

invasion

a two-part radio drama series

adapted for BBC Radio 4

from

The Arab Chronicles of the Crusades

by Jonathan Myerson

broadcast January 2009

about the research process and content:

This adaptation of what are sometimes called *The Syrian Histories* was an attempt to bring to life the First Crusade – but from an entirely different perspective. Different, that is, for Western audiences: namely, from the point-of-view of those then living in the territories invaded by the so-called Crusaders. what did it feel like when these blond giants suddenly arrived in their lands? Why were they there? What did they want? And, perhaps most importantly, what would they do to get it?

My research drew principally on the writings of Ibn al-Athir and Ibn al-Qalanisi.

It seemed essential that these invaders, these very foreign individuals retain their foreignness – were the characters to utter even a single word of English, then the audience would be impossibly tempted to identify with them. So I devised a form of gobbledegook – there is no better word for it – for the actors to speak when portraying Crusaders. Thus, the audience found themselves in the same position as the citizens of (what is now) Turkey and Syria and, especially, Antioch. In what follows, the 'gobbledegook' is printed phonetically, followed by a 'translation' (in bold type) – the translation was only provided as a tonal indication for the actors.

Above all, the aim of the adaptation was bring to life a sequence of history in a way which would surprise and unsettle a British/Western audience.

The adaptation was broadcast in January 2009, on BBC Radio 4, in two 60-minute plays.

invasion

the arab chronicles of the crusades episode one by jonathan myerson

SCENE 1. BAGHDAD. THE MOSQUE. RAMADAN.

IN THE BACKGROUND: FOUNTAINS, MARBLE, MEN COMING TO PRAYER.

IN THE FOREGROUND: THREE MEN ARE URGENTLY LEADING THE CAPTAINS OVER TO SOMETHING APPALLING....THEY ARE BREATHLESS WITH THE SCANDAL OF IT...

MAN 1 They're eating. Sitting there eating. By the fountain. Eating, fish, rice, everything.

CAPTAIN (DISBELIEVING) Inside the mosque?

MAN 2 Their heads uncovered, sitting there, like it was....(HE IS LOST FOR WORDS)

CAPTAIN Like it wasn't Ramadan?

MAN 3 Like they're not even good believers.

THEY ARE NOW CLOSER TO THE HUBBUB AROUND 'THE EATING MEN'.

A CROWD HAS CLOSED ROUND THEM.

MAN 1 They're in there, right in there.

CAPTAIN Let me through, let me through.

MEANWHILE, OVER THIS:

CAPTION 'Izz ad-Din Ibn al-Athir was a Mesopotamian scholar and the author of The Perfect History. He writes that "In the year 492, refugees from Syria reached Baghdad in Ramadan, among them the qadi Abu Sa'd al-Harawi. On Friday, they went to the Great Mosque and begged for help."

THE CROWD FALLS SILENT AND PARTS.
LEAVING JUST THE SOUND OF SEVERAL MEN EATING.

CAPTAIN You! You men!

AL-HARAWI (LOOKING UP, MOUTH FULL, UTTERLY CALM) Do you mean me?

CAPTAIN How dare you?

AL-HARAWI We're hungry.

CAPTAIN You come here, to the Great Mosque, in the middle of Ramadan and start eating –

AL-HARAWI You think it's wrong?

CAPTAIN (OUTRAGED) It is an outrage. An insult thrown in the face of the Umma. A violation, a –

AL-HARAWI A violation?

CAPTAIN The worst. You should be -

AL-HARAWI (CONTINUING) And the thousands of Muslims who have died, at the hands of the foreigners? Slaughtered merely because they are believers? Is that a violation?

CAPTAIN (DISMISSIVE) Where is this happening?

AL-HARAWI And the holiest places of Islam, seized by the invaders from the West, is that an outrage?

MAN 2 What's he talking about?

MAN 3 He's crazy. He's been in the sun.

AL-HARAWI The Faranj have been summoned into our lands. The streets of Nikaea, Edessa, Antioch, and now Al-Quds, the holy city itself, where the Prophet ascended – the Dome of the Rock runs with Muslim blood. Men, women, children have been slaughtered and what makes you angry? Eating during Ramadan!

MAN 1 Get rid of him.

CAPTAIN You need to come with me. All of you.

AL-HARAWI We have seen women shamed, children killed for food. How can we believers allow this? Even for one day?

MAN 3 He's making it up. Al-Quds! How could they ever capture - ?

AL-HARAWI (CALLING HIM OVER) Firuz, here. (HE PULLS A CLOTH OFF:) This Qur'an. One of the oldest in the world. This the Qur'an of Uthman.

THE CROWD HAVE HEARD OF THIS.

AL-HARAWI The Third Caliph, a man who fought alongside the Prophet.

MAN 2 I've seen that, it's in the Dome of the Rock.

AL-HARAWI The man rescued it, while the Faranj ransacked the city of Al-Quds - they call it "Jerusalem".

CAPTAIN Faranj? "Faranj"? Who are these people?

AL-HARAWI Firuz, tell them.

MAN 2 Get these idiots out of here, captain.

MAN 1 Let him speak.

CAPTAIN Who are you?

FIRUZ My name is Firuz. I am – I was – a citizen of Antioch. I make and I trade armour. That’s why I was in Nikaea.

MAN 2 What’s Nikaea got to do with this? That’s right over near Byzantium.

MAN 1 It’s in the lands of Sultan Qilij.

FIRUZ Not any more. Now it is ruled by red-haired men from over the waters.

CAPTAIN Are these the ‘Faranj’?

FIRUZ I was in Nikaea when I first heard about them.

MAN 1 So what’s taken you so long? If they’re so - ?
[*incredible*]

FIRUZ I didn’t understand them then. May Allah forgive me. I didn’t realise what they wanted, what they were willing to do.

CAPTAIN (BACK TO THE POINT) Why were you in Nikaea?

FIRUZ To buy up plunder from the Greeks’ invasion the year before.

MAN 2 Making money out of other people’s misery.

FIRUZ (DEFENSIVE) I work hard and treat people decently. And I pay good money for what I get.

SNAP CUT INTO:

SCENE 2. NIKAEA. RIHAB'S ROOM. JUST BEFORE DAWN.

RIHAB IS JUST GETTING OUT OF BED

FIRUZ Come back to bed.

RIHAB Can't.

FIRUZ (PLEADING) Rihab.

RIHAB Got work to do.

FIRUZ I'm your work.

RIHAB Your money ran out at midnight.

FIRUZ The rest was for love?

RIHAB Don't flatter yourself. I was tired.

FIRUZ I'll take that as a compliment.

RIHAB Maybe I was tired before you arrived.

FIRUZ (LEANING BACK) I wish I'd met you, you know,
sooner.

RIHAB (AS IF) You would have married me? A whore from
the -

FIRUZ Take you back to Antioch – who'd know?

RIHAB Someone always knows. The Stitch for one.

FIRUZ Stitch'd keep it shut.

- RIHAB This is your dream, is it? In spite of the wife, the daughters, the big foundry, the workshop –
- FIRUZ I only make these trips up here for a chance to see you.
- RIHAB Thought you had work to do anyways.
- FIRUZ The stuff's been lying there best part of ten months, it's not going to get up and walk away tonight.
- RIHAB It's sick.
- FIRUZ It's business.
- RIHAB Scrapping round battlefields. People died there, you know.
- FIRUZ The Sultan's pays his men well. And the Greeks, they went straight to heaven on angels' wings. Stitch told me.
- RIHAB For marching into the Sultan's lands and getting cut to pieces?
- FIRUZ If you die trying to get to al-Quds. Straight to heaven.
- RIHAB They all call it 'Jerusalem'. I get plenty coming through here. Pilgrims. Talking about seeing Jerusalem. And a place called Nazareth. Little wooden crosses round their necks, their whole worlds tied up in a bundle.
- FIRUZ You do Nazara?
- RIHAB If they can pay.
- FIRUZ (INTRIGUED) How do you, like, how do you know what they want?

RIHAB I've picked up a few words. Not so many as you can use out on the street but....I don't get complaints.

FIRUZ They come looking for God and stop for a quick one on the way?

RIHAB Maybe I'm a spiritual experience.

FIRUZ How much for another two hours then? My spirit needs refreshment.

RIHAB The sun's almost – you said you had to – [*go by sun-up*]

FIRUZ Half an hour but we cram everything in?

RIHAB Five dirham.

FIRUZ Three.

RIHAB Five.

BUT DURING THIS THE STITCH STARTS HAMMERING ON THE DOOR OUTSIDE, SHOUTING THROUGH:

THE STITCH Move it. Time to go, Firuz.

FIRUZ You just lost out on three dirham.

RIHAB You'll be back. With five.

FIRUZ You know me too well. I don't need to marry you.

THE STITCH (FROM OUTSIDE) Coming, Firuz?

FIRUZ (AS HE STANDS) Sadly not.

CUT TO:

CAPTION Abu Ya'la Hamza, known as Ibn al-Qalanisi, was a senior secretary in the court at Damascus and a

witness to the events he describes in his Chronicle. He relates how : “The previous year, the year 489 After Hijra, a mass of pilgrims had set out in tumult on the road which leads to Nikaea. But they fell into the ambush of the Sultan and were wretchedly cut to pieces.”

SCENE 3. A PLAIN ABOVE CIVETOT. MID-MORNING.

DRY GROUND.

FIRUZ AND THE STITCH ARE KICKING ROUND THE PLAIN, SHIFTING ROCKS, KICKING PEBBLES, DIGGING A BIT.

THE STITCH We’re not going to find nothing.

FIRUZ There were thousands of them, swarming down here. Everyone says. And then the armies of the Sultan come galloping through that pass and it was....it was messy.

THE STITCH What the Sultan’s boys didn’t take...

FIRUZ There were thousands and thousands of them –

THE STITCH It was children, women, priests, not a whole lot of fighting men. That’s why they was easy pickings.

FIRUZ Must have had a few swords, bit of chain mail, maybe an axe. There were thousands of them, coming down here like locusts –

THE STITCH You never seen locusts.

FIRUZ You read about them.

THE STITCH When d’you last read anything that didn’t include a demand for payment?

FIRUZ Keep looking, Stitch.

A MOMENT WHILE THEY SEARCH

THE STITCH (EXCITED AT HIS FIND) Yes, yes.

FIRUZ (EVEN MORE EXCITED) What have you got?

THE STITCH (FLAT, IT WAS A WIND-UP) Rusty spear point.

FIRUZ Very funny.

THE STITCH It's all been taken, Firuz.

A SHORT MOMENT, THEN:

FIRUZ No harm in looking.

THE STITCH We could be in the market –

FIRUZ Hundreds of them, swarming down here, put to the sword like...

THE STITCH Like you said –

FIRUZ - down through here, singing their special songs –

THE STITCH Psalms.

FIRUZ That's the thing.

THE STITCH (CUTTING ACROSS) Over there.

FIRUZ What?

THE STITCH With the plough and the half-dead donkey.

FIRUZ (SPOTTING HIM) That's a goat.

THE STITCH If anyone's got armour snaffled away, that farmer. He'll have swept up the remnants. Just waiting for best price.

FIRUZ His long wait is finally over then.

THE STITCH I said best price.

FIRUZ Come on.

MIX RIGHT INTO:

SCENE 4. OUTSIDE THE FARMER'S BARN. NOON.

THE FARMER HAS HIS SPIEL

FARMER In their thousands. Thousands and thousands of them –

THE STITCH (TO FIRUZ) What are we doing here, Firuz? These were unarmed - they were zealots, not fighters.

FARMER Sultan Qilij descended. Descended like the descending angel. Heaps of bones. Not hills, not ridges, not - mountains of them.

FIRUZ And they were well-armed?

FARMER Like demons. Like devils. Like giants. (WORST OF ALL:) With hair on fire.

THE STITCH (TRYING TO GET SENSE, AS THOUGH TO AN IDIOT) Was there any armour? We heard there weren't many fighting men?

FARMER I make it my job to look properly. Deep, underneath.

FIRUZ (CUTTING ACROSS, DOWN TO BUSINESS) How much?

FARMER I've got a couple of breastplates, not many holes –

FIRUZ Show us.

FARMER Just under here. Hold on.

WHILE THE FARMER GOES ACROSS AND RUMMAGES UNDER SOME STRAW.

FARMER (FROM A DISTANCE) They was all camped up at Helenopolis.

FIRUZ We heard.

FARMER (AS HE SEARCHES) Came out here, took my goats, took my fodder. We hid in the woods. There was others, others with more stock, the sort to try and fight them off. Horrible mess they made of them. What they did to the women.

FIRUZ (IMPATIENT) The breastplates?

FARMER (PRODUCING THE FIRST, PROUD) What do you think?

HAGGLER'S FAUX DISAPPOINTMENT:

FIRUZ Oh.

THE STITCH That's it?

FARMER There was this fighter wearing it. On this huge horse. Big as a house, this horse.

THE STITCH We was expecting...

FIRUZ ...Something a little more ornate.

FARMER It's big. Thick. (BANGING IT) Look at that. Seen plate like that before?

FIRUZ Too big.

THE STITCH Too thick.

FARMER Oh. (THEN:) I got a few swords. And those spiky things on chains.

AND MIX STRAIGHT TO:

SCENE 5. NEAR CIVETOT: PLAIN. DAY.

FIRUZ AND THE STITCH ARE WALKING AWAY ACROSS THE PLAIN, CARRYING THE BREASTPLATE AND OTHER WEAPONRY. LEADING A DONKEY.

THE STITCH We'll have to melt it down.

FIRUZ What a waste.

THE STITCH It's too heavy – no-one'd want to wear that into battle.

FIRUZ Look at the workmanship round the edge here.

THE STITCH You'd need a horse the size of – then you couldn't move fast enough.

FIRUZ See, they did have some armed men. You thought they were all just crazies.

THE STITCH They was pilgrims, they worship Jesus and want to see his tomb.

FIRUZ I really don't care who they worship, Stitch, they were over here and they were eating and pillaging and –

THE STITCH Don't patronise me.

FIRUZ I what?

THE STITCH You patronise me. All the time. "Don't worry that you're one of them. I'm going to be ever so polite, respectful of your stupid God." Well, Firuz, it so happens, we're standing here, not a day's ride from

Constantinople. From my people. The Empire of my religion.

FIRUZ (DON'T WANT A FIGHT) Why are we arguing?

A HALF-MOMENT, THEN HE ADMITS, IN A RUSH:

THE STITCH I'm embarrassed. Obviously. They come over here, singing psalms and chanting prayers, like God wants them here, like they had a right to be here.

FIRUZ I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

THE STITCH Don't think Sultan Qilij is any better. He'd add Constantinople to the Sultanate if he could. And Constantinople would gobble up the Sultanate if they could. It's all just -

PETER (SUDDENLY APPEARING) Business?

FIRUZ AND THE STITCH JUMP, AND:

FIRUZ Where did you come from?

PETER (HEAVILY ACCENTED, HE IS A FARANJ AND HE'S CRAZY) I live here.

FIRUZ You look like...? Were you a priest?

PETER I was with them. The slaughter.

THE STITCH You survived?

PETER I hope so.

FIRUZ You've been living here since?

PETER I'm on my way to Jerusalem. We're going to take it back from the unclean.

FIRUZ You can go any time you want.

PETER You people, you kill us as soon as we try.

FIRUZ (TO THE STITCH) What's he talking about?

THE STITCH It's what they've been told.

PETER It belongs to us. We are the chosen of God. We must cleanse the holy places.

FIRUZ It's all the same God.

PETER As soon as I've got my shoes, I'm on my way. Get rid of you lot.

FIRUZ (TO THE STITCH) Do they really think that?

PETER See this?

FIRUZ What?

PETER Sleeve. Nothing but. Yes?

FIRUZ Yes.

PETER (SUDDEN RATTLE OF STONES) How's that?

FIRUZ Where did all that come from?

PETER Not difficult.

THE STITCH It's trickery.

PETER It's the magic of the Lord God.

FIRUZ Got any armour to sell?

PETER Like the magic? Penny for it? Ha'penny?

FIRUZ (THROWING A COUPLE OF COINS INTO THE DUST) Buy yourself some sandals.

PETER (SCRABBLING FOR THEM) Thank you, master, thank you.

THE STITCH Let's go back, Firuz. It's too hot out here. We've got enough.

AND OVER THIS:

SCENE 6. BAGHDAD. THE MOSQUE.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) We thought it was just business. We're traders, we're used to working round sultan and emirs and their wars of honour. One year a city belongs to this one, next year to that one, next year back with the sultan you first thought of. The people in the cities wait, the mercenaries fight, and then we continue. We did not think these Nazara any different. Why should we? Except in Nikaea, the rumours are already running.

SCENE 7. NIKAEA: EATING HOUSE. EVENING.

A BUSY EATING PLACE.
AND THEY ARE EATING BUSILY.

RIHAB They're crawling all over Constantinople, that's what he said. Not inside, but all round the walls, the villages.

THE STITCH Since when do we take the word of man who uses prostit - ?

FIRUZ Because our Rihab gets to know everything first. (TO RIHAB) All of them are Faranj?

RIHAB Red hair, dirty brown hair, all of them. Shouting. Doing that praying they do on their knees, with their

hands up like – (WITH EDGE) well, you know what I mean, don't you, Stitch?

- FIRUZ Why do they keep sending these people over here?
- RIHAB Thing is, he said there's a lot more fighting men, this time. Some women and priests, like last year, but so many more ready for the fight.
- FIRUZ They want to conquer the place?
- RIHAB It's this thing – they want Al-Quds, so no-one else can have it.
- THE STITCH How many?
- RIHAB Thousands. Truly thousands of foot soldiers, he said. And horses. Huge horses.
- THE STITCH Where are they from?
- RIHAB Everywhere, he said. All the lands of the Nazara.
- FIRUZ Summoned by the Emperor.
- THE STITCH Maybe they just came. To see Jerusalem.
- FIRUZ They're mercenaries. Emperor's put out the call.
- RIHAB This was his city once. Ever since, he's been looking for help to get it back.
- THE STITCH They're just more pilgrims.
- RIHAB Pilgrims don't come with swords and armour and –
- FIRUZ (MAKING THE CONNECTION) Pilgrims don't need to buy new armour. But soldiers and horsemen and archers and -
- THE STITCH (DON'T) Firuz.

FIRUZ Soldiers, a long way from home, they'll pay any price.

THE STITCH We are not going to go to –

FIRUZ Some of them are bound to have lost their things, traded it on the way, need new armour, new swords.

THE STITCH Let's go home, Firuz. We can burnish up what we've got, fill the holes – we'll get a lovely price.

FIRUZ We could double our money, Stitch. Triple it. You and me, Constantinople and back in a week.

THE STITCH I don't like it. Too much to go wrong.

FIRUZ You said the stuff we bought was all too heavy. Not Turcoman style at all.

THE STITCH (KILLER ARGUMENT) How are we even going to talk to these Faranj? We don't speak their language.

FIRUZ (CAN'T DENY THIS) You're right. Mmmm....

THEN HE REALISES:

FIRUZ Rihab.

RIHAB (SHE'S ALREADY WORKED IT OUT) Twenty-five a day.

FIRUZ Twenty. All found. And extra if I need spiritual refreshment.

CUT TO:

CAPTION Ibn-al-Athir writes: "In the year 490, the Faranj again marched east to Constantinople but the Emperor of the Romans demanded their oaths of allegiance. His

real intention was to incite them to attack the Muslims.”

SCENE 8. ROWING ACROSS THE BOSPHORUS.

SOMEONE IS ROWING, AS WE APPROACH THE DIN ROUND CONSTANTINOPLE. THE NOISE OF 80,000 BORED AND RESTLESS EUROPEANS.

THE STITCH Can't you go any faster?

OARSMAN (ROWING) What you got in those sacks? Brass weights?

FIRUZ We've already agreed extra for that.

THE STITCH (SUDDEN AMAZEMENT) What the – ?

RIHAB Look at them all.

THE STITCH They're everywhere.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Constantinople isn't – no-one's going to say it's a quiet place, best of times. Now with half a million bored barbarians camped outside.

OARSMAN (WHO KNEW ABOUT THIS) He's not letting them in.

RIHAB Who?

OARSMAN Emperor. Doesn't trust the buggers inside. Gates is locked to the Faranj, all way round.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The usual thing is, everyone's going in and out of the city, always a queue of carts and caravans and camels, waiting to get in. Stuff goes in - they just buy it and sell it and buy it and sell it, ten times over, and then it comes out again. Except today, nothing's going in and not much is coming out. All

round the walls, big pale-skinned men, pale-skinned women, pale-skinned children. Some have tents, some are just sleeping in the mud, some are sleeping standing up. And the horses.

THE STITCH They're enormous.

OARSMAN They eat about a field a day.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The horses are tethered and the people might as well be. And they don't look happy. And the soldiers at the gates, they don't look happy neither. Everyone wants to be anywhere but here.

THE STITCH Let's go back.

FIRUZ Captive market, Stitch, prices through the roof.

RIHAB They need food, they don't need weapons.

FIRUZ They're going to need weapons to get food.

RIHAB Is there anything you won't sell to anyone?

FIRUZ I'm being asked that by a prostitute?

WHILE THE BOAT GROUNDS ON THE SHINGLE
AND THEY UNLOAD THEIR WARES:

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) There are patches, circles, where there's one of their priests – they don't look anything like our Nazara in Antioch – no, here, these priests, this one, all round him people are kneeling, that special praying, their palms slapped up together, they're weeping some of them – it's a kind of wailing, like they're happy.

THE STITCH I'll...I'll stay by the boat. You get on with it.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The Emperor has called for fighting men but I'd never seen them like this. They've brought

their women, their children, their shrines, their.. They bump against each other, their flesh cold, slimy, their bodies too big. (BACK TO BUSINESS) But big men need big armour.

AND NOW INTO:

SCENE 9. THE FARANJ CAMP OUTSIDE CONSTANTINOPLE. DAY.

FIRUZ It's fine workmanship.

FARANJ Trough, multim trough insplon.

RIHAB He says there are holes.

FIRUZ Tell him it's to make it lighter.

RIHAB I can't.

FIRUZ Tell him something.

RIHAB (TO FARANJ) Shest bueng, shest trov bueng.

FARANJ Wintshin. Wint.

RIHAB He's offering twenty-five.

FIRUZ (PLAYING TO THE FARANJ) I don't know. I really don't think I can...

FARANJ Trishin. Ushlan trishin.

RIHAB Thirty's his last offer.

FIRUZ Nnnn. You're robbing me but....

AS THE FARANJ PAYS

RIHAB You paid eight dirham for this. You're selling it for thirty dinar. Don't overplay it.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) I'd sold out by midday. And in Constantinople, once you've sold, you buy.

FIRUZ IS NOW HANDLING LEAD PANELS.

FIRUZ Where did they get this?

RIHAB You want to know?

FIRUZ Ask them where they got the lead.

RIHAB Quensh ventim shlimp plombol?

FARANJ Eglisk grenk. Oooba. Incrong.

FIRUZ He's pointing at that church roof. Past that tower.

RIHAB Which just happens to be missing its flashing.

FIRUZ How much does he want?

RIHAB The boatman's going to love you. Three sacks of lead.

FIRUZ How much?

RIHAB Quanst shlimp – ?

BUT SHE GETS NO FURTHER AS THEY ARE SUDDENLY RUSHED/INVADED BY A SQUAD OF BYZANTINE MILITIA, COMMANDED BY

OFFICER (GREEK ACCENT) That's the man. Take him. And these two. Quick. They're all involved. I want them all. Rope them up.

FARANJ (TRYING TO DRAW HIS SWORD) Nisht mansklim. Nisht, nisht.

HE IS OVER-POWERED, WHILE:

FIRUZ This man was trying to make me – I'm nothing to do with him, he's –

RIHAB We're not, officer, we really don't need to –

OVER THIS:

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Why do I always do this? I could have been back at the boat, purses full, over-full, enough for an extra pack horse, a comfortable ride across the mountains.

AND DURING THIS, INTO:

SCENE 10. CONSTANTINOPLE: A DUNGEON.

LATER

FIRUZ AND RIHAB SIT, DISCONSOLATE

RIHAB Why do you always do this?

FIRUZ It was a business opportunity.

RIHAB Stolen lead.

FIRUZ The riches of the world all belong to God.

RIHAB Most especially the stuff on the roof of his churches.

FIRUZ We hadn't actually bought it. Still checking the provenance. Once we knew...

RIHAB They'll do us all the same.

FIRUZ Why would they – ? They won't. They really wouldn't. Slavery?

RIHAB Or worse.

FIRUZ (FEARFUL) No? No.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) So I find myself in front of TatiKios, the emperor's favourite general.

USE THIS TO MIX INTO:

SCENE 11. CONSTANTINOPLE. A HALL.

TATIKIOS WATCHES AS THE NEXT CRIMINAL IS BE BROUGHT IN FRONT OF HIM, HALF-BORED, HALF-ANGRY. TATIKIOS IS HALF-GREEK, HALF-ARAB, AND IS MISSING BOTH NOSE AND TESTICLES.

TATIKIOS What have these two done?

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) He had lost his nose in battle and, years before, he had lost even more than that. TatiKios started his career as a court eunuch.

TATIKIOS (TO HIS OFFICER, GREEK) If it's looting, it's death. We cannot waste time on -

FIRUZ (IN A RUSH) My Lord, we can explain.

RIHAB There has been a misunderstanding, your Excellency.

FIRUZ (CONTINUING) The man, the Faranj, he wanted to sell to us. We would never deal in stolen goods - I am just a humble armour-maker, a little weapons selling, a little buying -

TATIKIOS In Nikaea?

FIRUZ I am a man of Antioch, sir, but I am in these lands to trade with the people of Nikaea.

TATIKIOS With the Sultan Qilij?

FIRUZ One of my biggest clients.

RIHAB (SOTTO, TO FIRUZ, BECAUSE IT'S A LIE) Firuz.

TATIKIOS (NOW INTERESTED) You have the ear of the Qilij?

FIRUZ The Sultan and me, we talk every day. Tactics, strategy, logistics, armour...tactics. Strategy.

RIHAB (SOTTO, AS MUCH TO HERSELF) Oh no.

TATIKIOS Tell me more.

FIRUZ If I can be of service to Your Lordship...

TATIKIOS (AUTHORITATIVE, CALM) We do have a problem.

FIRUZ Sir?

TATIKIOS These men, these Faranj, they are stealing everything they can move.

FIRUZ Appalling.

TATIKIOS We cannot let them inside our city – last year, we thought to trade with the people then, to feed them. They went through the streets like...like....

FIRUZ Locusts?

TATIKIOS I have never seen locusts.

FIRUZ Me neither.

TATIKIOS We didn't want these people. We didn't ask for them. We want fighting men, men who will serve the Emperor. And this arrives, this thieving, stinking rabble. They have us under siege, the city is stopped.

- FIRUZ (TENTATIVE) You can't just, you know, say, send them back?
- TATIKIOS They have an intention – I'm told – they wish to go to Jerusalem. Your Al-Quds.
- FIRUZ Then let them go?
- TATIKIOS While the Sultan's armies wait there, ready, these Faranj know that the crossing is impossible. Last year Qilij made the mistake of allowing them to cross and then gather in one mass. He knows better now. These men, they're slow, they need their horses, they need their armour. If the Sultan attacks them as they leave their boats, they are defenceless. They know they will be dead before they even dry their boots.
- FIRUZ (GOING WITH HIM) It's a problem.
- TATIKIOS We need to distract Qilij. We need him elsewhere. We need his cavalry to taste a more interesting enemy. We need his archers shooting at someone else.
- FIRUZ I see.... (HE DOESN'T)
- TATIKIOS We have sent people down the coast, to his enemies in the East. We have sent gold also.
- FIRUZ (GETTING IT) They will attack Qilij's lands in the East?
- TATIKIOS That is not so unusual. But this year we require something more...(HE LOOKS FOR THE MAN'S NAME)...Firuz of Antioch. We need someone, someone who has been here in the great city, who has seen the Faranj, walked through their encampment, has assessed their strength, we need this someone to whisper in the ear of Sultan Qilij, that there is no need to wait here, that these Faranj will be slaughtered as easily as last year even if they do muster, that he has plenty of time to march East, to see off that threat,

that he can return and crush these Faranj at his leisure. We need someone he trusts to whisper in his ear.

TATIKIOS STOPS.
A MOMENT.

FIRUZ You want that to be me?

TATIKIOS There will be gold. For you. When these Faranj are gone from our lands.

FIRUZ Give me a week. Two.

SMASH CUT TO:

SCENE 12. ROWING ACROSS THE STRAITS.

THE STITCH You've never even met the man.

FIRUZ What was I supposed to say – that's the Emperor's General – I was supposed to say to him, "No, actually, can't do it, might as well execute me here and now and take all our money"?

THE STITCH He's still going to do that. When he finds Qilij hasn't shifted.

FIRUZ I'll think of a way.

THE STITCH Uh-huh?

A MOMENT.
ROWING.

THE STITCH Any ideas? Yet?

FIRUZ Give me a moment.

ANOTHER MOMENT.

RIHAB Of course I knew his father.

FIRUZ What?

THE STITCH Who?

RIHAB The Sultan Suleiman. Qilij's father.

FIRUZ Professionally?

RIHAB (YES) I was younger then.

FIRUZ And Qilij, did you ever - ?

RIHAB He was barely a – someone in his retinue might remember me, all the same.

CUT TO:

SCENE 13. BAGHDAD. THE MOSQUE. RAMADAN.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) We do it for money. And because we can. The year before, Qilij destroyed the Faranj with ease. And made a profit, with the plunder and selling the survivors at the market. The Sultan doesn't think there's any real danger, so why should I?

AND BY NOW WE ARE IN:

SCENE 14. QILIJ'S TENT. NIGHT.

QILIJ A rabble?

QILIJ IS EIGHTEEN BUT ALREADY BATTLE-HARDENED.
FIRUZ IS DESCRIBING BYZANTIUM, AND GIVING IT EVERYTHING

FIRUZ Ragtag. Women, babies, and those priests, everywhere. Total chaos. 'Course the Emperor isn't letting them in.

QILIJ Men with horses?

FIRUZ Less than a hundred. Two hundred.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) My first real lie. There are hundreds. Maybe even thousands. They call them knights. They throw their weight around. Everyone gets out their way, even the foot-soldiers – it's a serious weight.

QILIJ Many footsoldiers?

FIRUZ Not battle ready. They're weak, they're unarmed.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) My second lie. (PENITENT) I am one of the many who is to blame. Blame me.

QILIJ We'll go East.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Tatikios pays me. I do the job.

QILIJ I like your advice. You'll be rewarded.

FIRUZ My Lord.

QILIJ And you'll accompany me. To the East.

FIRUZ (NOT SO GOOD, BUT...) My Lord.

OVER THIS:

CAPTION Ibn al-Qalanisi writes: "Qilij Arslan ibn Sulaiman ibn Qutlumish set about collecting Turcoman forces and raising levies. In the early summer, his army made camp on the plain above the Bosphorus."

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) By the time we returned, the Faranj had surrounded Nikaea. No man alive has ever seen an army so numerous. So many fighting men.

AND NOW WE ARE:

SCENE 15. ON A RIDGE OVERLOOKING NIKAEA. DAY.

ON HORSEBACK, WATCHING

QILIJ A few more than you mentioned, Firuz.

FIRUZ More must have arrived. I don't understand...

QILIJ No matter. More plunder, more slaves. We will attack an hour before dawn. Ensure our men carry ropes to bind the prisoners. Send word to the slave dealers.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) I am not a fighting man. For all my knowledge of bowstrings and mail and one-bladed swords. I watch. Qilij rides his men down from the ridge, south of the city. Inside the city, his garrison is ready to ride out once the Faranj line is broken. Qilij is like all Turcoman. They are horsemen, nomads, fast, with bows made of bone and horn. Their range is spectacular, their marksmanship – shooting from horseback – almost unnatural. It has given them domination of all these lands.

DURING THIS THE NOISE OF BATTLE HAS INCREASED

But now we see why the Faranj wear that heavy armour. They are not interested in speed. They are a mass, impenetrable, impermeable, implacable. The first waves of Qilij's archers make little impact on them, the long shields, the mail coats, the breastplates. Some men fall but the line does not even stumble. And then the Faranj assemble their knights – on the far edge of the city – their solid horsemen.

They start riding. A trot. A rumble goes through the ground and then it gets louder. The ground tears, screams at the weight of it. Galloping. Qilij's horsemen have never seen anything like it. When they annihilated the Faranj the year before there were few fighting men among them. This time, five thousand, eight thousand knights riding towards them. Qilij's horsemen have no readiness for this. They are bewildered, lost, scattering.

QILIJ (BREATHLESS, SHOUTING ORDERS) Call them back. Call them in.

FIRUZ My Lord?

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Without armour, with only a short lance, they have no defence against these men with broadswords, maces, mauls, flails.

QILIJ (ALMOST IN SHOCK, REALISING) My wife is inside the city.

FIRUZ She's safe.

QILIJ She is bearing my child.

FIRUZ No army has ever taken the city, my Lord. Think how many times the Emperor has tried and failed.

QILIJ We must negotiate.

FIRUZ (SURPRISED) With the Faranj?

QILIJ With your friends from Constantinople.

FIRUZ My friends?

QILIJ (DID HE KNOW ALL ALONG?) I like your advice, Firuz, but a Sultan makes his own decisions.

CUT TO:

SCENE 16. A TENT IN THE VALLEY. NIGHT.

THINGS ARE TENSE, ONLY SUPERFICIALLY POLITE.

QILIJ (POINTING) Was it my father?

TATIKIOS What?

QILIJ Your nose?

TATIKIOS One of his Turks, yes. The fighting at Manzikert.

QILIJ What is that then, gold?

TATIKIOS Brass. Why tempt anyone to steal it?

QILIJ Does it – ? [*really make a difference?*]

TATIKIOS Without it, I find people are too distracted to listen to me.

A MOMENT

TATIKIOS And I like to be listened to.

QILIJ Does the Emperor indulge this whim?

TATIKIOS He has survived longer than most before him.

QILIJ And what would you tell him now?

TATIKIOS He would listen to me as I explained that although the Faranj surround the city, if it is his standard that rises first inside the city, if Greek soldiers – no matter how few – seize the citadel, then the Faranj will stay outside. Those are the rules of war. It becomes the Emperor's city.

QILIJ And those inside will be protected by him?

TATIKIOS Of course. The citizens of Nikaea and their homes will all fall under the protection of the Emperor.

QILIJ So if I give orders to my captains to enable this?

TATIKIOS The honoured guests will be conveyed to you as soon as the routes are open.

QILIJ (IT HURTS, BUT....) I shall give word.

QILIJ TURNS AND GOES, SAYING

QILIJ Thank you, Firuz.

FIRUZ I don't understand.

TATIKIOS He is wiser than his years.

FIRUZ You said these Faranj were a nuisance. You said you just wanted them on the other side of the water.

TATIKIOS Until this young man's father, Nikaea was a part of our Empire. It will be happy enough to return.

FIRUZ (FEELING CHEATED) You made the Faranj swear oaths to you, to hand the cities back to you.

TATIKIOS You've been paid well. Haven't you?

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The Faranj see the Emperor's standard rise above the city and we watch their moments of surprise and we watch many hours of anger.

THE STITCH Let's just get back to Antioch.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The soldiers want plunder, the women and priests and older men want the pickings – are relying on it. They took whatever they could.

RIHAB (ALMOST SCREAMING AS SHE IS DRAGGED AWAY)
Do something! Firuz, do something.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) No-one is going to protect Rihab.

RIHAB Firuz, how could you?

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) What could I do? Really, what could I do? It was just the beginning. The duke who takes possession of Rihab – he’s taller than any man needs to be. He shouts like an angel of death and he dribbles when he isn’t shouting. He lacks teeth. There’s a scar running from the corner of one eye to the edge of his smile. It’s not a welcoming smile. He takes Rihab by the arm, like a goat, and throws her in a cart. She’s still wearing the head-dress I bought her. (WE HEAR AS HE:) I try to get close but this duke’s men are all around and I end up in the dust. The Faranj lord looks across at me and I think he knows why I’m looking at him.

THE STITCH (PICKING HIM UP) Time to go, Firuz.

FIRUZ (GETTING UP) They’re supposed to be religious. Here for a holy pilgrimage. Something transcendent.

THE STITCH They’re bullies. They don’t think and they don’t care. They just want to fight.

FIRUZ Come on, we’ve got three weeks’ ride ahead of us.

CUT TO:

SCENE 17. ANTIOCH: THE WORKSHOP. MIDDAY.

SULEIMA IS RUSHING DOWN THE STAIRS AND OUT INTO THE STREET AS SHE:

SULEIMA (YELLING, EXCITED) Mummy, Mummy, they're here, they're here, they're back!

NADIRAH Quiet, honey, quiet.

SULEIMA They're here. (POINTING) Look, there, just coming past the fountain.

NADIRAH (WATCHING THEM) They're so...dirty.

SULEIMA You expect them to come trotting in, fresh and clean?

NADIRAH (THE STERNLY LOVING TYPE) They could have made an effort.

SULEIMA All the time they're away, you're worrying. Now they're back, you're not even – Daddy!

FIRUZ (DURING THE PREVIOUS, APPROACHING ON HORSEBACK) We're here! We're back! We're all here!

SULEIMA (IN A RUSH) Did everything go alright? Are you alright? Is The Stitch alright? Did you make a lot of money? Have you got me a present?

FIRUZ Which question do you want me to answer first?

NADIRAH (STANDING OFF) Hello, Firuz.

FIRUZ Always this.

NADIRAH What?

FIRUZ You think you have to show me you're angry.

NADIRAH You're alive. I make do.

FIRUZ (SHAKING PURSE) Thirty dinars, more. Our most successful trip yet.

NADIRAH It's not worth it.

FIRUZ I have to travel, I have to trade.

SULEIMA Stop it, please, both of you.

FIRUZ (SOFT) Come here, wife. Come to me.

SHE STEPS FORWARD AND HE EMBRACES HER.

NADIRAH (ALL BUT TEARFUL) I hate it when you go North.

FIRUZ What's going to happen? Except a chance to get rich. We tripled our money. More.

NADIRAH I don't want any more money.

SULEIMA (EXPLAINING) We've been hearing rumours.

FIRUZ About what?

SULEIMA More of the Emperor's fighters. Crossing the waters.

FIRUZ It's true.

NADIRAH (PANICKED) See? Did you see them? Was there trouble?

FIRUZ Look, I'm home. With money. The Stitch is home. Between us we still have as many legs and eyes and fingers as we set off with.

SULEIMA He looked fatter.

FIRUZ Does Anna attack him the moment he walks in? No, she cooks and draws his bath and –

NADIRAH It's upstairs. Waiting for you.

FIRUZ Thank you.

NADIRAH Has been every day this week. And last week.

FIRUZ There was a landslide this side of the Cilician Gates.
We had to go round.

NADIRAH Tell him then, Suleima.

SULEIMA Not now.

FIRUZ What?

SULEIMA (BEGINNING) Father.

FIRUZ Not ‘Daddy’?

SULEIMA Thoros needs to speak to you first.

FIRUZ (SIMPLE, SMILING) He doesn’t need to.

SULEIMA (WORRIED) What?

FIRUZ Your mother and I have been waiting almost two years
now – “When will he ask?”, “Will he ever get the
nerve?” – and then he finds his nerve while I am away.

NADIRAH You think that’s coincidence?

FIRUZ All my life, I have treated Thoros like my own –

THE STITCH (BURSTING IN) Have you heard? Firuz, have you
heard?

FIRUZ Your son has finally spoken the words.

THE STITCH As though we haven’t plotted it since the day they were
born.

SULEIMA What?

FIRUZ You can conspire, but love cannot be forced.

SULEIMA (BLUSHY) Daddy.

FIRUZ (SEEING HIM HOVERING BY THE DOOR) Thoros!
Come in.

THOROS Sir?

FIRUZ (PATERFAMILIAS) So, young man, what do you have
to say to me?

THOROS (WRONG-FOOTED, NOT EXPECTING SUCH
FORMALITY) Sir. Well. Sir. I would like to ask you -
your permission, I mean - I need to ask - I thought
maybe -

SULEIMA (KNOWING HE IS TEASING) Daddy, stop it.

FIRUZ (DROPPING THE ACT) Come here, Thoros. Take my
hand. Welcome to our family.

THE STITCH And welcome to ours, Suleima.

THEY EMBRACE.
AS SULEIMA EMBRACES THE STITCH.

NADIRAH Stitch, welcome back as well.

THE STITCH Thank you.

NADIRAH Any trouble?

THE STITCH We had some interesting times with the -

FIRUZ (CUTTING THIS OFF) Where's Anna?

THE STITCH She is preparing my food.

FIRUZ (TO NADIRAH) See, there is a wife. A true wife. A
loving wife.

SULEIMA I'll do it for you.

FIRUZ Thank you.

NADIRAH Anna will want to talk about the ceremony.

FIRUZ You two haven't already got it all planned?

NADIRAH There is also the matter of...You know.

A MOMENT'S BAFFLEMENT.

THEN:

THE STITCH She means religion.

FIRUZ We've talked about that.

NADIRAH But not settled it.

SULEIMA Thoros and me, we don't mind.

FIRUZ It's the imams, the priests, the qadi.

THE STITCH The bride should convert. It's how it's done. She takes her man's religion.

FIRUZ And then they both pay the Nazara poll tax?
(GENTLE) Stitch, we're businessmen – let him convert to the cheaper God. For God's sake.

CUT TO:

SCENE 18. BAGHDAD. THE MOSQUE. RAMADAN.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Is it ever that simple? The Qur'an tells us "Do not concern yourself with those who defy God". So we live together, their prophets are our prophets, sometimes we even pray at the same shrine. Their prayers go unheard but – do I need to lose sleep over that? So why do these Faranj have to tell everyone they are the only ones getting it right? Why did they

have to come here and dig a ditch that cannot be crossed? Do they really need to work out who they are by telling us we are so different?

CAPTION Ibn al-Qalanisi reports: “Qilij marched out to the fords, tracks and roads by which the Faranj must pass and showed no mercy to those who fell into his hands. But in the late summer, during the month of Rajab of the year 490, they then turned their forces against him.”

SCENE 19. ANTIOCH. THE EMIR’S PALACE. EVENING.

FIRUZ STANDS IN THE DOORWAY, AFRAID TO COME CLOSER

FIRUZ Sir?

YAGHI-SIYAN Am I so terrifying?

FIRUZ I...I am a humble man, My Lord.

YAGHI-SIYAN Hurry up. Come here. There is lamb, in ginger.

FIRUZ WALKS ACROSS THE POLISHED FLOOR. ECHOES.

FIRUZ Is that...?

YAGHI-SIYAN Imnesila. No-one makes it like my cook. Go on.

FIRUZ TAKES A MOUTHFUL.

FIRUZ Outstanding.

YAGHI-SIYAN So tell me.

FIRUZ (MOUTH FULL) My Lord?

YAGHI-SIYAN About the Emperor’s new army.

FIRUZ It isn’t - how did you know? That I know?

- YAGHI-SIYAN Firuz, as though – Antioch is my city. A man shits in a different hole, I know about it. When an armourer travels to the north... These mercenaries, tell me.
- FIRUZ They are not his.
- YAGHI-SIYAN They took Nikaea for him.
- FIRUZ They have only one aim, to arrive at Al-Quds, to worship at the Prophet Jesus' tomb.
- YAGHI-SIYAN (SCEPTICAL) They are pilgrims?
- FIRUZ They must go there and they must own it. That's what makes them different. They are very determined. They are zealous.
- YAGHI-SIYAN You have fallen for the Emperor's camouflage, Firuz. You surprise me. A man of your wisdom and experience.
- FIRUZ How do you know - ? [*I am wise or experienced?*]
- YAGHI-SIYAN The Emperor of the Greeks resents us, he wants these lands for himself. Again.
- FIRUZ It's not just fighting men, there's women, there's –
- YAGHI-SIYAN We have had yellow-haired Nazara through this city for centuries. On their way to the Holy City. This is different, this is the Emperor's new war.
- FIRUZ The Nazara in this city, even they do not want the Emperor back.
- YAGHI-SIYAN That is far from certain. The Jacobites maybe, but the Armenians, the Orthodox.... And there are many of them.

FIRUZ Our friends in Aleppo will not allow this, in Damascus,
in –

YAGHI-SIYAN I wish I had made better friends of them in the past.

FIRUZ You won't appeal to them? Against a common enemy?

YAGHI-SIYAN It would be a sign of weakness.

FIRUZ Maybe...definitely – Sultan Qilij will ambush the
Faranj, as they march through his lands. They will be
lucky to arrive here.

YAGHI-SIYAN In my experience, luck comes to those who prepare.
Tell me about their weapons. Their armour. Tell me
everything you have learned.

CUT TO:

SCENE 20. ANTIOCH: FIRUZ'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

THEY ARE SITTING, RELAXED, OLD FRIENDS.

FIRUZ They'll never get across the desert. And if they do,
their horses won't.

THE STITCH (DISBELIEVING) Those horses.

ANNA What about them?

THE STITCH Twice the size of ours – three times.

FIRUZ Big as an ox.

NADIRAH How do they manoeuvre?

FIRUZ (ALMOST LAUGHING) They don't. They cluster, their
shields and armour grinding, they roll forward in a
single mass –

THE STITCH Each horse and man must weigh - what? - a ton, more?

FIRUZ (CONTINUING) - a single knot of muscle, galloping towards you. You don't wait for it to arrive.

THE STITCH The ground – it's like an earthquake.

FIRUZ You didn't see it.

THE STITCH You told me about it.

ANNA Horses like that, they will not get past the Devil's Mountain.

THE STITCH They will. These people will.

ANNA My husband, always the pessimist.

THE STITCH I saw them. They are believers.

FIRUZ (DISMISSIVE) They're mercenaries.

THE STITCH They have already marched across their own countries, now they are here, in Asia, nothing will stop them. Until they are at Jerusalem. And they cannot get there safely without possessing Antioch.

FIRUZ They're a rabble. The Emperor thinks he can reconquer the world with them.

NADIRAH You said the Sultan's arrows bounced off them.

FIRUZ They have numbers. Once those dwindle - they are nothing. Qilij has learned, he will wait for them, on the plains, where his men can –

ANNA (ACROSS THIS) We're supposed to be celebrating. Thoros and Suleima?

FIRUZ Anna, I apologise.

ANNA We brought wine, but you won't...

FIRUZ Maybe this time is special....Nadirah?

NADIRAH (STANDING TO DO IT:) I'll draw the blinds.

ANNA I sometimes worry – I'm sorry about this - they don't really love each other, it's us who have pushed them together.

THE STITCH (AS HE POURS THE WINE) Anna, that's ridiculous.

ANNA You two men have always been so determined for this to happen, maybe all of us, the children included, have fallen for it.

NADIRAH Anna, even I am sure. I can see it in Suleima's eyes. It's genuine.

FIRUZ (AS A JOKE) And even if it isn't, the business demands it, they've got no choice.

ANNA You see, it starts as a joke and in the end...

THE STITCH (PASSING ROUND THE GOBLETS) I bought this in Nikaea. From the Faranj. It is special.

NADIRAH Why?

THE STITCH He brought it all the way, from his country. I think that's what he was saying. They shout all the time.

FIRUZ And their teeth - not one of them musters a full set.

THE STITCH And the smell. There are cleaner camels.

ANNA (REMINDING) Our celebration?

FIRUZ Sorry.

ANNA (A TOAST) The children. Their happiness and our happiness.

THEY DRINK.

FIRUZ (OF THE WINE, COUGHING) Glorious.

THE STITCH Firuz, you wouldn't know if it was vintage or gut-rot.

FIRUZ (TO NADIRAH) Have you spoken to the imam?

NADIRAH He is ready as soon as we are.

ANNA It would be so strange.

NADIRAH What?

ANNA Seeing our son marry in a mosque.

NADIRAH You don't - ?

FIRUZ He converts, he gets out of the poll tax. You could too, you know.

ANNA It's....I need to talk to God.

FIRUZ It's the same God, Anna.

ANNA But I talk to him this way. I talk to him in a church. And I need Jesus.

NADIRAH The Prophet Jesus. He's one of our five true prophets.

ANNA And he is the son of God.

NADIRAH That's hardly -

THE STITCH (OVER THIS, BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND) We can afford the tax. For both of them.

FIRUZ Showing off now?

NADIRAH You used to complain all the time.

THE STITCH It was just the shock, when it started. I'm used to it now.

FIRUZ You Nazara, you're incomprehensible.

CUT TO:

CAPTION Ibn Al-Qalanisi reports: "It was the month of Sha'aban when the news of this shameful calamity was received in Antioch. The anxiety of the people became acute and their fear increased."

SCENE 21. ANTIOCH. WORKSHOP. DAY.

THEIR WORKSHOP IS ENTIRELY OPEN ONTO THE STREET
METAL IS BEING BEATEN AND FORGED ALL AROUND, MORE THAN
ONE BRAZIER BURNING.
THE STITCH IS ALSO WORKING.
FIRUZ APPROACHES.

FIRUZ Getting your hands dirty?

THE STITCH (BREATHLESS) The boys can't do it. (SHOWING
WHAT HE HAS BEEN DOING) Look, like we saw up
north. The detail round the eye-holes.

FIRUZ No-one'll want it here.

THE STITCH Has the new brass arrived?

FIRUZ This afternoon, he said, but we know what -
[*that means*]

ACROSS THIS, THOROS RUNS IN, SHOUTING, VERY PUMPED UP

THOROS There's a man in the South Market.

FIRUZ (DRY) Extraordinary.

THOROS He's come from the North. He says he's ridden straight here. He was fighting with the Sultan Qilij.

THE STITCH Against who?

THOROS The Faranj. The Faranj. He says there was a huge battle.

THE STITCH (PRESUMING THE FARANJ WERE ANNIHILATED)
Thank God it's over.

FIRUZ (CALLING BACK TO THE STAFF) Keep at it. We need that mail finished by sunset.

FIRUZ, THE STITCH AND THOROS ARE WALKING DOWN THE STREET

THE STITCH What's he saying?

THOROS It was a huge battle. Qilij called for Holy War against the –

FIRUZ He does that every year. Holy War against the Sunni, the Nazara, the Shi'ite – when is a war not holy?

THOROS (URGENTLY REPEATING WHAT HE HAS HEARD) Qilij assembled all his cavalry, a huge giant sweep of fighting men, he was ready for the Faranj. He tracked them, he watched them riding into this valley where he was waiting, his men up in the hills -

THEY ARE NOW DOWN THE STREET AND CAN HEAR THE REAL MAN TALKING

FIRUZ Let's listen to him, shall we?

- SELJUK We rode round and round the enemy. We fired wave after wave of arrows. I rode forwards, I fired, I rode back. All day we shot at them. And I saw many of them fall. But not enough. All day they stood, letting our arrows fall – whether they bounced off or pierced them. We had never seen this before. They refused to shift. Would the Sultan order us to attack man-to-man? We waited for his command. It was the middle of the afternoon. Since almost dawn we had attacked the Faranj and they had not moved. We pretended to retreat, enticed them to rush forward and they did not. Our horses were sweaty but willing for one more charge. And then we saw the dust. To the north. A huge cloud of dust. And then behind us, to the east, another cloud. Qilij, my Lord, looked around. Was this a storm, a circling storm? (NO) We thought we had massed against the entire Faranj army. No, all day we had been fighting and it was not even half their army. There were two more battalions and they were charging down on us. We had been fighting all day. We had killed many of them but not a tenth, not a hundredth. Sultan Qilij knew it was lost. He pricked our horses and fled to the east. All who could. The Faranj took everything we had. Took the Sultan's tents, his treasury, his women. My horse was cut from under me.
- MAN 2 Is it the Emperor of the Greeks? Is he their general?
- SELJUK The Emperor's man marches with them.
- FIRUZ Which one?
- SELJUK Lord Taticios.
- MAN 3 We're safe here. We've got walls. We've got food.
- SELJUK They have more men than you have ever seen. Thousands and thousands. Stand still at the crossroads and they would take three days to all walk past you.

MAN 2 Why did you not stay with - ?

SELJUK (BEGGING) Who'll give now? Who'll give? If you've just arrived, the full history'll be starting again as soon as I've - Who'll give?

DURING THIS, PULL BACK TO:

THOROS Why are they coming here?

THE STITCH They could take the eastward route, through the Ruj valley. If it's Jerusalem they're -

FIRUZ The Emperor wants all the lands from Constantinople to Al-Quds.

THOROS Why do they have to fight? They can visit the Holy City any time they want.

AND COMING IN OVER THIS:

SCENE 22. BAGHDAD. THE MOSQUE. RAMADAN.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Every day we heard more. Iconium is theirs. The cities of Cappadocia. Coxon surrenders without a fight. The cities of Cilicia. In Tarsos, every Seljuk throat is slit. In Adana, the Syrians rise up against the Turcoman Lord and give the city over to the Faranj. Mamistra does not want the fight. Village by village they come closer.
I was called to the Emir's Council.

CUT TO:

SCENE 23. ANTIOCH. EMIR'S PALACE. DAYTIME.

DISCUSSION ALREADY IN FULL FLOW, MEN STANDING IN GROUPS:

ANTIOCHENE 1 They won't make it through the desert.

ANTIOCHENE 2 Each of the towns will kill more of them.

ANTIOCHENE 3 I pity the horses.

FIRUZ If you'd seen them, you would not, they are monsters.

SHAMS AL-DAWLA (ENTERING, ANNOUNCING OVER THIS) The
City of Ma'arash has fallen.

SILENCE.

SHAMS AL-DAWLA You heard me? The Faranj have taken
Ma'arash.

ANTIOCHENE 2 Did they fight, Your Highness?

SHAMS AL-DAWLA The Atabeg welcomed them in, markets for them to
buy whatever they want.

MORE SILENCE

ANTIOCHENE 1 Should we do the same?

ANTIOCHENE 3 And give our city back to the Greeks?

ANTIOCHENE 4 What difference does it make? If you made a truce,
Your Highness, you would rule the city in his name.

SHAMS AL-DAWLA My father and I can defeat them, if we call on
our friends.

FIRUZ Do we have any?

SHAMS AL-DAWLA We are surrounded by Muslim cities. The
Sultans will come to our aid.

FIRUZ Your father refuses to bend the knee.

SHAMS AL-DAWLA It's not surrender. We must unite.

YAGHI-SIYAN (ENTERING, BRISKLY) Really?

SHAMS AL-DAWLA (TRYING TO BE BRAVE) Yes. Father.

YAGHI-SIYAN I know Aleppo, I know Damascus, you can only talk to them from strength.

SHAMS AL-DAWLA You would rather perish?

YAGHI-SIYAN You exaggerate.

SHAMS AL-DAWLA Or surrender.

YAGHI-SIYAN You've been listening to these people, haven't you? My so-called advisors.

ANTIOCHENE 1 My Lord, we have been discussing the practicalities of
-

YAGHI-SIYAN I know what you are thinking. You traders, you merchants. You think it is not even a generation since the Emperor of the Greeks was lord of this city. You remember those days, you say maybe it was not so bad. You say, why fight, why lose trade and money, it is only one ruler for another?

A MOMENT

YAGHI-SIYAN You think this, yes?

NO-ONE DARES ANSWER.

ANTIOCHENE 1 My Lord, we –

YAGHI-SIYAN (SNAPPING) Do not fawn. I know how your minds work.

A SILENCE.

- YAGHI-SIYAN This is my city. I am Emir here. We answer to Baghdad, to the Caliph.
- SHAMS AL-DAWLA (DARING) Will he send an army?
- YAGHI-SIYAN He does not need to. This city has never been taken by force of arms.
- ANTIOCHENE 1 The Faranj are preparing for a siege?
- ANTIOCHENE 2 How will we do business?
- YAGHI-SIYAN Think of the taxes you will pay if the Greeks take this city. All of you, all Muslims, will pay dearly for that.
- ANTIOCHENE But a siege will -
- SHAMS AL-DAWLA Allow me to visit our Muslim brothers. Please, Father. If they send an army, we can crush the Faranj, quickly. And there will be plunder.
- YAGHI-SIYAN The Sultans will see us crushed first.
- SHAMS AL-DAWLA They know that once the Faranj possess this city, they can march against Aleppo, against Damascus. They are not going to let that happen.
- YAGHI-SIYAN Nothing would please them more – you and me dead, they need only despatch a few horsemen to make the city theirs.
- ANTIOCHENE 3 There are those who say these Faranj are not the Emperor's men.
- YAGHI-SIYAN (TURNING ON HIM) Then who are they? What are they doing here?
- SILENCE AGAIN.
- YAGHI-SIYAN See? It is the Emperor of the Greeks.

ANTIOCHENE 2 There is no army big enough to surround this city. It would take millions.

ANTIOCHENE 1 That's why we must watch their friends inside the city.

FIRUZ No-one would betray us.

YAGHI-SIYAN You think?

FIRUZ We are all men of Antioch.

YAGHI-SIYAN Many of the towns north of here have welcomed the Faranj.

ANTIOCHENE 3 They're Nazara, of course they're going to.

FIRUZ My Lord, faith comes second to loyalty.

YAGHI-SIYAN Loyalty to what? They say Edessa will welcome the Faranj. Adana already has. Why should the Nazara of Antioch be any different? Do you know something we don't?

FIRUZ HAS NO ANSWER

YAGHI-SIYAN We must ready ourselves for siege. We will make a full catalogue of all grain and oil and salt within the city, all stock animals. We will appoint a commander to each well. I will appoint individuals to oversee every task. No Nazara will be appointed to these tasks. We cannot allow ourselves to take unnecessary chances. Mu'azam, I would ask you to list all the cows. Shams, we'll keep you busy, you are to take charge of the water supplies. We may well need construct more tanks. Come the winter months, the rain will serve us and sadden the enemy

USE THIS TO FADE OUT TO...

SCENE 24. ANTIOCH. WORKSHOP. DAY.

ALREADY IN FULL SPAT

NADIRAH (SARCASTIC) “Of course not.”

FIRUZ Yes, of course not, he never works Sundays.

NADIRAH Suddenly he never works Sundays.

FIRUZ He never has!

NADIRAH Convenient.

FIRUZ He works Fridays.

NADIRAH It’s my fault we’re believers?

FIRUZ Please, we make a good living. Things are good. If there’s fighting, we make even more money.

NADIRAH How can you say that? The Faranj are a week away.

FIRUZ They might just march right round us.

NADIRAH Then why is everything being prepared for a siege? When you’re not working in here, you’re out there, counting the sheep, counting the olives.

FIRUZ Better to be prepared.

NADIRAH He doesn’t have to do any extra work. (MEANING THE STITCH)

FIRUZ They’re not allowing the Nazara to get involved.

NADIRAH What does that mean?

FIRUZ Shhh. They’re coming. (CALLING OUT ACROSS THE STREET) Stitch. Anna.

ANNA Firuz. Nadirah.

THERE IS AN UNEASY MOMENT AS EACH COUPLE STANDS FACING THE OTHER.

ANNA (ARMS FOLDED) The Priest has been talking to us.

THE STITCH (PEACEMAKER) Not now, Anna.

ANNA It's not going away.

THE STITCH (MOVING AWAY, GIVING UP) It might.

NADIRAH What?

ANNA The priest, our priest, he has been talking to us.
About Thoros' conversion.

NADIRAH Why do you talk to him about it?

ANNA It is respectful. He is our leader.

NADIRAH Since when?

FIRUZ Nadirah.

ANNA He will not allow it. That's final.

THE STITCH (CORRECTING, SOFTENING) He advised us against.
We can still decide - [*for ourselves*]

ANNA He as good as instructed us to -

THE STITCH It's wrong. The woman should convert.

NADIRAH I'm not stupid.

ANNA What?

NADIRAH You think the Faranj - they're Nazara like you - you think they're going to take this city. So you think, why

kowtow to the Muslims one minute longer? Why let Firuz and Nadirah walk all over us, we don't have to do that any longer?

- ANNA That is not what we – [*think at all*]
- FIRUZ You think Thoros' conversion is some victory for us?
- ANNA It feels like that.
- FIRUZ We talked about it, why make Suleima pay the poll tax, their children? This is better business sense.
- NADIRAH Unless, of course, it's the Muslims who are going to be paying the tax soon. Maybe there are some people hoping for that.
- ANNA This was St.Peter's first city. His church is still up there.
- NADIRAH This is our city now.
- FIRUZ Nadirah, Anna, please.
- ANNA We can't allow it.
- SULEIMA (IN THE DOORWAY) What? What's - ?
- FIRUZ Suleima, what are you doing here?
- SULEIMA I heard. I couldn't not hear.
- ANNA I'm sorry, Suleima, I'm sorry, we've decided we don't want Thoros to convert. We're going to have to find some other way. (MOVING OFF) Come on, Stitch.
- THE STITCH Firuz, Nadirah.
- NADIRAH Go. Go back to your church.
- THEY WALK AWAY

SULEIMA What have you done?

FIRUZ What have I done?

SULEIMA You went North, you sold these people weapons, and now this is happening.

FIRUZ And they're only here because I sold them three breastplates and a couple of helmets?

SULEIMA You did more than that. Thoros told me what The Stitch told him.

FIRUZ (ANGRY BECAUSE HE'S BEEN CAUGHT) You flatter me if you think any one man can summon an army of a hundred thousand.

SULEIMA I don't care who summoned them. I want to get married.

FIRUZ (SOFTER) You will. The Stitch and me'll work it out.

SULEIMA I'll convert.

NADIRAH That is not happening, young lady.

FIRUZ There is no need for any of this.

NADIRAH Firuz, you've always been so naïve.

CUT TO:

SCENE 25. ANTIOCH. EMIR'S PALACE. DAYTIME.

DISCUSSION IN FULL FLOW. YAGHI-SIYAN HAS JUST ANNOUNCED (ONLY TO HIS COUNCIL) THE EXPULSION OF (MOST OF) THE CHRISTIAN MEN.

- YAGHI-SIYAN We have no choice.
- ANTIOCHENE 1 The leather market relies on them.
- ANTIOCHENE 2 The oil market, the silver exchange.
- YAGHI-SIYAN The Faranj are about to blockade our city, there will be little trading.
- ANTIOCHENE 3 We all know these people, we do business, we are friends.
- YAGHI-SIYAN The Nazara of Antioch are not my enemy. But maybe they are my enemy's friend. Maybe when offered the chance to choose sides, they will opt for our enemy's.
- FIRUZ (LOUD) They are men of Antioch. This is wrong.
- SHAMS AL-DAWLA And we lose half our fighters. More.
- YAGHI-SIYAN They would not find the heart to fight their own.
- FIRUZ They're foreigners. They're nothing like -
- YAGHI-SIYAN They fight under the cross. The sign of Lord Jesus. Do I see our Nazara worshipping under a different sign?
- SHAMS AL-DAWLA Even if they only man the watch-towers, we need
-
- YAGHI-SIYAN The last place to trust them!
- FIRUZ They worship God in their way but they are men of Antioch and we should respect -
- YAGHI-SIYAN (FINAL) Enough.
- SHAMS AL-DAWLA (QUIETER) We need the manpower, Father.

YAGHI-SIYAN Which is why I have sent word to Aleppo. To Damascus. They will receive you, my son. You leave at dawn and you must return with an army.

SHAMS AL-DAWLA Thank you.

YAGHI-SIYAN The expulsion of the Armenian Nazara, the Syrian Nazara will continue. My mind is made up. (TO ALL) Leave this room now if you disagree.

SILENCE.

YAGHI-SIYAN In two days we start digging a defensive ditch round the north and south walls. All men of the city will be required to take part. But we will divide the days. On the first day, the Muslims will dig. On the second, the Nazara. On the third, the Muslims. And so forth. We will finish on a day the Nazara are outside.

HE LETS THAT SINK IN

YAGHI-SIYAN No doubt, like Firuz, you all have friends among these people. Do not make the mistake of warning them.

CUT TO:

SCENE 26. BAGHDAD. THE MOSQUE. RAMADAN.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Every day they walked in through the gates, fleeing from the Faranj. They name their villages, their towns. A week's ride away. Then four days. Then two days. They sit outside the churches. Suleima takes them some bread, a blanket. Anna watches her. They're all the same, the refugees, what does it matter if they're Nazara? It's the same eyes, the same flinch when men come past. They make themselves smaller, barely breathing, hide their bread. Outside the city walls, everyone is digging ditches.

MIX INTO MEN DIGGING:SCENE 27. OUTSIDE ANTIOCH. DITCH-DIGGING. DAY.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Five days of digging, almost done, and suddenly there's a scouting party on the ridge. Two thousand paces distant but you can see the horses, the chain mail, the size of them. The Faranj – maybe twenty of them - look down across the valley. Word goes round and everyone stops digging. (THE DIGGING COMES TO A STOP) Nobody is moving, only the sun turning on the plates of their armour, pulsing across the space.

CUT TO:SCENE 28. ANTIOCH: THE STITCH'S HOME.

THEY HAVE ALREADY LOST IT

THE STITCH (AMAZED) You've come here to talk about the business?

FIRUZ I came here, with Suleima, to see if we can work this out.

ANNA (SARCASTIC) We're honoured, to have you come to our house.

FIRUZ I'm saying that even if things – I will always protect your family.

THE STITCH Protect us from what?

FIRUZ I meant – we are about to be united, by our children –

ANNA We are still waiting for your decision. About your daughter's conversion.

SULEIMA See? Everything's changed.

FIRUZ Quiet, please.

THE STITCH She's right.

FIRUZ I'm saying, I'm trying to say, I feel you are my family already.

ANNA Families don't have different religions.

FIRUZ That can be sorted.

THE STITCH Exactly. We're sorted. Muslims one day, Nazara the next. Everyone in this whole city is different now.

FIRUZ The digging, the arrangement, that's just for convenience.

THE STITCH And when that's done, tomorrow, there'll be something else.

FIRUZ Let's just get through this. Let's just look after each other till it's over.

ANNA Remember, Stitch, he's a big man now, part of the Sultan's Council.

FIRUZ Please.

SULEIMA Father, this isn't working, let's go.

FIRUZ Let's leave the children out of this.

ANNA I wish we could.

SULEIMA Father.

MIX TO:

SCENE 29. ANTIOCH: THE CITY WALLS. MIDDAY.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) I didn't say anything. It was my chance. Maybe you'll do the same, when they force you to decide.
 Instead I stood on the city walls and watched the Nazara start work that last day. Yaghi-Siyan allows them to dig until midday – he feeds them, plenty of water barrels. His people are going through the city, making sure all the Nazara men are out there. After about an hour I pick out The Stitch and Thoros, a hundred paces west of the Aleppo Gate. The Stitch is looking up, he's seen me, and I think that's when he works it out. He doesn't do anything.
 (A MOMENT)
 The gates were shut just gone midday.

THE GATES CREAK SHUT AS
 YAGHI-SIYAN IS SHOUTING DOWN FROM THE BATTLEMENTS – AND
 THE NAZARA YELL BACK, HAMMERING ON THE GATES:

YAGHI-SIYAN You are all still my people. Your families are all safe and are under my protection. They will come to no harm, I give you my oath. But until the Faranj are gone, you must make your lives in the villages nearby. Once the Faranj have gone, you may return, in safety, and find your homes and workplaces untouched, I assure you.

OVER THE END OF THIS:

SULEIMA What have you done?

FIRUZ What have I done?

SULEIMA You knew this was going to happen.

FIRUZ (HE CAN'T DENY IT) I am a member of the Sultan's –
[*Council*]

SULEIMA You could have warned them.

FIRUZ We were under threat to – if anyone knew, they would
all have – we couldn't -

SULEIMA (ANGRY TEARS) He's your friend. He's your – and
Thoros is my –

FIRUZ They will be fine. Better off not inside these walls
probably.

SULEIMA (COLD FURY) Be quiet. You have betrayed everyone.

NADIRAH (ARRIVING) What's happened?

SULEIMA (THROUGH TEARS, BARELY ABLE TO SPEAK)
Thoros, he's out there – they'll kill them –

FIRUZ (TO NADIRAH) The Nazara have been expelled.

SULEIMA (TO NADIRAH) He knew it was going to happen.

NADIRAH Did you?

FIRUZ I had no choice.

SULEIMA What has happened to you? You used to – now
everything is – we were all friends. And now?

FIRUZ I don't know, Suleima, I don't know what's happened.

NADIRAH You let your friends be expelled?

FIRUZ I couldn't do anything – you're the one who has been
saying we should –

NADIRAH This is their home. They have been cast out.

SULEIMA We've got to get them back.

FIRUZ Yaghi-Siyan has said he will protect all their families.
We will protect Anna.

NADIRAH This is – what's happened to us, Firuz?

FIRUZ I don't know. It's...how could we....I don't know.

AND ACROSS THIS, SUDDENLY:

SCENE 30. BAGHDAD. THE MOSQUE. RAMADAN.

CAPTAIN He was your friend.

FIRUZ If only that was the worst thing I did.

CAPTAIN (SURPRISE) What?

FIRUZ I should have hidden them, you're right. They would
have kept my sanity. Instead I....I should have seen it
coming.

CAPTAIN What?

FIRUZ That was only the beginning. Things changed so fast.
The way people acted, the things people did. The
things I did.

END OF EPISODE

invasion

the arab chronicles of the crusades episode two

by jonathan myerson

SCENE 1. BAGHDAD. THE CALIPH'S DIWAN. EARLY EVENING.

IN THE BACKGROUND: FOUNTAINS, MARBLE, MEN TALKING, WOMEN WHISPERING, GENTLE MUSIC.

IN THE FOREGROUND: FIRUZ AND AL-HARAWI AND THE OTHERS ARE BEING LEAD, URGENTLY, INTO THE COURT OF CALIPH AL-MUSTAZHIR BILLAH. WE ARE WITH THE CALIPH AS THEY APPROACH THROUGH THE MILLING COURTIERS.

OFFICER My Lord, My Lord Caliph.

CALIPH Who's making all the noise? I'm trying to listen. [*to the music*]

OFFICER My Lord. My Lord, these gentlemen were found in the mosque.

CALIPH How extraordinary? In Ramadan? (HE LOOKS ROUND FOR A LAUGH FROM HIS COURTIERS)

COURTIER Very good, Majesty.

OFFICER They have news. Events in Syria. An appalling story.

CALIPH I like stories.

AL-HARAWI This is a story to chill your heart, sicken your soul, My Lord.

CALIPH Oh.

MEANWHILE, OVER THE FOLLOWING:

CAPTION Historian Ibn al-Athir writes that “Late in the year 492, refugees reached Baghdad in Ramadan, among them the qadi Abu Sa’d al-Harawi. They were taken before the Caliph and his Ministers to describe the sufferings of the Muslims in the Holy City.”

COURTIER Who are you?

AL-HARAWI Qadi of Damascus, my Lord. I bring these refugees here under my protection.

CALIPH Refuge from what?

AL-HARAWI The Umma is under attack. Thousands of our people, our fellow-believers have been hacked down.

CALIPH These little wars, my princes always fighting each –
[*other*]

AL-HARAWI This is a new enemy, My Lord Caliph, and you, as descendant of the Prophet, we look to you to save us.

CALIPH From whom exactly?

COURTIER The Faranj, my Lord.

CALIPH (DISBELIEVING) A bit of skirmishing with Constantinople, anything more?

AL-HARAWI They have possession of all the lands from the River Jordan to the sea, north to south. Tripoli, Sidon, Antioch -

CALIPH (NOT ESPECIALLY BOTHERED) Antioch? Have I ever been there?

AL-HARAWI And Al-Quds.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE. SHOCK.

COURTIER The Holy City has fallen?

AL-HARAWI They call it 'Jerusalem'. The Faranj have made it theirs.

CALIPH The Dome of the Rock, the Al-Aqsa?

AL-HARAWI Taken.

CALIPH How did this happen?

COURTIER Who are these people?

AL-HARAWI (CALLING HIM FORWARD) Firuz. Here. (TO THE CALIPH) This man is a citizen of Antioch. He has seen them. Come.

FIRUZ STEPS FORWARD BUT SAYS NOTHING.

CALIPH Yes?

FIRUZ My Lord Caliph.

CALIPH He looks awfully...And he smells.

AL-HARAWI He escaped from the Holy City, from the Faranj. What he wears is all he owns.

COURTIER Speak.

FIRUZ (LOOKING FOR A WAY TO START) I am a citizen of Antioch.

CALIPH Seen what?

- FIRUZ In the middle of Shaʿban, two years since, the Faranj appeared outside our city walls.
- CALIPH (AN EDGE OF TETCHINESS) Who, who are these Faranj? Will someone please explain?
- FIRUZ My Lord, when you see them first, you won't understand. They come from the cold lands. We thought they were Constantinople's new fighting men. You'll decide that too. You will look for an explanation, you'll look for something that makes sense and you'll be wrong.
- CALIPH A Caliph is never wrong.
- FIRUZ Forgive me, My Lord. You'll send spies and they'll report back: they are pilgrims.
- CALIPH Pilgrims of all faiths have always been free to travel.
- FIRUZ They intend to possess the holy cities, cleanse them of all but their own kind.
- CALIPH (BAFFLED) This is so unnecessary.
- AL-HARAWI Tell the Caliph, Firuz. Tell him about Antioch.
- CALIPH Where is that exactly?
- FIRUZ Three weeks' march north from Jerusalem, My Lord. For days, weeks, we had been waiting for them. We knew these people were coming south, from Constantinople, through the Turcoman lands.
- CALIPH (HALF-ADMIRING) Fine soldiers.
- FIRUZ It is the morning of the second day of Shawwal. Dust on the horizon. A cloud of dust coming closer. Slowly. Slowly, closer.

BY NOW WE ARE ON THE WALLS, LOOKING DOWN, THE DISTANT SOUND OF FIFTY THOUSAND MEN, WOMEN AND HORSES. DURING THE FOLLOWING, THE PEOPLE OF THE BATTLEMENTS, TRYING TO MAKE OUT THIS HUGE FORCE COMING UP UNDER THEIR WALLS.

FIRUZ (CONTINUING) We have heard they are beyond number but the walls of our city are ten thousand paces around. The walls circle the plain and circle down again. We know that at the peak of those walls, high up the hillside, is a citadel which can never be taken. We know that on the western side the river protects us. We know all this and still we are terrified.

CAPTION The Chronicler Ibn al-Qalanisi writes: "On the second day of Shawwal, in the year 490 After Hijra, the Faranj descended and developed their attack upon the territories of Antioch. Yaghi-Siyan, Emir of Antioch, had fortified the city in readiness."

YAGHI-SIYAN (PROCLAIMING) My People. This is a great city. Founded by Antiochos, a man who fought alongside Al-Iskander. This city was once the rival of Constantinople and Baghdad. This city has never been taken by force. The Faranj, with all their men-at-arms, with all their thousands, still cannot even hope to surround us. Inside the city we have water, we have orchards, we have livestock. We will be trapped but we need only wait.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD BUT OVER MONTAGE OF SOUNDS/LINES FROM THE EVENT IN EPISODE ONE) He doesn't say what we are all thinking. He doesn't say that our greatest enemy is betrayal. None of us talk about that day, only last week, when we watched our friends – of course we all have friends who follow Jesus – we watched them as they were shut out of their city. We watched them shout and howl and sink down as they realised.

AND MIX STRAIGHT INTO:

SCENE 2. ANTIOCH. FIRUZ'S HOME. EVENING.

THEY ARE SITTING, ANNA DISTRESSED. FIRUZ AND NADIRAH TRYING TO COMFORT HER.

ANNA My son is still out there, with those people, what will those people do to him?

FIRUZ The Faranj will protect them, won't they? You're all the same, you know, religion and everything.

ANNA My son is supposed to be marrying your daughter. We're supposed to be united.

NADIRAH I thought that was – we – you told us you didn't want it to happen.

ANNA We got scared. It's not the time for people to go changing religion.

FIRUZ Nadirah, think about it. The Faranj won't just charge straight up at the walls – they'll want to know about the city, the defences.

ANNA My husband is your friend, your partner. You could have hidden him.

FIRUZ The Stitch knows how to make himself useful.

ANNA He wouldn't betray the city.

FIRUZ There's nothing he can tell them which will make it any easier for them.

ANNA They might –

FIRUZ Anything he tells them about our food-stocks, our water, our walls, it will only make them despair even more.

ANNA They don't look very despairing right now.

AND USE THIS TO MIX BACK INTO:

SCENE 3. BAGHDAD. THE CALIPH'S DIWAN.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The Faranj settled in around our walls. A hundred paces beyond an arrow cast, maybe more. They've marched a long way. They've lost the brutal shine they had in Constantinople. Gained an angry hunger. We gaze at them, for hours, watch them shuffle round – one encampment opposite each of our gates. They don't often look up at us. It's as though we don't matter. They sit and they eat. They eat everything. If they don't eat it, they burn it.

CAPTION Ibn al-Athir writes: "Yaghi-Siyan, Emir of Antioch, showed unparalleled courage and wisdom. If all the Faranj who died had survived, they would have overrun all the lands of Islam."

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) When we can, our soldiers – less than three thousand to their twenty-five – do what they can. We deploy from the citadel, fire arrows down into their camp. We watch the Faranj run for shelter, cheer when one is stuck. Our cavalry charges out, firing and galloping back inside.
And when we can't fight, the Emir insists we do something.

OVER THIS:

SCENE 4. ANTIOCH. BATTLEMENTS.

ANNA (PANICKED BUT QUIET) What are they doing?

PATRIARCH (AS HE IS DRAGGED, PROTESTING, TERRIFIED)
 Stop, please, I beg you. We are all citizens of Antioch.
 Stop, I beg you, stop.

BUT THEY CONTINUE, WE HEAR WHAT FIRUZ IS DESCRIBING

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The Patriarch of the Nazara. Yaghi-Siyan gives the order to hang him from the city walls. For the Faranj to see.

ANNA Stop him! Someone. Firuz.

FIRUZ (SHHH) Quiet.

ANNA He's an old man.

FIRUZ That doesn't matter any more.

PATRIARCH (CONTINUING IN THE BACKGROUND) Please don't do this. Please. I love this city. I know nothing about these Faranj, we don't want them here.

FIRUZ Do you want to make things worse?

ANNA What? They throw me out, at least I can be with my family.

FIRUZ You're here as a hostage. You're staying.

ANNA The Emir said he was protecting us. Not a hair on our heads. He said.

FIRUZ Don't be naïve. Have you seen those people out there?

ANNA So stop telling me they're the same as us just because they paint a cross on their backs.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The first day, they tied ropes round his ankles. The next day, the Nazara women found an iron cage and he lives there for days at a time, facing

out at the foreigners. Nazara throw food down to him.
Others throw shit.

MEANWHILE MIX INTO:

SCENE 5. ANTIOCH. YAGHI-SIYAN'S COUNCIL.

DISCUSSION IS UNDERWAY

YAGHI-SIYAN Of course, it disgusts me. But there is a point to be made.

ANTIOCHENE 1 He is a friend of mine.

YAGHI-SIYAN You think he is unknown to me? The Patriarch and I have sat in this room, many times, broken bread.

ANTIOCHENE 1 Then...

YAGHI-SIYAN These Faranj wish to destroy us. I expect to fight and I pay my soldiers to do so. But I would not fight if I thought thousands of you would perish as a result.

HE LETS IT SINK IN

YAGHI-SIYAN I have offered them truce, a chance to talk. They have refused me. So now we will fight every way we can. I hope the Patriarch will not genuinely suffer.

A MOMENT

FIRUZ What about...?

YAGHI-SIYAN Yes?

FIRUZ Aleppo, Damascus, Mosul? Did Prince Shams not....?

YAGHI-SIYAN Shams.

SHAMS I waited in the court at Damascus. They were very polite. Every day they talked to me. Every day they invited me to talk again the next. After twenty days of this, I travelled to Aleppo. Sultan Ridwan is a weak man. (BUT) We know that.

YAGHI-SIYAN And I have not treated him well.

SHAMS That is the problem. They hate you more than they hate the Faranj.

ANTIOCHENE Don't they understand, the Faranj are a threat to us all?

SHAMS They have not strayed near their borders. They have no reason to hate them. Not like you, father.

YAGHI-SIYAN Be careful.

SHAMS We all know this is the truth.

YAGHI-SIYAN They will see sense soon enough. You must go back.

SHAMS That is your only plan?

YAGHI-SIYAN You will take gold. They will understand that.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) But soon enough a church was burned. Most days there is a mob in the street. Without most of the Nazara men, the Muslims rule the streets – the Hebrews stay out of sight. The bullies go house to house – we all know where everyone lives.

DURING THIS THE RIOT HAS COME CLOSER:

SCENE 6. ANTIOCH. THE STITCH'S HOME.

FLAMES AND A RAMPAGING CROWD GETTING CLOSER

FIRUZ Come on. Anna, please.

ANNA (DESPERATE) My wedding chest.

SULEIMA There isn't time.

ANNA (MOVING AWAY) Let me.

SULEIMA Stop her, Daddy. Stop her.

FIRUZ GRABS HER ROUND THE WAIST. THEY STRUGGLE

FIRUZ We have to go, Anna.

ANNA What right have they?

FIRUZ It's not about rights any more.

ANNA Everything, The Stitch, he gave me, you've got to let me.

FIRUZ (AS HE MANHANDLES HER OUT) We're going to keep you alive, so when The Stitch comes back, when Thoros comes back you'll be –

SULEIMA Please, Anna. Come with us.

ANNA It's our home.

FIRUZ (TO SULEIMA) Get that bundle. Suleima.

SULEIMA I've got it.

THEY ARE GOING OUT THE BACK DOOR AS THE RIOTING CROWD BURSTS IN THE FRONT

RIOTERS Nazara! Nazara!
Where are you?
Look in there.
Find her, we'll send her out to join the others.

AND OVER THIS:

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) We took her home. We try to help her. We are a family. We should be, we were before the Faranj.

AND INTO:SCENE 7. ANTIOCH. THE WORKSHOP.

THEY ARE STILL BREATHLESS, TENSE

SULEIMA (ACCUSING) You did this.

FIRUZ I'm sorry?

SULEIMA If you'd hidden The Stitch. Hidden Thoros.

FIRUZ If I had? He could hardly have jumped out, defended the house, helped carry away the stuff.

SULEIMA Thoros would have.

NADIRAH Always Thoros. Always the one who's going to make everything perfect.

SULEIMA You're so bitter.

NADIRAH (BLUNT) I'm scared, Suleima. There's a difference. A year ago, less, we were all friends. No-one thought about it. Now you're us or you're them.

SULEIMA We don't have to be the same as them.

ANNA (COOL, CALM NOW, ACROSS THIS) Your mother's right, Suleima.

NADIRAH (SHARP) Thank you for your approval.

SULEIMA If Thoros had asked sooner, if the Faranj had been a year later – we would be married now.

FIRUZ Suleima, there's no point in - [*thinking like that*]

ANNA (CONTINUING) I can't stay here.

SULEIMA Don't be stupid. Tell her, please.

ANNA (FATALISTIC) They will come here. Once they know I'm here. They will destroy the workshop.

FIRUZ They need the weapons we make. They won't come close.

ANNA (SHARP) Business is good, is it?

FIRUZ That's not what I meant.

ANNA And when they find me here?

FIRUZ It's not like that. Is it, Nadirah?

NADIRAH (CALM) Let her go if she wants.

SIMULTANEOUS:
 FIRUZ (SHOCKED) What?
 SULEIMA Mother!

NADIRAH If she doesn't feel welcome here.

FIRUZ Stop that, Nadirah. We're all pledged to protect the Nazara families.

ANNA Doesn't seem to be working, does it?

FIRUZ Things will calm down.

ANNA It can only get worse.

FIRUZ The Faranj will give up soon. Turn back to Constantinople.

NADIRAH Come on, Firuz. They're not going to just go.

FIRUZ They'll be defeated.

NADIRAH By who?

FIRUZ By hunger. You can see – every day men ride off from their camp to look for food.

NADIRAH You think it's any different here?

SULEIMA We've got plenty. And the smugglers are -

NADIRAH So let her go. Do you want to get burnt out too?

ANNA STANDS

ANNA I'll go. May I leave those things here?

FIRUZ Anna, please.

SULEIMA You don't have to. Anna, stop.

NADIRAH Firuz, allow her to make her own choice.

FIRUZ You're forcing her!

ANNA She isn't, Firuz. There is no point in everyone suffering.

FIRUZ Anna, please, stay.

ANNA WALKS OUT.
SULEIMA RUSHES AFTER HER

SULEIMA Anna, please. Come back.

FIRUZ Nadirah.

NADIRAH It's not our fault.

FIRUZ There's an army, coming from Damascus.

NADIRAH When?

FIRUZ (THEN:) I'm not supposed to tell anyone. I couldn't tell her.

NADIRAH See? Even you don't want to trust the Nazara.

FIRUZ I mean...

FIRUZ Finally Damascus has agreed. They didn't want to, but...

NADIRAH With the Faranj in our land they still think about their little arguments?

FIRUZ The foreigners they have only hated for months, these men have hated each other all their lives.

AND BRING UP THE NOISE OF BATTLE

INTO:

CAPTION Ibn al-Qalanisi writes: "During the last days of the year 490, a large detachment of Faranj left the main body and set about ravaging other districts. The army of Damascus moved out against it. After a succession of charges, in which a number of their men were killed...."

AND
CROSS-FADE THIS INTO:

SCENE 8. ANTIOCH. YAGHI-SIYAN'S COUNCIL.

- SHAMS (BREATHLESS) We think they were on a foraging expedition. No more than a thousand of them. They had no idea we were there. The Sultan of Damascus ordered his men over the crest of the hill, surprised them utterly. But the Faranj refused to run and stood their ground. And the Sultan refused to give the final order, refused to commit his troops. He had seen a handful of his soldiers fall and he would not risk more. He drew his soldiers back. Allowed the Faranj to pass. We are alone.
- FIRUZ (AMAZED) They're soldiers. They're paid to fight.
- SHAMS The Faranj lost all the food they had garnered. That's our only victory.
- YAGHI-SIYAN The Sultan is a coward.
- SHAMS The Faranj are fighters. They don't run. They have iron in their blood.
- YAGHI-SIYAN So we should surrender?
- SHAMS We must offer terms.
- YAGHI-SIYAN They're starving. They went for food, they brought none back.
- SHAMS And has it stopped them? Look out there. Have they lifted the blockade, are they retreating?
- YAGHI-SIYAN The winter is breaking them.
- SHAMS We have to understand what they are. It's different.
- ANTIOCHENE My Lord, what are we going to do?
- YAGHI-SIYAN Shams, you will go further - Aleppo, Mosul. You will make the case.

SHAMS And the same thing will happen. Even if their army marches, it will not fight.

FIRUZ They're all scared. Everyone who should fight for us. And after this, they won't -

YAGHI-SIYAN Are you, Firuz?

FIRUZ My Lord?

YAGHI-SIYAN You have been up close to these men. Should we fear them?

FIRUZ Of course not, My Lord.

YAGHI-SIYAN See, all of you? Firuz knows them, he knows they are nothing to be scared of.

FIRUZ I am no fighting – [*man, My Lord*]

YAGHI-SIYAN You're too modest. The Captain of Two Sisters Tower, on the south wall, he has – we lost him. You will take his place.

FIRUZ My Lord, I know about armour, weaponry, I know nothing about tactics, command and –

YAGHI-SIYAN The job is simple, Firuz, you keep your eyes open and you don't let the Faranj get inside the city.

FIRUZ But –

YAGHI-SIYAN That's all it amounts to.

SCENE 9. ANTIOCH. BATTLEMENTS. NIGHT.

FIRUZ STANDS ON THE BATTLEMENTS

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) I am on my tower, watching the Faranj celebrate the festival of the birth of their Messiah. The one they call God's son. It is raining and they are hungry and they are still there. They will not retreat. Don't ever forget this. When they get here, you'll see it for yourselves – they should be broken by now, they should be turning back, but they don't. When they get here, you'll tell yourselves it will be easy to crush them. It's not like that.

THE STITCH (A WHISPERED SHOUT) Firuz! (LOUDER:) Firuz!

FIRUZ Who's that?

THE STITCH Down here.

FIRUZ Where?

THE STITCH Here.

FIRUZ Is that you, Stitch? Is it?

THE STITCH Shhh.

FIRUZ Where?

THE STITCH Heeeeeeeeeeeeeere.

FIRUZ Stitch, you can't – if someone sees you.

THE STITCH No-one sees you out here. Not at night.

FIRUZ They'll think you're a digger.

THE STITCH What, standing down here, not even a sword, let alone a spade.

FIRUZ What are you doing?

THE STITCH I've come to see you.

FIRUZ What?

THE STITCH To talk to you.

FIRUZ How did you know? *[I was here]*

THE STITCH We know.

FIRUZ Are you alright? I mean, are you managing?

THE STITCH Shhh. Come down here. We can talk.

FIRUZ Out there?

THE STITCH Shh. Come on.

MIX TO:

SCENE 10. OUTSIDE ANTIOCH. AT THE FOOT OF THE WALLS.

THEY ARE TRUDGING THROUGH THE MUD, PAST FIRES AND STARVING FARANJ – ONE OF WHOM HAS GRABBED THE STITCH

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD, DISGUSTED) It's rained for at least two weeks. The ground is swimming – mud and shit and mud and blood and piss and mud... The ordinary Faranj, the people, the women and priests and children and men too old to fight, they simply lie down wherever they are. Sometimes they light a fire, sometimes they don't even try. There's not much left to burn.

AND COMING UP UNDER THIS:

THE STITCH Nisht plime skallan.
[I haven't got anything.]

FARANJ (DESPERATE) Quamt pangret. Semmla quamt pangret.

[A loaf of bread. Half a loaf.]

THE STITCH He thinks I've got food.

FARANJ Tish ils mampem? Ils lifgrem.
[What's he got? He looks fat.]

THE STITCH Ils amemtrim.
[He's no-one.]

BUT THE FARANJ IS GRABBING AT FIRUZ

THE STITCH He thinks you're a trader.

FIRUZ (RATTLED) Get off me. I haven't got anything.

FARANJ Sivrem. Donkrest tia tiam.
[Please. I'll give you anything.]

THE STITCH They're eating rats. Roots. Selling their women for a banana.

FARANJ ti min donkrell timdreg
[Give me anything you've -]

WHILE THIS CONVERSATION CONTINUES IN BACKGROUND:

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The skin is stretched across his face, his eyes are bulging. And there's the stench of his breath as his body eats itself. And they're all like this. They used to be so solid, now the yellow skin sags on them, their red hair dropping in clumps. They're waiting for food that they know won't come. But they sit, they wait and they fight.

THE STITCH (FINALLY FIRM, STOPPING HIM) Nisht habbam. Domnij. Domnij.
[I haven't got anything. Maybe tomorrow.]

FARANJ (SUBSIDING) Dominj. Sadfrec?
[Tomorrow. Promise?]

AS THEY CONTINUE WALKING

THE STITCH The people from all the villages round here, they know how badly everyone here needs food. So they're going out, buying it all up and then they come in here and demand impossible prices for it. Ordinary people like him can't afford it. Ten denarii for a loaf. Three hundred for a goat. So duffers go off on their own expeditions, no soldiers to protect them, and your horsemen come charging out of the city and hack them to –

FIRUZ Your?

THE STITCH What?

FIRUZ You said your horsemen. It's our horsemen, Stitch.

THE STITCH I'm living out here. Your arrows come down on the camp where I live. Your catapults chuck bones and dung down here.

FIRUZ It's still us.

THE STITCH You think it feels like that out here? I get locked out of my own city. I'm told to fend for myself.

FIRUZ That's not the point.

THE STITCH Anna alright, is she? Getting looked after?

FIRUZ Of course. She's fine.

THE STITCH (SIMPLE) Don't lie to me, Firuz.

FIRUZ What?

THE STITCH You think we don't know what's going on in the city? They've been burned out, haven't they?

- FIRUZ We're looking after her. She's alright. She's safe with us.
- THE STITCH (TAKING THAT FOR GRANTED) Did you save much from the house?
- FIRUZ Not a lot. A few best bits. And the money.
- FARANJ Soireg, Stitsh.
[Evening, Stitch.]
- FIRUZ Everyone knows you.
- THE STITCH Soireg tish, monswer.
[Evening to you, sir.]
- FIRUZ You speak the language now.
- THE STITCH (EXPLAINING TO FIRUZ) I translate, when the village farmers come in. And then they blame me when the prices are so high
- FIRUZ Where are you taking me?
- THE STITCH To see someone you already know.
- FIRUZ What? (TRYING TO WORK IT OUT) Who?
- THE STITCH (STOPPING, WITH SOME PASSION) Look at them, Firuz. How long before you realise? They're not going home. These people – would you do this?
- FIRUZ I wouldn't ever –
- THE STITCH No-one would do this. Unless they believed. They aren't going home. They are going to Jerusalem.
- FIRUZ We're not stopping them.

THE STITCH They can't march off south with this city against them. They'd be under constant attack. They need a clear, safe line back to Constantinople.

FIRUZ So they make terms.

THE STITCH (FORGET IT) With Yaghi-Siyan? Shake your hand today, knife you in the back next week.

FIRUZ Give him a stake in it, that's how you -

THE STITCH This will go on and it will go on until we are in the city.

FIRUZ Again. "We."

THE STITCH There are soldiers and there are women and there are children and there are knights – though they've eaten most of their horses – and every single one of them is going to Jerusalem or going to heaven. They really are. This isn't warfare, this isn't empire - no-one round here ever fights in the winter. They mean this, look, sitting here, in the pissing rain. They're dying of starvation, of fever, dying in battle, and they're not moving.

FIRUZ They've got into your head, Stitch. (REALISING)
Where are we?

THEY'VE STOPPED.

THE STITCH Tatikios is the Emperor's man, he's the big general. Get Yaghi-Siyan to surrender to him, like they did in Nikaea, peaceful changeover, it can happen.

FIRUZ Why's he going to listen to me?

THE STITCH He knows you. He'll trust you to talk to Yaghi-Siyan. we've got to try.

AND MIX INTO:

SCENE 11.OUTSIDE ANTIOCH: TATIKIOS' TENT. NIGHT.

- TATIKIOS You genuinely think the sultans will allow the Emperor of the Romans to possess this city?
- THE STITCH Anything that gets these people past here.
- TATIKIOS They're not passing on. The Faranj want this city, want its wealth, its trade, its –
- FIRUZ They want their Holy Jerusalem...(TRYING TO WORK IT OUT)...don't they?
- TATIKIOS Don't be naïve, Firuz.
- FIRUZ What am I supposed to think? You told me you wanted them away from Constantinople but then you used them to get Nikaea. The Emir thinks they are your new fighters. Now The Stitch tells me they are solidier pilgrims. Which is it, I don't know?
- TATIKIOS Why not all those? And more? Duke Bohemond especially – he set out for Jerusalem, swore his oaths, wept his tears for the Pope. Now he thinks about it, he looks around – he's stopping here. Be Prince of Antioch.
- THE STITCH Take the city. You can have it.
- TATIKIOS You saw how angry they were at Nikaea. But that's just two days from the Great City. Here, we're a month's march, two in the rains – there's nothing to stop the Faranj taking what they want.
- THE STITCH They pledged obedience to the Emperor.
- TATIKIOS I think the time for oaths has passed.

FIRUZ They rely on the Emperor for supplies. If he cuts them off north, they are finished.

TATIKIOS Soon they will have the use of ports to the West. Once the weather improves, ships will arrive from Cyprus, from Genova, from further.

FIRUZ That's why you must treat with our Emir. While there's time.

THE STITCH You can save the city. No-one else can.

TATIKIOS We strike camp tomorrow. The order is already given.

FIRUZ What?

TATIKIOS We are returning to Constantinople. We're not safe here and we are achieving less.

FIRUZ The Faranj, without you, they'll –

TATIKIOS Carry on doing exactly what they want.

FIRUZ You can't. We need you.

TATIKIOS I'll tell the Emperor that the traders of Antioch were begging him to take their city. He has a good sense of humour.

A MOMENT, THEN:

FIRUZ Take me back, Stitch.

MIX TO THEIR WALK BACK THROUGH THE CAMP:

SCENE 12. OUTSIDE ANTIOCH. THE FARANJ CAMP. NIGHT.

FIRUZ What are you going to do now?

THE STITCH What does it matter?

FIRUZ What about Thoros, how's he getting on? Suleima will be desperate to hear - [*how he's doing*]

THE STITCH (SIMPLE) He's dead.

FIRUZ What?

THE STITCH He was young, he was angry. He felt betrayed. He joined the Faranj, as a footsoldier. They get meat. They were escorting a foraging expedition. Your horsemen.

FIRUZ (TAKING IT IN) Thoros.

THE STITCH It's happening. Every day it's happening.

FIRUZ Do I tell Anna? Suleima?

THE STITCH You think about it, you decide.

CUT TO:

SCENE 13. ANTIOCH. THE BATTLEMENTS.

SULEIMA Where are they?

FIRUZ You'll never see them from here.

SULEIMA If we keep looking.

FIRUZ A farmer's taken them in.

SULEIMA But aren't the farmers all - ?

FIRUZ Two valleys towards Saint Simeon. Nearer the coast. They're safe there.

SULEIMA Why didn't you say?

FIRUZ It's complicated.

SULEIMA So why was The Stitch in the camp last night?

FIRUZ (THINKING ON HIS FEET) Sometimes they come. To trade.

SULEIMA So they might still be here.

FIRUZ You'll never - [*see them*]

SULEIMA Have you told Anna?

FIRUZ Not yet.

SULEIMA Why not?

FIRUZ It's not that....I will. (HE WON'T)

SUDDENLY OVER THIS, FROM OUTSIDE, FROM BELOW, CALLING UP

FARANJ (SHOUTED) Sisminsh Antiocham, tin prend jasdin.
[Citizens of Antioch, you must make a decision.]

SULEIMA What's going on?

FIRUZ Shhh.

SULEIMA What are they doing?

FIRUZ (SHHHH) Listen.

NAZARENE (MEANWHILE INTERPRETING, TO BE HEARD ON THE
 BATTLEMENTS ABOVE) My Masters say –

FARANJ Minsh domini dict kaj draf pog med bons disij dfres
 gew Harim ked fay okram nowp ejjfillnon elkij hewej
 Turcman hewmin lok chidut ute witraz wijem eys bahj
 sideg hatty fogs dilk **[We have captured the... (FROM**

**NOW ON CARRYING ON UNDER THE
INTERPRETER]**

NAZARENE We have captured the fort of Harim. Won a great battle. And captured these Turcoman fighters.

ON THE BATTLEMENTS, OVER THIS:

SULEIMA What are they doing?

FIRUZ You shouldn't be here.

SULEIMA I'm...I want to....

FIRUZ They might be about to attack.

SULEIMA He might be there. We might see him. Out there.

FIRUZ Who?

SULEIMA (LIKE, OBVIOUSLY) Thoros.

MEANWHILE, CONTINUING, TRANSLATING THE FARANJ:

NAZARENE These prisoners are brave fighters. So they will be offered the chance to convert to our faith.

FARANJ (TO THE NAZARENE) Ultmish tim, prendrit crucem?
[For the last time, will you take the cross?]

NAZARENE (TO THE FIRST TURCOMAN SOLDIER) For the last time, will you take the cross?

TURCOMAN (MEANING 'NO') Allah, the merciful, the compassionate.

WITH A HEAVE A FARANJ BEHEADS HIM

SULEIMA SCREAMS IN SHOCK

FIRUZ I warned you.

MEANWHILE IT CONTINUES:

NAZARENE (TO THE NEXT TURCOMAN SOLDIER) You, will you take the cross?

TURCOMAN (MEANING 'NO') Allah, the merciful, the compassionate, I await you in paradise -

MAYBE SOMETIMES THE TURC IS BEHEADED BEFORE COMPLETING THE PRAYER. SOMETIMES IT TAKES MORE THAN ONE BLOW TO BEHEAD THEM, SOMETIMES MAYBE THE SWORD STRIKES A SHOULDER FIRST.

SULEIMA Why won't they – ? They're all going to die.

FIRUZ They're doing it to scare us.

SULEIMA I am scared. We're all already scared.

FIRUZ We'd better get inside. They will...

SULEIMA What?

FIRUZ The heads. They use catapults. Let's get inside.

CUT TO:

CAPTION “In the first months of the year 491, the winter rains were heavy and in all parts men and horses were perishing for want. There was a great earthquake and a comet appeared in the West for twenty days and the Faranj took great heart from this sign.”

SCENE 14. ANTIOCH. BATTLEMENTS.

FIRUZ My Lord, our people our suffering. The Jacobite Quarter has the red fever.

- YAGHI-SIYAN That's not unusual. This time of year.
- FIRUZ We cannot send the sick to the coast as we normally do.
- YAGHI-SIYAN What do you want, we surrender the city to these people?
- FIRUZ If they take us by force, with rights of plunder...
- YAGHI-SIYAN This city has never been taken by storm.
- FIRUZ Already they have sat in the rain and mud for seven months. They are angry and they want something in return.
- YAGHI-SIYAN We must speak to them.
- FIRUZ (HOPEFUL) Yes?
- YAGHI-SIYAN (TO FIRUZ) We must send a message back. A message in their own language. (CALLING OUT) Bring the prisoner.
- THE GUARDS BRING A PRISONER ONTO THE BATTLEMENTS.
- REYNALD Yo Marshmet, mersim.
[I can walk, thank you.]
- YAGHI-SIYAN Apparently he is valuable. His name is Reynald. We intended to ransom him.
- REYNALD (CLOCKING HIS NAME) Reynald.
- YAGHI-SIYAN But such transactions are no longer possible.
- FIRUZ If he's valuable?

YAGHI-SIYAN Those days have passed. We are on our own. And the Faranj are on their own. Now we must fight. (TO GUARDS) Have him stand at the edge.

REYNALD Quint dramport?
[What's happening?]

FIRUZ We shouldn't do this.

YAGHI-SIYAN We did not start it.

FIRUZ The hatred will spread.

YAGHI-SIYAN We are strong enough.

FIRUZ We are feeding it. The patriarch, the conversions, now beheadings.

IN THE DISTANCE, THE FARANJ ARE CALLING OUT:

dux Reynald! **Duke Reynald!**
 Quint drashant? **What's he doing?**
 Quint drampit freb? **What's going on up there?**

AND DURING ALL THE FOLLOWING, THE GUARDS INCREASINGLY EAGER:

Kill him.
 Chop him up and send him back.
 Get on with it.
 I'll do it, if you won't.

MEANWHILE YAGHI-SIYAN DRAWS HIS SWORD AND PASSES IT TO FIRUZ

YAGHI-SIYAN Take my sword.

FIRUZ I'm no fighting man, my Lord.

YAGHI-SIYAN You sought to bring me a message. Firuz. Now you must send one back.

FIRUZ My Lord, I understand weapons, I have never raised one in anger.

YAGHI-SIYAN (FIRM) Send them the message.

FIRUZ He doesn't need to die.

YAGHI-SIYAN We are fighting. This tells the Faranj we are also fighting to the end.

FIRUZ My Lord, I –

YAGHI-SIYAN (IMPLACABLE) Do it.

FIRUZ LIFTS THE SWORD.

FIRUZ I have never...

YAGHI-SIYAN Do it.

FIRUZ I barely know how to –

AND THEN, HE HEFTS THE SWORD AND WITH A YELL – TO COVER HIS OWN FEAR AS MUCH AS ANYTHING – HE STARTS TO SWING IT

STOP IT DEAD – INTO SILENCE – AS:

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The bodies of the Faranj lie unburied in the ditch – dead of hunger, dead of cold, dead. When they start to smell, we know it is Spring. The snow has not driven them down. Hunger has turned few of them back. And the weather allows ships to arrive on the coast – food and oil, wood and carpenters, fresh armour. They build forts outside each city gate. Our horsemen can no longer ride out. We are trapped.

CUT TO:

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The red fever is everywhere in the city. We tend our sick and we talk about the army that

might arrive from Mosul. Word is that Sultan Karbuqa has sworn to help us. Few believe it. We talk and wait. Hunger and disease. Every day, every hour, the fever takes someone.

SCENE 15. ANTIOCH. FIRUZ'S HOME: BEDROOM.

BOTH ARE DISTRAUGHT, STRETCHED TAUT, TEARFUL BUT NOT CRYING.

NADIRAH IS DEAD.

SULEIMA (EXHAUSTED ANGER) How do you feel now?

FIRUZ Suleima, I am your father.

SULEIMA Then I am an orphan.

FIRUZ Please. Let's mourn first and then –

SULEIMA Mourning is for the living. I might as well be dead.

FIRUZ We can – it's our duty to – your mother would want us to continue.

SULEIMA (CONTINUING) The whole city's dying. And you're doing nothing about it.

FIRUZ What am I supposed - ? [*to do?*]

SULEIMA I had a man about to marry me, that is over.

FIRUZ (WITHOUT CONVICTION) They can come back.

SULEIMA The Faranj are taking all the food. How will Thoros even eat?

FIRUZ They're – they're clever.

SULEIMA And my mother is dead.

- FIRUZ You make it sound like my fault. Did I bring these Faranj to this city?
- SULEIMA You've told me. You did deals with the Romans. To help them cross over here.
- FIRUZ One man, one little armourer, made all this happen?
- SULEIMA You did it for money. Everyone does it for money. That's what makes us weak.
- FIRUZ Your mother's illness is my – the fever, that's my fault too? It's running through the city, half the families have been affected. And that's Firuz' - [*fault as well?*]
- SULEIMA We eat one small meal a day. And we're lucky. The fever was the final blow.
- FIRUZ Thanks to my hard work. Plenty don't even get one small meal.
- SULEIMA Because you make weapons and, well, weapons are what people need. We don't need food, apparently. Don't need –
- FIRUZ Stop it. Allah is compassionate. He has taken your mother. He has preserved us.
- SULEIMA He should have taken you instead.
- FIRUZ I will forgive your anger.
- SULEIMA Don't. It's not going away.
- FIRUZ We will bury your mother and then we will talk.
- SULEIMA I will bury her. Leave me. Go back to your tower, chop off a few more heads.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) It couldn't go on. Any of you would have done the same. Was I really the only one who saw this? The only one willing to do something about it?

MIX TO:

SCENE 16. OUTSIDE ANTIOCH. THE FARANJ CAMP. NIGHT.

FIRUZ AND THE STITCH ARE TRUDGING THROUGH THE FARANJ CAMP.
IT IS NOT AS WET AS BEFORE AND SPIRITS ARE CLEARLY HIGHER.

FIRUZ Why this one?

THE STITCH Like Tatikios told us – everyone knows anyway - Bohemond wants this city for himself.

FIRUZ What about Jerusalem?

THE STITCH He's a practical man. He's a man looking for his own little kingdom.

FIRUZ Doesn't mind about their Holy Sepulchre?

THE STITCH I'm not saying he'll see you. We get spies through here every week, telling us this, telling us that.

FIRUZ I'm on my own.

THE STITCH I know that. Does he?

FIRUZ You'll tell him.

FARANJ Stant. Stoob.
[Halt. Stop.]

THE STITCH Lish mindrem, Stitch.
[It's me, Stitch.]

FARANJ Ils travallom.
 [He's busy.]

FIRUZ What's he saying?

THE STITCH Ils vollum quin vinktik hommum.
 [He'll want to see this bloke.]

FARANJ Ils dictrim nikt –
 [He said not to -]

BOHEMOND (EMERGING FROM HIS TENT) Quint estam?
 [Who's this?]

THE STITCH Dush Bohemond. Ya prendim Sismin Antioch.
 [My Lord Bohemond. I bring a citizen of Antioch.]

FIRUZ Is this him?

BOHEMOND Militim?
 [Soldier?]

THE STITCH Ils mandush Turrum.
 [He commands a tower.]

BOHEMOND Quinshil?
 [Which one?]

THE STITCH (TO FIRUZ) Which tower?

FIRUZ What?

THE STITCH Which tower is yours?

FIRUZ Two Sisters Tower. Third eastward from the South Gate.

THE STITCH Trittim ocsimnin deff Zaplim Portum.
 [Third eastward from the South Gate.]

BOHEMOND (TURNING TO GO INTO THE TENT) Swimpin.
[Follow me.]

THE STITCH Come on.

AND THEY FOLLOW HIM INTO THE TENT.

THE STITCH Let me do the talking.

FIRUZ How can I - ?

THE STITCH He's picked up some of the language.

RIHAB (SURPRISE) Firuz!

FIRUZ Rihab?

RIHAB What are you....?

FIRUZ You're with....?

BOHEMOND Quam dontresdim?
What's he offering?
 (ACCENTED TO FIRUZ:) What want?

THE STITCH Talk to me, Firuz.

FIRUZ I want to see the city safe. We are all starving. Too many people are dying.

THE STITCH We don't want a speech, we want an offer.

FIRUZ (HARD TO SAY, BUT:) If I help him into the city, will he guarantee the safety of –

THE STITCH Amim slikrat, Dush Bohemond, amim vllum vlinkrep hulgik skad dusum -
[My friend here, Lord Bohemond, wishes to see if there can be a peaceful –]

RIHAB (TO BOHEMOND) Urbim prendint. Urbim.

He's offering you the city. The city.

- RIHAB (TO FIRUZ) That's right, yes? You're giving him access to the city?
- THE STITCH (TO RIHAB) We need to negotiate this carefully.
- RIHAB He's not an idiot.
- FIRUZ Will you two stop this?
- THE STITCH (TO BOHEMOND) Dusht Jobnen, figgod suyaq pollmin si -
[My Lord Duke, many things are possible if -]
- BOHEMOND (TO FIRUZ) You want gold?
- FIRUZ That's not what -
- BOHEMOND (ACCENTED) Many chests gold.
diktim ils, ya diffiv thus waims blint.
Tell him I'll make him a very rich man.
- THE STITCH He'll make you a very rich man.
- RIHAB (TO BOHEMOND) Ils nisht vollum.
He doesn't want that.
- FIRUZ What did she say? (REALISING) What did you say?
- RIHAB I told him you don't want that.
- FIRUZ How do you know?
- RIHAB I know you, Firuz.
- FIRUZ My wife's dead.
- RIHAB I belong to this man now.
- THE STITCH (STOPPING THIS) Please! Can we - ?

BOHEMOND (TO RIHAB) Tish dios ils?
You know this man?

RIHAB Ab Nikaea.
From Nikaea.

BOHEMOND Tishim fidrent ils?
You trust him?

RIHAB (TO FIRUZ) He wants to know if he can trust you.

FIRUZ Tell him I want the city to be taken peacefully. Tell him I can let them into my tower – we'll have to devise some kind of diversion – and then they could open the South Gate - but I need promises.

[DURING THIS, RIHAB HAS BEEN TRANSLATING:

RIHAB Jeffen lejmen julk gipoi sedd klus jus sidollmen siddis def benis tijrut wirb roaror rokrelm fregtem rutem lipor ruan rend riol edoebm eitry doppil filk.]

BOHEMOND What you want, Saracen-man?

FIRUZ (AS RIHAB TRANSLATES IN THE BACKGROUND)
Your oath. That the city will not be put to the city.
That the people will be safe. That we will be respected.

BOHEMOND (AS THOUGH IT'S OBVIOUS) Ya vollum Antioch. Ya vollum minsh, minsh. Dush Bohemond na Antioch. Bentrim? Porklen yak jitreg kiffil? Porklen f ild pobbest enitrem? Ya minshtim.
[I want Antioch, I want it for my own. Duke Bohemond of Antioch – good? Why would I burn it? Why would I let my soldiers loot it? It's mine.]

DURING THIS, THE STITCH TRANSLATES, REPEATING IT IN THE THIRD PERSON

FIRUZ (TO THE STITCH) Do you believe him?

THE STITCH He wants it. Why destroy it?

FIRUZ Rihab?

RIHAB He's a soldier. He's a commander. You have to decide.

FIRUZ If we don't do anything and they get in, they'll take everything, burn the whole place down.

A MOMENT:

BOHEMOND So? Saracen-man? What we do?

FIRUZ Do I have any choice?

CUT TO:

CAPTION Ibn al-Athir writes: "In the month of Jamada 491, the Faranj sealed their pact with the cuirass-maker, God damn him! Thus, on the arranged night in early summer, the armies of the Faranj made to withdraw."

SCENE 17. ANTIOCH.

ANTIOCHENE 1 (CALLING) They're going! They're marching! They're going!

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The sun is setting as everyone runs up to the battlements.

ANTIOCHENE 2 They're giving up. They're going home.

YAGHI-SIYAN My people, it means the army from Mosul is near. They've finally arrived. They're going to slaughter these Faranj.

ANTIOCHENE 4 I don't care why they're going, they're going. That's enough.

YAGHI-SIYAN My son, Prince Shams al-Dawla will be riding at the front, leading the fighting men, to rescue us.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The news rips through the city, everyone talking about why the Faranj are going, everyone presuming it's over.

A CITY-WIDE HUBBUB OF HAPPY CHATTER

SULEIMA Father?

FIRUZ What?

SULEIMA You're not....you're sad. Everyone else is happy. You're...

FIRUZ I'm...if it is the army from Mosul, there will be a battle. And the Faranj have already defeated the army from Damascus, the other one from Aleppo.

SULEIMA They're much more tired now. Fewer of them.

FIRUZ They still might....go to bed, daughter.

SULEIMA Not even a smile?

FIRUZ Why are you suddenly talking to me like this?

SULEIMA They're going. Reason enough.

FIRUZ You mean soon the Nazara men will be allowed back into the city?

SULEIMA (WITH A SMILE) Of course.

FIRUZ Suleima...(IS HE GOING TO TELL HER)....It's been hard for them out there.

SULEIMA I know.

FIRUZ So....

SULEIMA What?

FIRUZ Go to bed. I have watch duty tonight.

SULEIMA (GOING) Tell me if you see anything good.

CAPTION Ibn al-Athir writes: "By night, a gang of Faranj approached the tower with ropes. Five hundred in number, they began to climb in."

SCENE 18. ANTIOCH. TOWER.

DURING WHICH FIRUZ IS HELPING THE FIRST KNIGHTS OFF A ROPE LADDER ONTO THE WALL

FIRUZ Come on, that's it. Shhh.

BOHEMOND Quiet.

FIRUZ Get them all along there.

BOHEMOND (ACCENTED) We wait for many.

FIRUZ Just do it quietly.

BOHEMOND Come.

FIRUZ Where are the others?

BOHEMOND Gate. There.

AS THEY CLIMB – AS QUIETLY AS THEY CAN – UP THE ROPE AND OVER THE WALLS AND ONTO THE BATTLEMENTS

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Yes, it was me. And you too will get to the point when you think it might be best, anything

to end the fighting somehow. Don't. That's why I'm here. Don't.

FARANJ (ACCENTED) We ready.

FIRUZ There's only –

FARANJ Gate, Saracen.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) It wasn't money. It wasn't that. It had to stop. They promised to take the city and stop. Yes, even then I thought "Is this the best way? One shout and it will not be so." My watchmen were already dead but at the next tower they would have heard. I didn't say anything.
I lead them towards the gate. The gatemen are silently removed.

DURING THIS, MOMENTARY CRIES AS THROATS ARE SLIT AND THE KNIGHTS MOVE DOWN THE STEPS AND TOWARDS THE GATE

A MOMENT OF SILENCE
THEN THE TRUMPET IS SOUNDED
THE GATE IS THROWN OPEN

CAPTION Ibn al-Athir writes: "At dawn, when they were all in the city and the defenders worn out after their night watch, they sounded their trumpets and threw open the gates and their fighting men rushed in."

IN MOMENTS, MOUNTED KNIGHTS ARE RIDING TOWARDS IT
MEANWHILE THE FARANJ INSIDE ARE YELLING AS THEY CHARGE AT ANYONE AND EVERYONE , WITH SWORDS AND AXES AND FLAILS DRAWN

FARANJ Godswill! Goswill!
[God's will! God's will!]

CAPTION "They entered the city by the gates and sacked it, slaughtering all the Muslims they found there. Yaghi-

Siyan panicked and fled the city. If he had stood firm for an hour, the Faranj would have been wiped out.”

AS THEY CHARGE AND START KILLING ANYONE AND EVERYONE VERY QUICKLY THE NOISE IS ENORMOUS, UNRELENTING – FIGHTING, SHOUTING, KILLING, TRUMPETS, CHARGING, SMASHING INTO HOUSES, FIRE, SCREAMS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN. OVER WHICH:

FIRUZ (TO THE FARANJ, DESPERATE) Stop, stop, leave the people - they're not soldiers. Stop! Where's Duke Bohemond? Stop. Just take the citadel.

OVER WHICH (OVER HIMSELF):

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Eight months the Faranj have waited outside our city. Every fourth man has starved to death. All their money is spent. For months, the Faranj priests have been telling them to purify themselves, to ban women from the camp. They are ready. I cannot stop them now. And Bohemond knows he will not, cannot stop them either.

UNDER THIS, FIRUZ, RUNNING THROUGH THE STREETS, NOW FILLED WITH FIGHTERS (SHOUTING AND KILLING AND KICKING OPEN DOORS) AND VICTIMS (SCREAMING AND DYING) AS HE CHARGES BREATHLESSLY TOWARDS HIS HOME

FIRUZ (IN ANTIOCH) Suleima! Suleima! I'm coming! I'm coming!

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) They go house by house. Their God rewards them for killing believers.

FIRUZ (IN ANTIOCH) Stop, please! Stop this! The city is yours – stop, please!

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Tonight, they attack everyone, take from everyone, use any woman they find.

FIRUZ (IN ANTIOCH) Suleima! Suleima! I'm coming! I'm coming!

FIRUZ IS NOW ARRIVING AT HIS WORKSHOP. IT HAS BEEN PILLAGED, HE BUSHES FURNITURE AND BEAMS OUT OF HIS WAY AS HE CLIMBS IN AND UP THE STAIRS.

FIRUZ (IN ANTIOCH) Suleima? Suleima, it's me. Suleima, I'm home, I'm here.

HE THROWS A BEAM/CHAIR OUT OF HIS WAY AND FORCES HIS WAY INTO A ROOM, DURING:

FIRUZ Suleima, come out, I'm here – they've gone. I'll protect you. Suleima, I'm here, Suleima! Come out, Sulei –

AND HE SEES HER.
MUCH QUIETER:

FIRUZ Suleima. Suleima?

HE MOVES OVER TO HER.
SHE IS DEAD.

FIRUZ (QUIETLY, SIMPLY, HOLDING HER) Suleima, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. It's all my fault. You were right. It is my fault. Again. I thought I was making it better. Here, cover that up. I'm sorry. I should have been here. You shouldn't be on your own.

HE STARTS TIDYING UP, RIGHTING FURNITURE, PICKING UP WHAT REMAINS AFTER THE LOOTING.

CAPTION Ibn al-Qalanisi: "The number of men, women and children killed and enslaved is beyond computation. This happened in the month of Jumada in the year 491."

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The sun rises on a city of corpses. The stink will start soon. Remember this, if you make treaties with these people - and you'll want to – this

will be the result. And will you be able to explain? “I wanted the best for the city”? “I didn’t take money”? “They’re lying, murdering, heartless - ”? None of that will be enough. Not when everyone’s dead and you let it happen. Not when these loud men walk through your streets with a bloody swagger.

DURING ALL THIS, FIRUZ IS TIDYING THE WORKSHOP.
AS BOHEMOND ARRIVES, WITH RETINUE, BEHIND HIM

BOHEMOND Saracen-man!

FIRUZ (TURNING, SURPRISED) Duke.

BOHEMOND Nos donil tin merkem.
[We come with your reward.]

THE STITCH Your reward.

FIRUZ I asked for nothing.

BOHEMOND (TO HIS MEN) Prem lantrin.
Put it there.

THEY DEPOSIT A CHEST ON A TABLE.
FIRUZ IMMEDIATELY PICKS IT UP

FIRUZ I don’t want it.

BOHEMOND Take. You good. I want thank.

FIRUZ (PUSHING IT AT HIM) I asked for nothing. Please.
Don’t.

BOHEMOND (TO THE STITCH) Disht ils fidremink nikklet.
[Tell him he’ll need it.]

THE STITCH He says you’ll need it.

FIRUZ (COLD FURY) You promised me – you gave me your word, there would be no killing.

THE STITCH TRANSLATING THIS: Tish fifeb malid inbe minsh.
Fidrem minsh. Tin diklet.

BOHEMOND (UNTROUBLED) Parklem ya arrent ilsem?
How could I stop them?

THE STITCH TRANSLATES

FIRUZ You gave me your oath.

BOHEMOND Fillem pinret cam dintrenk. Quin firetnim billam.
An oath with a traitor. What an amusing idea.

THE STITCH (TRANSLATING) He says “I gave my oath to a traitor.
That’s funny.”

FIRUZ I don’t want your money. Take it away.

BUT BOHEMOND IS ALREADY WALKING AWAY.

FIRUZ (TO THE STITCH) Get him back.

THE STITCH He’s not coming back.

FIRUZ Why didn’t you warn me?

THE STITCH Why didn’t you look after Anna? I found her last
night. She’s been living in a sheep shed. With ten
others.

A MOMENT.

FIRUZ KNOWS HE HAS NO ANSWER FOR THIS.

FIRUZ We tried to...

THE STITCH And you complain about broken promises.

FIRUZ Everything’s been – we all had to join one side or the
other. It’s never been like that before.

THE STITCH It's not over yet.

FIRUZ You and me, we're still friends, yes?

THE STITCH Are you – (COOL LOATHING) – get out of my sight.

FIRUZ I - I understand

FIRUZ WALKS AWAY. HE STOPS AND TURNS BACK.

FIRUZ The workshop's yours now. These people, they're going to need re-arming. You'll do well.

MIX INTO:

SCENE 19. ANTIOCH. OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS.

FIRUZ IS DIGGING.

IN THE BACKGROUND, THE CROWD IS MILLING, DISCONTENTED.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Maybe Thoros and Suleima are together now, somewhere. I dug the grave myself. By now word is out – Bohemond knew it would – that I allowed them in. It's impossible to explain. (THEN) Is there really any explanation?

DURING THIS, THE CROWD

CROWD He's the one.
 He let them in.
 He's the one.
 Him and his foreign friends.

AND THEY START TO THROW ANYTHING THEY CAN FIND AT HIM
 HE DEFENDS HIMSELF AS BEST HE CAN

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Bohemond knew. Knew it would be like this. My only friends now are the Faranj.

BOHEMOND (SHOWING IT) Saracen-man! You like?

FIRUZ Is that....? Who is that?

BOHEMOND (ACCENTED) Your Emir. Yaghi-Siyan's. He fall from horse - in valley. Farmer cut it, bring it in. You like?

FIRUZ GAGS. BOHEMOND LAUGHS.

BOHEMOND Come with me. We make you safe. You friend.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) So I'm standing with the Faranj when we see the dust on the horizon - the army from Mosul, three days too late.

BOHEMOND Sultan Karbuqa.

FIRUZ Or did Karbuqa wait those extra three days until he need only defeat the Faranj?

THE GATES SLAM SHUT

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Now trapped with thousands of Faranj, all still looking for food. And there was barely anything left before. You see men on all fours, picking grains out of dung. Some grab you, search you. Some say the bodies of the unburied are put to use. With each day, the city becomes quieter.

SCENE 20. ANTIOCH. STREETS.

BY NOW THE CITY IS STRANGELY QUIET, GENTLE MOANING, LITTLE MOVEMENT (DURING THE ABOVE)

THEN SUDDENLY, CRAZILY LOUD:

PETER (ACCENTED) You're the armourer, aren't you?

FIRUZ Used to be.

PETER With the workshop and the spears and everything?

FIRUZ I know you.

PETER Do you come to my prayers? We meet by that cave up there. God fills our bellies.

FIRUZ We've met before.

PETER We could pray together now.

FIRUZ Near Nikaea. The battlefield. You did that thing with –

PETER This? (REPEATING THE TRICK)

FIRUZ Yes!

PETER And this? (AGAIN)

FIRUZ That's – amazing.

PETER (FLAT) That wasn't me.

FIRUZ You were –

FIRUZ Never seen you before in my life.

FIRUZ Maybe just as well.

PETER You're the armourer though. The one who let us in?

FIRUZ I could explain – It wasn't like that -

PETER I need a spear.

FIRUZ I've given up the workshop.

PETER Just an old one. Half a one. Old, rusty.

FIRUZ Why?

PETER Just another of my – one of my tricks.

FIRUZ There might be something out the back, we were used to fling the scraps, for smelting.

PETER Take me. (CRAZILY URGENT) Take me now.

FIRUZ After dark, I can't....[*do it now*] I'm not welcome there.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) I have nothing better to do. And it's nice to be wanted again.

THEY ARE NOW RUMMAGING THROUGH A HEAP OF OLD WOOD AND METAL WEAPONRY, ALL SMALL PIECES, IN A JUMBLE.

FIRUZ What about this?

PETER Too shiny.

FIRUZ Usually people want – [*them shiny*]

PETER Didn't you hear me?

FIRUZ Alright. Alright.

MORE RUMMAGING.

PETER What's this?

FIRUZ Sword handle.

PETER (CHUCKING IT BACK) You did make spears? Lances?

FIRUZ Of course. But they nearly always sell.

PETER (OPTIMISTIC) What's this?

FIRUZ Half a spear shaft. (REMEMBERING IT) I remember that.

PETER All we need now is the point.

FIRUZ (RUMMAGING) There was one....here. Yes.

PETER Yes.

FIRUZ (TRYING TO FIT THEM TOGETHER) Not a perfect fit.

PETER Work it.

FIRUZ (FORCING IT) I need tools.

PETER You can do it.

FIRUZ (JUST ABOUT FITTED TOGETHER) That good enough? Bad enough?

PETER Perfect.

FIRUZ Don't put it up your sleeve, you'll hurt yourself.

PETER Don't want anyone – there'll be trouble if -

PETER KISSES HIM AND SCAMPERS OFF

FIRUZ Where are you going?

PETER Got things to do. (THEN HE STOPS, AT A DISTANCE, CALLS BACK) You got a spade?

FIRUZ I have nothing.

PETER Pick-axe?

FIRUZ I said I have –

PETER (TURNING AGAIN) I can manage. Leave me alone now. You never saw me. Nobody knows me.

THE STITCH (SUDDENLY APPEARING BEHIND HIM) What you doing?

FIRUZ Stitch?

THE STITCH What you doing here?

FIRUZ Sorry.

THE STITCH Well?

FIRUZ How's Anna?

THE STITCH Don't tell me you care.

FIRUZ (DESPERATE TO EXPLAIN) When it was bad, in here, we couldn't be seen with them. The Emir said they would help the enemy enter the city.

THE STITCH Ironic, isn't it?

FIRUZ It was bad. In here. Everyone changed.

THE STITCH What are your friends going to do now?

FIRUZ They're your people.

THE STITCH They're not our friends.

FIRUZ You got enough to eat?

THE STITCH And if we haven't?

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) People stew thistle roots and then twist up and die. The knights cut blood from the few remaining horses. Outside Karbuqa knows he need only wait. Every day more Faranj slip out of the city, for the coast, running home. Karbuqa waits for surrender, the Faranj wait for a miracle. It comes.

CUT STRAIGHT INTO:

SCENE 21. ANTIOCH. A CROWDED MARKETPLACE.

IN THE BACKGROUND, PETER HAS THE CROWD WHIPPED UP, LISTENING INTENTLY TO HIS EVERY WORD.

RIHAB (APPROACHING) Believe him?

FIRUZ Rihab? Why are you wearing - ?

RIHAB I've converted. It's better for business.

FIRUZ Isn't Duke Bohemo – ?

RIHAB I'm not going to miss him.

FIRUZ Right.

RIHAB Don't get any ideas.

FIRUZ I won't. (THEN:) What's he saying?

RIHAB STARTS TRANSLATING PETER'S WORDS (SELECTIVELY) FOR HIM:

PETER Quinrem Moses? Nict. Quinrem Adamo, paterrem toto? Nishtem ilsem. Dusht Christus, da, dusht Christus. Sancty Andrrem, tallan, tallan.

RIHAB Was it Moses? No. Was it Adam, father of us all? No. none of these. Yes, that's right, yes, it was the Lord Christ himself. And St.Andrew by his side.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) My priest. He had quite a crowd.

RIHAB Flind jaddin quillin. Da, da dilod sidden ona sajjid gottib skivvi willid fur laanrem hiddiya wippin de foddeb fid Dusht Christus, firink jurrum figg skillib.

PETER They stood in front of me. Right there. No-one else was seeing them. It was me they had chosen. And Lord Christus, he was bleeding, from the wound in his side.

- FARANJ Romanus prendit il.
The Roman did that.
- PETER Da dalrint – Longinus, Romanus militim.
That’s right – Longinus, the Roman legionary.
- FARANJ Illibim.
Bastard.
- PETER Sancty Andrem, dissid Christus algof gan dud dhajd.
Sbay shiffob finn hillid newklid japis bin plew mannig.
Him, da him. Basilic tirrem, disht, dihst mintim.
**RIHAB And St.Andrew, he lifted the Lord’s cloak and
showed me the wound, bleeding again. And then
Lord Christus pointed in here. In here, inside the
church, it’s in here, he seemed to be saying.**
- FARANJ Quin?
What?
- PETER (LIKE DUHH) Hallank. Sancty hallank. Inkerrem fan
tin Dusht Christus. Sancty Andrem disht tellim,
disht, veritim “Hallank pillim din basilic. Viderrem,
und chinnerim hallank. Prendim hallank ab milit und
numquil vankorril.
**RIHAB The lance. The Holy Lance that pierced the side of
our Lord Christus. St. Andrew said it, in fact, “The
Holy Lance is buried in the church. Search and it
will lead you to victory. Carry this lance into
battle and you will never be defeated.”**
- FARANJ Numquil?
Never?
- PETER Numquil vankorril.
“You will never be overcome.”
- FARANJ Nos ferrem chintrim.
We’ve got to find it.

- FIRUZ They'll find it.
- RIHAB Why are you so sure?
- PETER (CONTINUING) Nos fallit hinnig ashlin finnik. Dusht
Christus dafhob dassin ollim. Sancty Andrem.
**We dig with our hands. We will find it. The Lord
Christus showed me. St.Andrew.**
- FIRUZ So do you believe him?
- RIHAB (FLAT. DOES SHE?) Of course. You?
- FIRUZ He will find something.
- RIHAB Not the lance?
- FIRUZ Difficult. The Emperor in Constantinople already
possesses it.
- RIHAB Yet you know he'll find something?
- FIRUZ He's had a vision. And Nazara visions never lie.
- FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) He did a good job. He lets the people
tear up the stones, the bodies – they work in shifts,
no-one's strong enough to work for long. A day's work
and they find nothing. It's going to plan.
He sees me watching. He watches me watch him. I
watch him drop into the hole, do one of those prayers –
- PETER (UNDERNEATH) Dinnim nostar Sancty Christus.
Prendem nink sancty palmim.
- RIHAB (TRANSLATING) Give us the lance of Holy Christus.
Bring strength to the holy pilgrims.
- FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD, CONTINUING) He digs with his bare
hands. Mud everywhere, like a dog. That's how he
does it. All the mud flying and he slips it down his
sleeve and into the mess and then he shouts

- PETER ("FINDING" IT) Sancty Dish Christus.
Holy Lord Christus!
- FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) He's done a nice job on it. Mashed the edges. Worked up the rust. It doesn't look a thousand years old but then it wouldn't.
He knows I'm watching.
- PETER (ACCENTED) You, you armour-maker.
- FIRUZ (SURPRISED) Me?
- PETER This spear. Yes? Old?
- FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) You'll make the same mistake. It looks like tricks. Except they turn conjuring into miracles and miracles into victory. When you believe, anything new becomes the work of God. And that's all they need. He told me:
- PETER (REPRISE, FROM EP1) I'm on my way to Jerusalem. We're going to take it back.
- FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) And when you believe God is taking you there, you wait for God to show the way. And you'll never guess where it'll come. Just wait.
- PETER This spear. Roman?
- FIRUZ Could be.
- PETER (TO EVERYONE) Sancty Hallank! Num Sancty Andrem dishtim.
The Holy Lance! As St.Andrew promised.
- RIHAB He says it's the Holy Lance.
- FARANJ (ECSTATIC AND SHOCKED AND WONDROUS)
Hallank Deus. **The Lance of God.**
Deus amam ti nos. **God is with us.**

Christus prem nikkelim. **Jesus brings us** victory.
 Signil bellem. **It's a sign.**

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The priest kisses it. Everyone else drops to their knees. It's what they do. They're ready. They believe. They're ready for the fight. Every walking man is marching out – no horses. Their knights fight on foot now. They rush across the bridge and surprise Karbuqa's pickets. They're easily pushed out of the way. They take up positions on the plain. We watch from the walls. Why doesn't Sultan Karbuqa attack?

RIHAB He wants them all in a single bite. Finish it today.

FIRUZ (NO!) Attack them before they're ready.

RIHAB He'll come.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) His soldiers wait to do what they're told. When they're told nothing, they attempt an attack. The Faranj, carrying that fragment of spear, are brutal, a strength they didn't know they possessed. The Holy Lance fills their stomachs and it swings their arms, it sharpens the battle-axes that hack through. Karbuqa's army is running, it's gone. They're running away from a few thousand starving men carrying a scrap of rust.

NOW THE FARANJ ARE SINGING AND REJOICING AND EATING AS THEY COME BACK INTO THE CITY.

CAPTION Ibn al-Qalanisi: "The Lords of the swift-paced steeds were put to flight and the sword was unsheathed upon the footsoldiers who were vehement in their desire to strike a blow for the protection of the Muslims. This befell in the month of Rajab 491."

THE FARANJ ARE MUCH LOUDER

THE STITCH How could that happen?

FIRUZ (SURPRISED TO SEE HIM) Stitch?

THE STITCH Half-dead, three-quarters starved. No horses. Outnumbered. And they still win the field.

FIRUZ They believe in their Holy Lance.

THE STITCH Scrap from our pile.

FIRUZ You knew?

THE STITCH If they can do this, just because – they will destroy the whole world.

FIRUZ They only want Jerusalem.

THE STITCH We must warn them.

FIRUZ What?

THE STITCH They'll hear about this. But they won't believe it. We've seen it. We've got to tell them.

FIRUZ I'm not going anywhere near –

THE STITCH We're the people who know.

FIRUZ It's none of our business.

THE STITCH You took their gold. You made it your business.

OVER THIS:

CAPTION Ibn al-Qalanisi: "Thereafter, the Faranj proceeded towards Jerusalem and the people fled in panic from their abodes before them. At the end of Rajab in the year 492, after the ripening of the crops, they descended first on al-Ramla and captured it ."

SCENE 22. ROAD TO JERUSALEM.

AS THEY RIDE/WALK:

THE STITCH We've got a good head-start on them.

ANNA They might have sent riders on ahead. Anything.

FIRUZ They're taking the coast road, they need the supplies. We'll be there in less than three weeks.

RIHAB We could've stayed in Antioch. Started again.

THE STITCH Don't you feel any duty, to try and warn people?

RIHAB That doesn't mean anyone's going to listen to you.

ANNA Don't listen to her.

FIRUZ (TO RIHAB) We were there. I was in Nikaea, I was at Antioch.

RIHAB So was I.

FIRUZ It's....different.

RIHAB When I was still with Bohemond, they were saying that the Wazir of Jerusalem was offering a truce. The Faranj could visit any of their holy sites, unarmed.

THE STITCH They laughed, right?

RIHAB The Wazir doesn't want war.

FIRUZ (EXASPERATED) He's getting it, Rihab. That's the point. It's coming whether he wants it or not.

ANNA The Faranj have no more strength to fight.

THE STITCH They took Karbuqa's camp. His horses, his food, his gold.

RIHAB There were thousands of them when they set out.
Four times as many. They don't want to keep fighting.

FIRUZ The Faranj want it all. They don't make truces. How
can you when God tells you you must be the only one.
That everyone else is unclean.

RIHAB Everyone makes agreements in the end.

FIRUZ Once they've got Jerusalem. They won't not stop until
it is theirs.

ANNA And now we're riding straight into the storm.

THE STITCH (TO ANNA) What's left for us in Antioch?

RIHAB I don't see it, why should the Wazir listen to you?

FIRUZ He will. (QUIETLY DETERMINED) I'll make him. I
know how.

SMASH STRAIGHT INTO:

SCENE 23. JERUSALEM. THE VIZIER'S COURT. DAY

FIRUZ IS ALREADY BEING ROUGHLY MANHANDLED OUT OF THE
COURT, RIHAB ALONGSIDE:

FIRUZ (SHOUTING) You have to listen to us.

OFFICER Silence.

FIRUZ You're all in danger. They're coming this way.

OFFICER We know that.

RIHAB He's not dangerous.

ANNA (TO RIHAB) Leave it to them.

OFFICER Put your hands down. Please.

THE STITCH (TO FIRUZ) Let me, let me. (TO OFFICER) Allow us to address the Wazir.

FIRUZ We need to speak to him. Please.

OFFICER We know all about the Faranj. Tripoli has just made peace with them.

FIRUZ They're coming this way.

OFFICER The Lord Wazir has granted them passage, unarmed, to any shrine in the city.

FIRUZ They're not interested in that.

THE STITCH This is a holy struggle for them. They're not pilgrims.

FIRUZ They have to possess their holy city otherwise they've failed.

OFFICER I thought you said they were monsters?

FIRUZ I did.

OFFICER Then how can it be holy?

FIRUZ That's how they do it. They kill us, they get a reward from their god. Something to do with sins getting forgiven. Every time they go into battle, they kill or they get killed, and their burden is lifted. This gets them to heaven.

OFFICER They should be easy to fight if they don't mind dying.

THE STITCH That's the hardest enemy to fight. They'll do anything. They don't mind being outnumbered – they fight, they charge, they – it's terrifying.

OFFICER I'll tell the Vizier. I'll tell him exactly what you've said.

FIRUZ Can't we –

OFFICER Did you hear me?

THE STITCH You promise? You'll tell him?

OFFICER Of course. (HE DOESN'T MEAN IT)

CAPTION “From Arqa, the Faranj moved on to Jerusalem in the month of Sha’aban in the year 492. Having built a tower, they brought it forward to the wall. They fought all day, until the light faded. On the morrow, they attacked the city with increased vigour. They gained a footing on the and the defenders were driven down. The population was put to the sword.”

THE MASSACRE HAS BEGUN, THE FARANJ RAMPAGING THROUGH THE CITY, KILLING ANYONE AND EVERYONE. SCREAMS, CRYING, RUNNING, FLAMES.

ANNA, THE STITCH, FIRUZ AND RIHAB ARE RUNNING.

THE STITCH Down here.

FIRUZ (NO) This way.

THE STITCH That's the Syrian quarter. Down here. We'll find a cellar, something.

RIHAB Anna, hurry up.

THEY RUN ON.

AND THEN WE HEAR THE FOLLOWING:

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD, OVER THIS) Three Faranj footmen turn the corner. They're spattered in blood, eyes wide. One swings an axe, the other two watch. The blade takes Anna in the neck, just below the ear. (THE

STITCH: Anna!) Her head flips to one side and she slumps. We stop. It's Rihab who pulls us on.

RIHAB (UNDER THIS) Come on. Come on.

CAPTION "Some townsfolk fled to the sanctuary of David and were killed. The Jews assembled in the synagogue and the Faranj burned it over their heads."

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) We hammer on doors, we kick at cellar hatches. No-one is going to let us in. Everyone is locked-in, waiting to die.

FARANJ **You, over here.**

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The Faranj fighters stop in front of us. We don't move. Their leader points. His demand is Rihab.

FARANJ (ACCENTED) You, come.

THE FARANJ SNATCHES AT RIHAB

FIRUZ (STEPPING FORWARD) Let go of her.

THE STITCH Firuz!

FIRUZ Let go of that woman.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) Rihab surprises everyone when she pulls a dagger from her waistband and plunges it into his throat. In her last moment, she looks back at us. She's giving us time to run.

FIRUZ Quick! Stitch!

THEY RUN, WHILE THE FARANJ HACK RIHAB TO DEATH

CAPTION "In the Masjid al-Aqsa, the Faranj slaughtered imams and scholars. They stripped the Dome of the Rock."

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) It's a shrine, in the end – we find the tiniest alcove. There's a hanging. We try not to breathe.

WE CAN HEAR THEIR HUSHED BUT HIGH-TENSION BREATHING,
TRYING TO KEEP THEMSELVES QUIET

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) The Faranj fighting men kick open the door. They haven't come to pray. They rip the hangings from the walls, they're looking for gold, looking for a priest to show them where it's hidden. They move towards our hiding place. Which is when The Stitch jumps out. Stands in front of them. For a moment they're shocked – why would anyone do this?

THE STITCH (LOUD, ANGRY) Why are you here? Why are you in this city? Have you only come here to - ?

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) They cut him down. He knew they would. He wanted to distract them, to give me time to escape.

CAPTION "The Faranj destroyed shrines and the tomb of Abraham. The streets ran with blood, deeper than your feet."

FIRUZ What the Faranj didn't destroy, they stole. I didn't know what to try and save. I found this, this Qur'an. They didn't know it was precious.

CAPTION The Faranj stripped the Dome of the Rock and slaughtered many thousands, taking the women and children prisoner. This was the year 492 After Hijra, the year the Faranj know as 1099 after the birth of their Messiah.

FIRUZ (IN BAGHDAD) It wasn't just Muslims. It wasn't just the Hebrews. They killed everyone. It's what they do.

SCENE 24. BAGHDAD. THE CALIPH'S DIWAN. EARLY EVENING.

BACK TO WHERE WE WERE AT THE START:

CALIPH Why?

FIRUZ These men and women, they've marched half way across the world, defeated every enemy, eaten roots and eaten human flesh, they are – they will not be stopped now.

CALIPH Are they coming here?

FIRUZ That's exactly what I'm saying.

CALIPH What do we do?

FIRUZ They have something we do not. They have belief. We cannot defeat them unless we remember our own belief.

CALIPH I still don't understand. What do we do?

FIRUZ "What do we do?" (VERY SIMPLY:) We fight holy war until they are gone.

AND WITH THIS SIMPLE THOUGHT, SILENCE

AND

END OF EPISODE