed, Lord Kayren's orders. Let them pass.

Mendex looks shocked. He turns to Windblown One.

MENDEX  
Lord Kayren?

WINDBLOWN ONE  
Aye, after he gave them the city, the bastard's went and put him in charge.

Mendex's eyes scan the two groups. He looks back at Windblown Two and gives him a quick hand signal. He looks at Windblown Captain, and does the same. As the Artelyans move to the side, Windblown Two pulls the crossbow from his back.

A shriek of pain accompanies the quarrel lodging in Artelyan Captain's neck.

The Windblown have their weapons drawn before the captain hits the ground, and are slicing through the Artelyans long before they can get their own weapons back up.

Two Windblown stand at the back, weaving the hands simultaneously. When they finish, a fountain of fire erupts from the chest of an Artelyan.

The last Artelyan falls, and the Windblown start running down the street, leaving it covered in bleeding, smoldering bodies.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Aleric rides at the side of the column, which has dwindled in size since it left Aldmere.

Groups of people quickly move towards abandoned houses, while others simply stop moving to rest their feet.

A CITIZEN walks up to Aleric.

CITIZEN

Thank you for taking us home,  
m'lord.

Aleric smiles down at Citizen, who continues on towards the village.

Riety and Janen ride up to Aleric's side.

JANEN

You're sure you don't want us to  
stay?

RIETY

She's right, you may need us.

ALERIC

(smiling)

Nonsense, you two have done more  
than enough already. Go somewhere  
quiet and secluded, and forget  
everything that we've been through.

Riety looks at Janen, then back at Aleric.

RIETY

Hopefully not everything, Captain.

Aleric smiles.

JANEN

Goodbye Captain.

Aleric nods, and Riety and Janen ride off into the the village.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Halvarg stands with a squad of Artelyan soldiers, looking down at the carnage. Some of the bodies have only just stopped boiling, and most of them are not dead yet.

Halvarg kneels down beside a DYING SOLDIER.

HALVARG  
Who did this?

DYING SOLDIER  
The...the...the Windblown.

Halvarg turns to the squad.

HALVARG  
Get healers down here, now.

He gets up, and, gesturing for some of the soldiers to follow him, leaves the street

EXT. GATE SQUARE - NIGHT

Mendex and the Windblown run through the square, towards the open gate.

From a building next to the gate Ozymandius emerges, standing right in front of the running soldiers. They show no sign of stopping.

Cradling a book in his left arm, Ozymandius closes his eyes and raises his right hand. He flicks out two fingers.

A pulse shoots through the square, stopping the Windblown in their tracks. The square goes quiet.

A squad of Artelyan's appear behind Ozymandius, crossbows raised.

The Windblown turn as footsteps are heard from behind.

Halvarg slowly walks across the square, followed by a group of Artelyans, all with crossbows raised.

Mendex looks between the three parties, slowly moving towards the edge of the Windblown. He reaches the edge and starts running, but falls as a quarrel hits his leg.

The sound of dozens of quarrels being released cuts through the night.

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

The caravan now only consists of Aleric and a few soldiers. Trees still line the road here. The sun is high in a cloudless sky.

As he rides his horse, Aleric looks off into the distance and slides Aileen's bracelet through his fingers.

SOLDIER  
(alarmed)  
What is that?

Aleric turns, looking in the direction that the soldier is pointing.

The horizon is filled with black smoke.

ALERIC  
That's coming from Aldmere.

He spurs his horse faster, and the soldiers follow.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATE - AFTERNOON

A pillar of smoke rises from the city. Along the wall the bodies of Mendex and the Windblown are hanging. Halvarg and Ozymandius are waiting just outside the gate.

Aleric rides up to them and dismounts. He stares up at the bodies hanging from the wall.

He looks as if he wants to say something, but he cannot find the words.

Halvarg looks to Ozymandius, then walks up to Aleric.

HALVARG  
Walk with me.

Halvarg and Ozymandius lead Aleric into the city.

EXT. ALDMERE - AFTERNOON

The white stone buildings are in ruins. Rubble fills the squares and the streets of the city. Wooden buildings are smoldering, and it appears that they have been for a long time.

The only sound is that of their footsteps walking through the ruin.

(CONTINUED)

Aleric steps over the rubble as he makes his way through the city, followed by Halvarg and Ozymandius.

The lanterns that hung between the buildings lie crushed on the ground, fire spreading out from them.

In the distance, the palace is still in tact, the beacon that announced Sarias's death burning brightly against the fading light of the sky.

The three come upon a square, where statues of once great Dragon Knight kings lie smashed and scattered across the ground.

The trees that line the avenue running through the center of the square have been torn down. One sits in front of the travelers, its branches aflame.

Aleric falls to his knees before it, Halvarg and Ozymandius standing behind him, as Aldmere crumbles and burns around them.

SUPER: "And Then There Was Silence"

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END