

THE HERETIC

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A HARD RAIN FALLS UPON...

TEXT: ROME, 1521

EXT. VATICAN CITY - VIA DELLA POSTA - DUSK

A BOY MESSENGER runs the torch-lit Vatican streets as quickly as his legs can carry him.

He crosses the cobbled road, dashing through puddles. His labored panting does not slow him down.

INT. VILLA

We follow the messenger darting down a marbled hallway. The boy throws open a door, revealing CARDINAL UMBRETTO, a slim, spectacled man, sitting behind his document-covered desk. He does not even look up to acknowledge the boy.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Yes?

The boy hands him an envelope. The cardinal reviews the message.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)

Take this to Inquisitor Bernadonis
Vitalo at St. Angelo's. Have him
meet me at the Basilica.
Immediately.

The boy runs off, his feet patter down the long hall.

The cardinal takes a sullen breath, rising from his seat.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)

It is finally time.

He buttons his cassock, his scarlet red sash flows behind him as he walks down the hallway.

CARA GIACHETTA (30s) steps from one of the doors in her nightgown. She, as if carved from marble, is the epitome of Italian beauty. Umbretto passes her without so much as a glance.

CARA

What is happening?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Bad things. Go back to bed.

INT. PAPAL PALACE - DUSK

Cardinal Umbretto hurries through the ornate marble passage. Waiting for him is INQUISITOR VITALO. His sinewy forearms are the only flesh revealed from beneath his cowl.

Vitalo drops his hood, taking up Umbretto's pace. Vitalo's pale face is severe at first sight.

INQUISITOR VITALO

I can take care of this without
concerning the Pope. He would not
need to know.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

There is order here, Vitalo. And
we will give the appearance of
following it.

They draw towards the SOUND of a party.

The cardinal opens two large doors to reveal a vast--

DINING ROOM

The room is lined by a giant rectangular table where GUESTS chatter, MUSICIANS play and at the end of the table, Pope LEO X sits.

The Pope is an overweight man, engrossed in the entertainment and the adulation of his guests.

The cardinal discreetly takes the Pope's side.

POPE LEO

Umbretto. Can't you see I am
entertaining my guests?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Your Grace, I have news that
requires your attention.

The Pope ignores him, as SERVANTS place a gargantuan cake on the table. The Pope claps, signaling the next wave of entertainers.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)

(under his breath)

Four more churches have been burned
to the ground. The priests... all
dead.

The Pope's disposition quickly changes.

ANTECHAMBER

Pope Leo reads the message by the light of a fireplace. A leaflet attached is titled "95 Theses". He crushes the papers, throwing them into the fire.

POPE LEO

I thought this was just a drunk German who would change his mind after he sobered up.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

It has escalated. These so called Lutherans... they defy us.

POPE LEO

Our money? Have we been able to collect?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

The congregations dwindle every day, afraid to enter our churches. The sales of indulgences have all but stopped.

The Pope paces. He looks at Vitalo.

POPE LEO

You've brought your long arm with you, Umbretto. How suggestive. I suppose you'd like to have this monk dragged here from Germany to have him scourged in our dungeons?

INQUISITOR VITALO

Make it so, your Holiness, and I will personally attend to his inquiry.

POPE LEO

That only gives the German people more reason to despise us. It cannot be my face that manufactures a martyr.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Nor do we have any designs in making one.

The Pope makes his way to the door.

POPE LEO

Good. I leave this mess to you,
Umbretto. I expect success in
cleaning this matter. Failure...
will not please God.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

I understand.

The Pope returns to his party.

Umbretto looks out a window. Rain falls down on the Vatican,
cleaning the tiled spires under spotted moonlight.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)

This requires delicacy. The path
must be cleared of this German
Lunatic for a righteous papacy.

Cardinal Umbretto raises his eyebrow, waiting for Vitalo to
continue.

INQUISITOR VITALO

I know an inquisitor from my time
in Spain. He was once my protege.

Cardinal Umbretto draws a deep, contemplative breath.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

He must be discreet.

INQUISITOR VITALO

There is no one who can match his
skills for this sort of task.

Umbretto opens the window. A humid air wafts in along with
the thrum of rain.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Will he come? This...

INQUISITOR VITALO

His name is Arturo Sarmiento.

Vitalo reaches out, washing his calloused hands in the rain.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

I was his confessor. He will come.
I promise.

We follow the--

HARD RAIN INTO THE SKY...

DISSOLVING TO...

...rain shrouding a brown, muddied land along the sea.

TEXT: GRANADA, SPAIN

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

A muddied battlefield is littered with BODIES, the GROANING and the MAIMED. MOORISH SOLDIERS slide as they fight with stumbling SPANIARD FOOTMEN; they are tired. Some retreat, others continue their wearied battle.

A WEAK MOOR rests against a low wall catching his breath. The shadow of a man crawls over him. The Moor notices, but takes no action. Instead he cries.

SARMIENTO (O.S.)
Pick up your sword.

The Moor loosely grabs his sword. The act is just formality.

ARTURO Sarmiento (late 30s), clad in an open tattered priest's habit, boiled leather armor beneath, pistols hanging inside like the ribs of a beast. Dark hair highlights the rings around his desperate eyes.

With merciless resolve, Sarmiento drives the sword through the soldier and into the ground. Sarmiento searches the landscape for the next victim.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
(under his breath)
Forgive me, soldier.

A whistle chortles, Sarmiento finds his protege, PINTADO, alerting him. Sarmiento pulls his sword from the corpse, TWO ARMORED SOLDIERS bravely run at him.

Pintado and Sarmiento run side by side over the uneven earth, splitting up as Pintado takes on another fight.

Pintado is wily young warrior, shoulder slung with a long rifle, sword in hand.

Sarmiento launches overtop a nearby wall, disappearing.

The two soldiers blindly hurtle the wall, and have just enough time to see the smoke rising from Sarmiento's trained pistols--

BAM! BAM! They hit the ground, skidding to a halt.

An arrow darts into Sarmiento's side. Sarmiento plucks it from his robe without so much as a wince. He traces the arrow to--

TWO MOORISH ARCHERS peeking around a bluff recognize him and run for it.

Chasing them like a greyhound, Sarmiento preps one of his matchlock pistols with a burning wick.

Sarmiento muzzles the matchlock from the wind... and tags an archer in the leg. As Sarmiento runs past the limp soldier.

Pintado runs atop a outlying ridge, finishing the limping soldier with a long shot from his rifle.

The other soldier continues to run, screaming a warning to his comrades:

MOORISH SOLDIER
(in Arabic)
The Mace! The Mace!

The soldier is quieted by a shot through the neck.

Sarmiento lies the man down, taking a dagger from the soldier's sheath.

SARMIENTO
Go easy. Please.

Sarmiento steadies the bloodied soldier like a mother would a child, sliding the knife between his collar bones.

The soldier becomes still. Sarmiento closes the man's eyes.

A Moorish king, NASIR, steps into view of Sarmiento, drawing his sword. The king's ENTOURAGE stands back.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
I will make my request again.
Leave this place. These monks want
nothing other than peace.

KING NASIR
You have claimed what is not yours.
For seven hundred years this land
prospered under our rule. This
land shall return to the Muslims,
if it is Allah's will.

SARMIENTO
My God is not willing.

KING NASIR
We have the same God, Christian.

SARMIENTO
Then your God is not willing
either.

The king strikes at him with precision. Sarmiento barely catches up to the blow to block it, cutting his hand.

Sarmiento, respecting Nasir's ability, steps back. The king levies a battery of strikes with incredible speed. Sarmiento counters ineffectively. PRINCE NASIR (Mid 20s) steps from the gathering crowd to intervene in the fight.

PRINCE NASIR
We have lost too many today,
father. Must we lose you, too?
End this battle.

KING NASIR
Let your orders be heeded when I am
dead.

The prince, shamed by his father's words, steps back. The king turns back to Sarmiento.

KING NASIR (cont'd)
I apologize.

Sarmiento nods, never letting his guard down. The king nods back, then launches at Sarmiento.

He knocks Sarmiento off balance, removing Sarmiento's sword. Sarmiento unexpectedly slips down an muddy incline, giving Nasir the higher ground.

The king lunges at him, but Sarmiento takes advantage of his lowered position, driving his now unsheathed dagger into the king's ribs.

The king slides face down in the mud, pushed by the momentum of his final attack. Sarmiento crawls to him and turns him over. He cleans Nasir's surprised face. The prince runs to his father.

SARMIENTO
Let your men save you. Do not let
this happen to your son.

Nasir feels his wound.

KING NASIR

This was my statement to my people.
I am to die here, fighting my
father's war.

The King aggressively wrangles the prince in close, peeling his eyes from Sarmiento long enough to say...

KING NASIR (cont'd)

(to prince)

Do not die in the mud, at the hands
of thieves.

He mouths a few more words, then fades. The boy cries. Sarmiento begins to pray over Nasir's body.

PRINCE NASIR

What are you doing?

SARMIENTO

Praying for your father.

PRINCE NASIR

Which way is East?

Sarmiento points the direction. The prince turns, grabbing Sarmiento shoulder, indicating for him to turn East as well.

PRINCE NASIR (cont'd)

Then pray in that direction, so it
may aid his passage to heaven.

The prince bows down and weeps. From over a wall vaults PINTADO, drawing his sword to attack the prince, when Sarmiento stops him.

Pintado, confused and angered by the break in battle, reluctantly heeds Sarmiento's command.

The prince rises, looking down on Sarmiento.

PRINCE NASIR (cont'd)

I must take my father back so he
may be buried properly. But my
people... they will want this
avenged.

SARMIENTO

I will expect to see more of your
people then.

The prince signals the entourage. They lift the king's body from the mud, and leave quietly. Pintado comes over to Sarmiento.

PINTADO

What was that? You let them leave?
I could have finished him off.

SARMIENTO

Your questions take the tone of
impudence. We are done for today.

PINTADO

And what of tomorrow? If it does
not stop? As it didn't stop the
day before?

The muddled Sarmiento rises from the ground and walks away.

SARMIENTO

Pray that it ends.

PINTADO

Don't be naive, Sarmiento. You
speak like a man who doesn't have
blood on his hands.

SARMIENTO

I speak like a man who has seen
enough blood to fill an ocean.

EXT. CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY - DAY

The rain continues to pour down on Sarmiento as he walks towards the walled monastery's gates. The high monastery walls reveal the age.

His head slightly hung, too proud to trudge, too tired to walk tall. Pintado walks behind him, staring with a low brow at Sarmiento's back.

Sarmiento looks at his hands... caked with soil and blood.

SARMIENTO

(praying to himself)

Dear Lord. Forgive me for what I
have done.

Pintado walks past Sarmiento.

PINTADO

Open the gates.

From atop the monastery wall, a SENTRY sees the men approaching. A moment later the gates open.

EXT. MONASTERY COURTYARD

Rain pours down into the walled village. The monastery is rustic and worn. Muddied paths wind around patchwork hovels, which all surround the Spanish church in the center.

Sarmiento and Pintado walk into the village, parting ways.

Sarmiento's son, IGNACIUS (5) plays in the rain with BROTHER BATIZ, a short, gentle barefoot monk. They stomp through the water playfully.

Sarmiento spots Ignacius playing. Watching for a moment, he releases a long breath, focusing on his son's joy.

Ignacius spots the tired Sarmiento walking into town, breaking out into a run towards him.

Ignacius throws his arms around Sarmiento. Sarmiento envelops the boy in his arms.

IGNACIUS

Papi.

The boy doesn't care that his father is covered in the grime of the battlefield. Sarmiento, however, does notice the uncleanliness of his hands.

SARMIENTO

Go clean yourself before supper.

Ignacius complies innocently, running away, splashing through puddles as he runs indoors.

Brother Batiz walks over to Sarmiento, taking his sword and satchel from his shoulders.

Brother Batiz notices a wound on his back, stopping Sarmiento in his walk to dab the wound with some of his Chartreuse.

Sarmiento snaps out of his trance, grabbing a missalette and pencil. He flips through to a clean page.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

(trying to see the wound)

How long?

Brother Batiz measures the wound from the arrow with his finger, indicating it's length to Sarmiento.

Sarmiento writes an entry about the wound as Brother Batiz dabs the cut.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Six men today, brother. It was my
hand that stilled them.

Sarmiento closes the missalette, continues walking.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
And I can barely remember their
faces.

INT. REFECTORY - EVENING

The monks congregate to eat their rustic supper under candle light. The silence is broken by the muted contact of wood utensils.

Ignacius sits across from Sarmiento at the end of a table, eating quietly.

Sarmiento watches his son eat, motionless, hands lying on the table.

Ignacius puts his spoon down, tracing his small finger along a old scar on his father's hand.

IGNACIUS
Did this hurt?

SARMIENTO
Sometimes, my son, it is best not
to remember.

Sarmiento pulls his hand away, picking up his spoon, Ignacius, copying his father, does the same, continuing his meal.

Sarmiento watches Ignacius contemplatively before he begins to eat.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - MORNING

Sarmiento and Pintado silently stalk through a thicket, paralleling a battle between Moors and Spaniards in the muddied fields below. The humidity hangs in the air, Sarmiento and Pintado drip with sweat.

PINTADO

There he is.

Pintado crouches down, pointing beyond the battle.

In the distance, A MOORISH GENERAL watches on from the rear of his CAVALRY.

Sarmiento squints, trying to make out Pintado's query. Pintado sees Sarmiento struggling to see the target.

PINTADO (cont'd)

Is it that you don't want to fight anymore? Or is it that you cannot see what you're fighting?

SARMIENTO

I am looking to end a fight.

Sarmiento grits his teeth, shaking his head slightly as he continues to move through the thicket.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

To take the first available shot may not always be the best one.

INT. MONASTERY - MORNING

Brother Batiz looks out his window, to see a PLATOON of SWISS GUARD entering the monastery grounds.

BATTLEFIELD

Sarmiento guides the impatient Pintado through the thicket.

SARMIENTO

His weakness may not be evident if you take him on from the obvious angle, where he may move or run...

MONASTERY

Brother Batiz sees one of the SOLDIERS pulling a child out from a doorway. The Swiss guard entering all the buildings, kicking up a commotion. They are taking all the children.

BATTLEFIELD

Sarmiento and Pintado crawl on their bellies, under a row of felled trees, through the mud. Pintado is clearly unhappy with getting filthy, where Sarmiento thinks nothing of it.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Or worse, attack, only to have your
defense lowered for him to return
the favor with dire consequence.

MONASTERY

Brother Batiz runs frantically down a corridor, throwing open
a door. Ignacius rises from his bed.

BATTLEFIELD

Sarmiento and Pintado crawl a short distance further, rising
to a crouch, moving silently behind a pile of rocks.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Better to strike from where he does
not suspect he is vulnerable.

Sarmiento peeks his head over the outcrop, pointing at a
superiour angle on the Moorish General.

MONASTERY

A SWISS GUARSMAN throws open the door, to find Brother Batiz
pulling Ignacius behind him.

BATTLEFIELD

Pintado unslings his rifle, readying the powder and balast
quickly so he can take aim.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
It's where your opponent doesn't
expect to be hit that you end a
fight before it ever starts.

MONASTERY

Brother Batiz is tossed to the ground with a punch, the guard
lurches towards Ignacius. Right before he grabs the boy--

BATTLEFIELD

BOOM! Pintado takes the shot. Pintado grins from ear to
ear.

Sarmiento's face becomes long and still, watching young
Pintado revel in his handiwork. Without taking a look at
Pintado's results, Sarmiento wades back into the mud, under
the felled trees.

EXT. MONASTERY COURTYARD - DAY

Sarmiento walks in to find PEASANT FAMILIES moaning in agony. He quickens his step to find Brother Batiz slumped on a bench, bruised, beaten, with blood running from his nose.

Brother Batiz makes eye contact with Sarmiento. Sarmiento sees the tears welling up in the monks eyes.

SARMIENTO

Ignacius!

The ABBOT of the Monastery comes out, only to have Sarmiento shoves him aside as he runs into the--

INT. CORRIDOR

Sarmiento dashes down the hallway, throwing open the door to his--

DORMITORY

The modest room has been tossed. Ignacius is nowhere to be found. The abbot comes to the doorway.

ABBOT

They took all the childre--

Sarmiento grabs the abbot, forcing him against the door.

SARMIENTO

Who?

Brother Batiz tries to pull Sarmiento from the Abbot.

ABBOT

The Swiss Guard, I tried to stop them but it was ordered by the High Inquisitor of Rome.

Sarmiento's grip slackens, releasing the abbot.

SARMIENTO

Rome?

ABBOT

Yes, to Rome is where they said they were going.

Sarmiento grabs a sack, putting some items inside. Pulling a heavy case from below a bed, Sarmiento reveals gun powder, a set of fine pistols, a sack of ballasts. He takes a SIMPLE WOOD CRUCIFIX from Ignacius' bedpost, hanging it around his neck.

Brother Batiz pulls a sack out from below his bed, packing an extra robe, and some corked Chartreuse.

SARMIENTO

This is not your fight.

Brother Batiz swigs his open bottle, corking it and placing it in the sack. His face a near scowl, he nods to Sarmiento.

Sarmiento pats Brother Batiz on the back, more to reassure himself than the monk.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

To Rome then, brother. I know a man there who may help me.

EXT. CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY - DAY

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz prepare their horses for travel, when Pintado walks over to Sarmiento, pressed to speak to him.

PINTADO

What is this I hear from the abbot?
You are off to Rome without me?
This monk sacrificed nothing, and
yet he rides with you? Was it not
I who fought on those battlefields
along your side?

SARMIENTO

Consider the risk if someone does
not stay here to protect the
monastery. You must await the
Spanish reinforcements.

PINTADO

You are not the only important
person here, Sarmiento.

SARMIENTO

I need you here, my friend. What
is important is that I am doing
what is needed. I served Spain
when I was asked, I fought here,
with you, because I was asked.

(MORE)

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
You should do what is asked of you,
and not concern yourself with what
you deserve.

PINTADO
I have toiled here just the same as
you. But you keep me from the
honor of going to Rome.

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz mount their horses.

SARMIENTO
I do not want this "honor" that has
been given to me, my friend. Nor
should you.

Sarmiento rides off. Brother Batiz follows. Pintado is left
hanging on Sarmiento's last words. Sarmiento's jaw is
clinched tightly.

MONTAGE

-through the EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE over the Spanish mountains.
They ride on cobbled roads, dirt paths; through brush and
Spanish sand.

-they wait out a hard rain under trees.

-Sarmiento fixates on a GROUP OF CHILDREN who play along the
road as they ride past.

-the ride through fields where PEASANTS farm.

-at night, Brother Batiz and Sarmiento sit away from a
PILGRIMAGE'S camp fire, keeping to themselves.

EXT. EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE - VILLAGE - DAY

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz enter a village under gloomy
skies. The muddied streets are motionless, the buildings
dormant, the sounds of life missing.

They ride past a YOUNG PEASANT GIRL sitting slouched at her
doorway.

Sarmiento dismounts and kneels next to her, lifting her head
to find black boils dotting her neck. He signals to Brother
Batiz to stay on his horse. They cover their mouths and
noses.

SARMIENTO
 (showing the boils to
 Brother Batiz)
 Black death. Continue. I will
 meet you at the east gate.

Brother Batiz rides on. Sarmiento looks into the girl's eyes. She is in a groggy, zombified state.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 Where is everyone?

Her lips move slowly, trying to speak, but no words come out.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 Your family?

YOUNG GIRL
 Forty days--

She gags on her saliva. Sarmiento pushes the door behind her open, taking a look inside.

INT. SMALL HOME

The opened door illuminates a BODY, ripe from decomposition, open sores long since dried. The only sign of life: flies festering near her dead eyes.

Sarmiento takes out his benedictional and invokes a short prayer.

SARMIENTO
 Forty days quarantine.

Sarmiento tries to pick the girl up to move her, but she struggles to stay put.

YOUNG GIRL
 M--
 (coughs)
 Mother...

Sarmiento says nothing. She touches his robe and gathers energy to say something.

YOUNG GIRL (cont'd)
 God does not answer my prayers.

SARMIENTO

I have been in His service all my
life, and He has not answered my
prayers, either.

Sarmiento tries to leave, but she holds his robe tight,
keeping him from rising. She locks her gaze on the pistols
beneath his robe.

Sarmiento pries at her fingers, but she channels all her
strength into her grip. She stares into his eyes, then
suggestively looks back at his pistols.

He continues to try to remove her hand.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

(almost begging the child)

No. Please, no.

EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE

Brother Batiz waits outside the village, standing next to his
horse. Ankle-deep in mud, he mucks over to a patch of grass
to wipe his feet.

The SOUND of a pistol blast startles Brother Batiz and his
horse. After a moment, a stone-faced Sarmiento rides out of
the village gate.

SARMIENTO

No more stops. The righteous be
damned.

Sarmiento rides past Brother Batiz, who mounts his steed to
follow.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROME - DAY

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz ride into Rome. They marvel at
the rising, bustling Renaissance city.

VATICAN CITY

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS scale the scaffolding in the distance;
marble stones are pulleyed upwards, as if in orbit around the
monumental structure being built: the Basilica of St.
Peter's.

INT. APOSTOLIC LIBRARY

Sarmiento sits on a bench alone. He looks small amongst large tapestries, columns, and sculptures that fill the immense marbled space.

Cara, carrying her workload, emerges from a doorway, and sees Sarmiento. She squints as she looks over his rough exterior. Her dark hair blends seamlessly with the dark corners of the library, as if she were painted into the room.

CARA

You're not from here.

When she notices his scarred hands, he self consciously hides them in his robe.

SARMIENTO

I am unclean from my travel. I apologize.

CARA

Who are you here to see?

SARMIENTO

I am looking for Inquisitor Bernadonis Vitalo.

CARA

(nodding knowingly)

I see. You were sent here so I could examine you. Cardinal Umbretto believes I have good judgement of character.

SARMIENTO

The Cardinal? I wasn't aware a line of judges awaited me.

CARA

The Vatican provides judgement liberally. I am Cara Giachetta, the literary censor for the Cardinal.

He rises from the bench, offering his hand. She feels his rough hands.

CARA (cont'd)

You are not here for academic reasons, I suppose.

Sarmiento pulls his hand away.

SARMIENTO

A woman working in the church.
Your position does not come without
it's favors... I suppose.

Cara, insulted, steps away from Sarmiento.

CARA

There is enough trouble looming
here as it is. If you've come to
create more, I'd advise you to
return to wherever you are from.

SARMIENTO

Where is Vitalo? I don't have time
to play games.

As she walks away...

CARA

Well, make time. You are in Rome,
the holy city.

FROM AN INTERIOR BALCONY...

Inquisitor Vitalo, Cardinal Umbretto and his RETINUE covertly
watch Cara walk away from Sarmiento.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Cara doesn't like him. A bad omen.
And he is smaller than I thought.
Underwhelming. I don't need a
defrocked priest chasing a monk.

INQUISITOR VITALO

Trust me. Leave him amongst the
literati long enough, and he'll
begin persecuting people out of
sheer frustration.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

So this is the famed "Mace of God".

Umbretto signals Vitalo, who points to one of Swiss pikeman,
ARMANNO (20s). His young eyes are eager to please.

INQUISITOR VITALO

(to Armanno)

How many years in service?

ARMANNO
Three, sir.

INQUISITOR VITALO
And in that time, did they not
teach you to bar transients?

Vitalo ticks his head towards Sarmiento, the "transient".

ARMANNO
I will see to it.

Armanno leaves to inquire.

INQUISITOR VITALO
Watch what this underwhelming man
can do.

ON THE FLOOR BELOW...

Sarmiento, seated impatiently, is approached by Armanno.

ARMANNO
What business brings you here?

Sarmiento doesn't respond as he barely peeks up at the
pikesman.

SARMIENTO
I await an audience, nothing more.

Armanno notices he's carrying a sword, and defensively wields
his weapon.

ARMANNO
You are the Pope's presence, disarm
yourself.

Sarmiento rises, removes his sword and raises his hand. When
Armanno sees the battery of pistols and knives in his robe,
he shoves Sarmiento against the wall.

SARMIENTO
I am here to see Inquisitor
Bernadonis Vitalo--

ARMANNO
Silence!

Another GUARD joins the commotion. Armanno tries to pull the
pistols off Sarmiento.

SARMIENTO

They are slung on, you can't pull
them off--

Armanno belts Sarmiento on the back of the head with the pole. Sarmiento grits his teeth in anger, touching the new cut on his scalp.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

I don't think you'll want to try to
do that again.

ARMANNO

Shut your mouth, beggar.

Armanno shoves him again, but this time, Sarmiento presses himself off the wall, shoving back into him.

In one motion, Sarmiento grabs the pike, turning the weapon until Armanno can no longer hold it without breaking his wrists.

Before there's time to react, Sarmiento sweeps Armanno from his feet, poking the butt of the pike into his solar-plexus, knocking the wind from him.

The other guard charges Sarmiento, sword drawn. Sarmiento notices...

TWO MORE GUARDS running across the foyer.

SARMIENTO

(praying under his breath)
God, please, stay my hand...

Sarmiento backs up, batting away slices from the fervent guard.

The guard stabs wildly. Sarmiento uses the opportunity to grab his wrist, slamming him in the face.

Sarmiento disarms the guard, arm locking him, holding the sword to his neck. As Armanno rises, Sarmiento hits him in the chest again with the heel of his boot.

WATCHING ABOVE...

Cardinal Umbretto nods pensively.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

I've seen enough. He will do.
Stop him from spilling blood in
here. The marble will stain.

INQUISITOR VITALO
Of course. Shall I bring him to
you?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
I'll meet him at St. Angelo's.

Inquisitor Vitalo leaves.

ON THE LIBRARY FLOOR...

...the two other guards close on Sarmiento, who tosses the
restrained man at them. They catch him, turning back to
Sarmiento...

Only to find him pointing two pistols at their heads.

SARMIENTO
God wasn't listening to my prayer.
Perhaps you will. Where...
(pulling the hammers back)
Is Inquisitor Vitalo?

INQUISITOR VITALO
You can't help your nature, can you
Sarmiento.
(to the guards)
Stand down.

The guards do not listen. Vitalo smacks the hand of one of
the guards.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)
Lower those before you get yourself
killed. This Spaniard is a guest
of mine.

Sarmiento kneels before Vitalo, kissing his hand. Vitalo
taps him to rise, and gives Sarmiento a hug.

SARMIENTO
Brother Vitalo. I am glad to see
you.

Armanno slowly rises, giving a dirty side glance to Vitalo as
the two men walk past him.

INQUISITOR VITALO
Divine providence delivers us
another union. I am surprised to
find you in Rome.
(MORE)

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)
Last I heard, you were protecting
monks from an invasion? From
soldier to priest to soldier again.

SARMIENTO
Yes... I apologize again, brother,
for leaving your side.

INQUISITOR VITALO
No, no matter. You penance
continues to play out, accordingly.
But I am glad to see you
nevertheless. What brings you
here?

Sarmiento bites his lips, trying to find the words.

SARMIENTO
The monastery was raided by the
Swiss Guard, in the name of the
inquisition. The children were
taken. I don't know why.

INQUISITOR VITALO
Spain is still awash in moorish
bastards, is it not?

Sarmiento nods soberly.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)
Yes, they are here in Rome.

SARMIENTO
There was a boy amongst them,
Ignacius. Can you help me get him
back?

INQUISITOR VITALO
You came all the way from your war
in Spain for this? What difference
does the boy make to you?

SARMIENTO
He was my servant boy.

INQUISITOR VITALO
Indeed. Those children are fine,
Sarmiento, I assure you, nothing
has been done to them. But I have
no sway over this. If I were to
release the boy, it would only
raise the suspicions of the other
inquisitors.

(MORE)

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)
And you know as well as I the
dangers of a suspicious inquisitor.

Vitalo rubs his chin, thinking. Sarmiento watches him with
intently.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)
There is recourse. Cardinal
Umbretto can rectify your dilemma
with the stroke of a pen. I
believe I can arrange a meeting.

SARMIENTO
Thank you brother. You are a
blessing upon this boy.

Vitalo stops Sarmiento.

INQUISITOR VITALO
Play the innocent with the
Cardinal, I invite you to. But do
not play me for the fool.

SARMIENTO
Brother, you are many things, but
you are no fool.

Vitalo continues walking.

INQUISITOR VITALO
And of those things, I am still
your confessor. Meeting the
Cardinal will remind you what
sacrifice looks like.

INT. VILLA - DAY

Cara freshens herself in a bowl of water held by a SERVANT,
when the Cardinal comes in to see her.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
How goes your work, my dear?

CARA
Aren't you going to ask me if I met
the stranger in the library?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
Brisk tonight. No pleasantries?

CARA
If your dog Vitalo summoned that
man, he will come to no good.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
Do not worry about Vitalo's
dealings. A hard cleaning is
needed for the worst stains. That
is what he is good for.

Cara sifting through some papers, pulling out...

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)
(reading the title)
The ninety-five Theses. Yes, I
know of it. Recommend it as
heretical and move on.

CARA
It is why that brute is here.

The Cardinal crushes the paper, throwing it to the floor.

CARA (cont'd)
Nothing stays secret in the
Vatican. You are making a mistake
if you intend to kill your way out
of the problems in Germany--

The Cardinal snaps a slap across Cara's face. The servant
tenses.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
Read your books and live plushly.
I keep the walls standing in the
Vatican. I govern Vitalo, and he
will govern his. Do not concern
yourself with what happens outside
of how you wash and what counsel
you keep.

The Cardinal whisks his hand through the servant's bowl.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)
You could easily be in a nunnery.
I hear she who is not first in line
for the bowl is never clean.

Cara turns her head away from Umbretto, hiding her contempt.
He gently caresses her back.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)
I am off to make the kind of
decisions that keep you out of that
line. Don't wait up for me.

After he leaves, Cara dismisses her servant. She pulls on her boots.

EXT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS - DAY

A carriage runs into the thick walled, intimidating fortress that straddles the Tiber river.

INT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS

Vitalo casually steps down the deep, torch-lined stairwell, Sarmiento following behind.

The sound of rope straining, shackles clanking, the moans of those begging to die echo throughout the--

DUNGEON

The wrought iron bars reflect a hellish orange from the torches. Sarmiento follows behind, looking at the beaten and emaciated PRISONERS behind the bars.

The prisoners are from all walks of life: Romans, Jews, Saxons and Moors... all have crossed the church, all have been condemned.

Vitalo and Sarmiento stop at the last cell.

Inside, a few CHILDREN, passed out or cowering in the corners, keep away from Cardinal Umbretto.

INQUISITOR VITALO
May I present the Cardinal.

The Cardinal puts his hands through the bars. Sarmiento kisses his ring, all the while searching the small faces for Ignacius.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
These children, Vitalo... this is barbaric. Give them food once a day, at the least.
(to Sarmiento)
They are too young to understand their guilt. You know this better than I, as this was once your trade.

SARMIENTO
Where is Ignacius?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

I am not a cruel man, Sarmiento. I derive no pleasure from hurting children. But when the Lord's work is stifled, I must put my leniencies aside to do what is right. Which is why you are here. To make things right.

INQUISITOR VITALO

The boy, he is about four?

SARMIENTO

Five.

INQUISITOR VITALO

Born when you were in the Order. And you left shortly thereafter. Tell me... the boy's skin is more olive than a typical Spaniard. The bastard son of a Moor. Five years old. Left in the care of the most reckless man I have ever known. How did this come to pass?

Sarmiento averts the Cardinal's stare, looking at Vitalo instead.

SARMIENTO

Get on with it.

INQUISITOR VITALO

You know your offense. A blasphemy such as yours has a heavy penalty. You have defiled your service as a priest, as a Catholic, as a Spaniard--

Umbretto raises his hand, cutting off Vitalo's driving accusations.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

"The Mace of God."

SARMIENTO

A taunt the Moors gave me.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

A badge of your boldness, no doubt. But you do not have the courage to admit the boy is your son.

Sarmiento says nothing.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)
 No matter. He is innocent of our
 messes. But there must be a
 penance for this crime against God.
 Will you pay? Or would you rather
 the boy pay?

Sarmiento' eyes well up with tears, but his face remains
 stoic.

SARMIENTO
 (quietly)
 Where is he?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
 Would you believe me if I said I
 understand your plight? I am human
 enough to imagine the weight of
 your pain. It eats you. You are
 tired?

SARMIENTO
 Yes.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
 Of the struggle.

SARMIENTO
 Yes.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
 Why did you not run? So no one
 could find you or the boy? Why
 fight?

SARMIENTO
 (searches for words)
 My whole life I have sought
 salvation, a sign... I fear if I do
 not fight, He will not answer my
 prayers.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
 Let me answer then, and ease your
 worries.

FROM THE SPIRAL STAIRWELL...

Cara covertly listens to the meeting. A PORTLY GUARD walks
 up behind her, grabbing her arm.

PORTLY GUARD
 What are you doing without escort?

He tries to pull her, but she yanks her arm away angrily.

CARA

Unhand me. You don't know who
keeps me.

The guard is unsure who has the upper-hand now.

CARA (cont'd)

Unless you want to hang for
touching me, you would be wise not
to mention your name.

She turns back to listen.

CARA (cont'd)

You are my escort. Now, quiet
yourself. And mention nothing of
my presence to anyone. Or else.

The portly guard is speechless, taking her side, as ordered.

IN THE DUNGEON...

The Cardinal produces a writ.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

This bull absolves you and any of
your offspring of any wrong doing.
Ignacius will be baptized here, and
you will both be free to go.

Sarmiento suspiciously eyes both the men.

SARMIENTO

I thought the Pope was the only one
who could dictate bulls...

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

The honor of papacy is...
temporary, at best. But you are
assured this will be ratified by
the standing Pope when the time is
right.

SARMIENTO

And the price...

INQUISITOR VITALO

There is a curse upon Germany,
Sarmiento. Have you ever heard of
the monk Martin Luther?

SARMIENTO

No.

Cardinal Umbretto gently pats a CHILD as he exits the cell.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Good. Vitalo will give you the details. But know your prayer has been answered, Sarmiento. On this fateful day, I have truly made you the Mace of God.

The cardinal comes over to him, making the sign of the cross over his head.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)

May the Lord be with you on this mission. Much depends on it.

The cardinal offers his ring to Sarmiento...

Sarmiento snatches his hand pulling the cardinal close. Vitalo pulls a knife on Sarmiento, leveling it with lightening speed under his throat.

But Sarmiento doesn't care. Nor does the Cardinal as he smiles off Sarmiento's threat.

SARMIENTO

(restrained)

The boy. Not one lash. Not one torment by anyone--

INQUISITOR VITALO

Release him, or I will sever you--

Vitalo cuts into Sarmiento's skin, pressing him tensely. But Sarmiento doesn't budge.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

The boy will be treated as if he were my own son. You have my word.

Umbretto nods to Vitalo, who reluctantly withdraws his blade.

Sarmiento releases the Cardinal, finally kissing his ring.

As the Cardinal exits. He thinks he sees Cara. But when he passes where Cara was spying, she is no longer there.

Vitalo sheaths his knife, stepping away from Sarmiento, shaking his head.

INQUISITOR VITALO

You are not here for your boy any longer, Sarmiento. You are here for the church. Keep that in mind and all will be delivered as promised.

SARMIENTO

Then let me deliver. What is this Luther's offense?

INQUISITOR VITALO

His followers burn our churches, terrorize our faithful. He has scoffed at all advances to recant his blasphemies. He seeks to destroy the church in Germany.

SARMIENTO

You brought me here for this. A monk. Why not send the Swiss Guard to arrest him?

INQUISITOR VITALO

We are not starting a war. We are hunting a drunk, a loudmouth. Tell me if this will be too difficult for you--

SARMIENTO

Where is he?

INQUISITOR VITALO

He is set to stand trial at Worms before Emperor Charles.

SARMIENTO

What does he look like?

INQUISITOR VITALO

Probably like every other drunken monk, portly and weak. Finding him might be difficult, but this task will be easy in comparison the war you've been waging. The church does not want him airing his rhetoric in front of the Holy Roman Emperor. Of paramount importance: He must not attend that trial.

SARMIENTO

He won't. Now. Where is Ignacius?

Vitalo signals GUARDS at the end of the hall, who bring Ignacius out from another passage.

Sarmiento walks over to the boy, falling to his knees.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Forgive me, Ignacius. For all I
have done to you.

Ignacius hugs his head innocently.

Sarmiento holds Ignacius by the shoulders, the boy's small frame fills his hands.

IGNACIUS
I am sorry. I will clean up
better, I promise.

SARMIENTO
No, no. You did well. This is not
your fault. It is mine.

IGNACIUS
Will you leave me again?

SARMIENTO
Only for a short while.

Sarmiento pulls from under his robe the SIMPLE WOOD CRUCIFIX hung around his neck. He hangs it around Ignacius' small neck.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
I will come for you. I promise.
This will soon be over.

Vitalo places his hand on Sarmiento's shoulder, the guards flank the boy.

INQUISITOR VITALO
So I can count on you?

Sarmiento stares at Ignacius one last time.

INT. GUEST QUARTERS - MORNING

SARMIENTO (V.O.)
Consider the monk dead.

Brother Batiz rises from his sleep to find Sarmiento writing in his missalette. He counts his recent scars, cataloging them in the blank pages of his book.

His cleaned pistols are displayed on a table, his sword and knife have been oiled, and his armor has been stitched.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

I have been asked by the church to murder Martin Luther, a German heretic. I understand if you do not want to join me from here on out. This... is not what I expected.

Brother Batiz places his hand on Sarmiento's shoulder as a sign of solidarity.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

Pray for my soul, brother.

CARA (O.S.)

I have heard of your purpose here.

Brother Batiz snaps around to find Cara standing at their door. Sarmiento is not surprised to see her.

SARMIENTO

Mind your own affairs.

CARA

Your actions will imperil the standing of the church. Killing this monk will only justify the people's disdain. I ask you, for the sake of the Holy See, go to Germany, and come back without finding him.

Sarmiento turns to face her.

SARMIENTO

Do you care to tell me who you hear your rumors from? Perhaps Cardinal Umbretto shares more than just words with you?

CARA

Save your judgements. You have no idea what is at stake--

Sarmiento pushes her up against the wall. She calmly stares him down.

SARMIENTO

I know exactly what is at stake.
Furthermore, I would hold your
tongue of such insurgent speak,
censor. I have experience with
those who air their thoughts in
such a manner, and the results are
never favorable.

Sarmiento winces, he looks down to see Cara holding a dagger
to his ribs.

CARA

I came to advise you, nothing more.

Sarmiento backs off. Cara sheaths her dagger in her ORNATE
ROSARY CRUCIFIX.

SARMIENTO

Would God approve of a knife hidden
in His cross?

CARA

They call you "the Mace" in Spain?
Certainly He wouldn't approve of a
butcher who wore his cloth.

SARMIENTO

God makes us all what he needs,
whether we like it or not. And now
he sends me to do his bidding once
again. Martin Luther put the blade
at his own neck. I live with far
worse.

CARA

Then let me leave you with this.
There are more than just Lutherans
running amok in Germany. Be
careful who you trust.

Sarmiento closes the door on Cara...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE - MONTAGE

-Sarmiento and Brother Batiz ride across fields, through
villages, over mountains.

SARMIENTO (V.O.)
 (talking to Brother Batiz)
 He lectures across the country...

-Sarmiento pulls a flier announcing a lecture by Martin Luther from a post... the 95 Theses. He crushes it, flinging it to the ground.

SARMIENTO (V.O.) (cont'd)
 ... speaking of the corruption
 within the church. Heretical by
 any standard. This man would have
 been hung in Spain long ago...

-Sarmiento stops to speak to LOCALS, asking where he might find Martin Luther.

SARMIENTO (V.O.) (cont'd)
 ... but yet, he does nothing to
 hide himself.

-Sarmiento stands at a crossroads in a town, looking down each thoroughfare, as if sensing Martin Luther's location.

SARMIENTO (V.O.) (cont'd)
 He must be mad, provoking the anger
 of the church.

-Sarmiento and Brother Batiz stand before a burnt church, the VILLAGERS finishing putting out the flames.

SARMIENTO (V.O.) (cont'd)
 If he cares so little about the
 fate of his soul, then so shall I.

INT. VILLAGE PUB - EVENING

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz enter the busy pub. Brother Batiz quickly takes a seat, pointing for the SERVER to bring him an ale. Sarmiento walks through the loud crowd of YOUNG SCHOLARS and WORKERS who have gathered.

Sarmiento singles out a SCHOLAR reading a leaflet... Martin Luther's work.

SARMIENTO
 Could you help me, I am seeking
 someone...

No response from anyone.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 Martin Luther, the Monk. Do you
 know if he has lectured here
 recently?

SCHOLAR
 A foreigner comes into Germany
 asking questions about where to
 find Luther? You must come on high
 authority--

SARMIENTO
 I do.

SCHOLAR
 No authority I answer to.

SARMIENTO
 I merely seek answers. There are
 men in your land, perhaps some of
 these people here, who burn
 churches in the name of Luther.

The other patrons tune into their conversation, quieting the
 pub a bit.

SCHOLAR
 I see not one arsonist here, so you
 have great nerve to fling your
 accusations. You will only find
 friends to his cause in these
 parts. Luther bows to God. He
 does not bow to the falsehoods that
 salvation lies anywhere else.
 (laughing to friends)
 Certainly not in paying your way
 out of purgatory, as the Pope would
 have you--

Sarmiento, with shocking quickness, sweeps legs on the young
 man's chair, dropping him to the floor.

Sarmiento steps on his chest--

--and points a pistol at him.

Others move away, shocked by the violence.

SARMIENTO
 As if it were that easy. I've
 visited all the rims of penitence
 seeking God's help.
 (MORE)

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 The last place He comes through is
 a drunk with bible in hand, as
 Luther would have you believe.
 Where is he?

No response. CLICK--

Sarmiento pulls the hammer back on the pistol, driving the barrel into the scholar's cheek. The scholar urinates himself.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 Where?

SCHOLAR
 (breaking)
 His leaflet said Wittenberg... I
 beg you, leave me be.

SARMIENTO
 (loudly to everyone else)
 Listen to me if you care to save
 yourselves.

Sarmiento snatches the leaflet on the table, showing to the people.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 Follow Luther, and follow the path
 to Hell. Warn your countrymen: if
 another church burns while I am in
 Germany, I will come back. And I
 will not be as gracious a guest as
 I am now.

He stuffs the literature into his pocket.

Brother Batiz shakes his head, accustomed to Sarmiento's moodiness, lamenting that he couldn't just enjoy a drink. He finishes his ale quickly, following Sarmiento out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DUOHM - BURNT CHURCH - MORNING

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz ride into the center of town, where stands the husk of a recently burnt church.

Smoke still rises from the building. Sarmiento finds CONSTABLE ARNOLDT, an old town servant, leading the fire brigade.

SARMIENTO

The people who did this, did you
see them?

The constable looks around discreetly before speaking.

CONSTABLE ARNOLDT

Come with me.

The men dismount and follow the constable into--

INT. BURNT CHURCH

The roofless church still smolders. The ruined pews line the wrecked passage to the altar, where a CHARRED BODY is nailed to an 'X' shaped crucifix.

Little of his face is intact, other than the morbid smile of teeth exposed through scorched lips. Brother Batiz prays at the sight of the body.

Sarmiento makes his way to the foot of the body, kneels to pray. He eyes a MEDALLION hung from the body, bearing the letter "L" on it.

CONSTABLE ARNOLDT

(pointing to the medallion
on the body)

Father Von Hof. In red robes, they
brazenly waited for the church to
finish burning to arrange this
atrocity.

Sarmiento rises.

CONSTABLE ARNOLDT (cont'd)

Many of the townsfolk heard them
chanting the name "Luther" as they
rode from town. Some have taken to
his message, but after this... they
are wolves masquerading in the skin
of men.

SARMIENTO

You saw them?

CONSTABLE ARNOLDT

Yes, they rode northwest on the
pass.

SARMIENTO

And you did... what? To stop them?

CONSTABLE ARNOLDT
(apprehensively)
I am but one man, there was nothing
I could do--

SARMIENTO
Jesus was just one man. Thankfully
he did not exhibit your kind of
bravery.

Sarmiento takes the medallion from the corpse.

EXT. EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE - DUSK

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz gallop across the countryside,
racing by night to the next town. Sarmiento spies a CLOAKED
RIFLED RIDER in the distance. Brother Batiz traces his stare
to the far horseman.

SARMIENTO
He's kept his distance from us
since we left Rome. Perhaps the
Cardinal's faith in me extends only
so far.

The rider moves out of sight.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Or perhaps Luther's reach is more
extensive than I thought.

INT. WITTENBERG - CHURCH - NIGHT

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz enter the church. Every step is
accentuated by a dissonant echo that alerts FATHER HENNINGER.

SARMIENTO
I am Arturo Sarmiento, this is
Brother Batiz, of the Carthusian
order.

Father Henninger looks at Brother Batiz's bare, dirty feet.

FATHER HENNINGER
Yes, I see that. I am Gerrit
Henninger, the purveyor of St.
Augustus. What brings you here at
this late hour?

SARMIENTO
We are looking for accommodations
for the night.

FATHER HENNINGER
I think I can find someplace.
Follow me.

Horse HOOVES POUND up to the building. Voices can be heard outside.

Sarmiento peeks out the doors...

A POSSE OF RED HOODED LUTHERANS on horseback raise their torches and approach. Sarmiento runs back to the two men.

SARMIENTO
The Lutherans have come to burn
your church.
(to Brother Batiz)
Pick up the torches as they come.
(to Henninger)
Where is your font?

They scramble to his orders.

FATHER HENNINGER
Do you propose to douse torches
with blessed water?

A flaming torch shatters a window and flies into the church, igniting a wooden pew. Sarmiento snatches it up before the flames can spread.

SARMIENTO
A more holy employment of the font
there will never be. Fill it!

He checks his pistols. Torches continue to smash through windows. He sneaks outside.

EXT. CHURCH

Sarmiento prowls his way behind a statue. A LUTHERAN HORSEMAN approaches. Sarmiento reveals himself, aiming the pistol, holding the torch to the flash pan. The surprised horseman unsheathes his sword, about to skewer Sarmiento--

BLAM! An iron ball explodes from beneath Sarmiento's robe, bursting the man's head, tossing the limp Lutheran from his horse.

Sarmiento mounts the now available horse. He rides up behind another SPEEDING LUTHERAN HORSEMAN, readies his next pistol--

POF! a dud shot. The horseman drives at Sarmiento, but Sarmiento uses their closing proximity to jump from his horse, tackling him to the ground.

SARMIENTO

Let's try this again.

The Lutheran stabs at Sarmiento. As the sword slices Sarmiento's shirt, he disarms the Lutheran in a graceful spin. With equal ease, he runs the Lutheran through.

One of the LUTHERANS, a YOUNG ONE by the look of his wide eyes, is intimidated by Sarmiento, riding away in retreat.

Sarmiento takes the moment to mount up again, only to find--

TWO OTHER LUTHERANS on foot ignite the exterior of the church, but they run for their horses at the sight of Sarmiento, now wielding his sword.

Sarmiento cleaves one in the shoulder, dropping the man to the ground.

The other mounts his horse, darting into town. Sarmiento gives chase.

WITTENBERG STREETS

Sarmiento rides up alongside the sword-bearing Lutheran. Exchanging glancing stabs, the Lutheran pulls away as they twist and turn through the narrow streets of Wittenberg.

Sarmiento aims his pistol, but cannot get a clean line-of-sight on the Lutheran.

SARMIENTO

God, forgive me...

Using his flattened hand as a muzzle break from the wind, he shoots the Lutherist's horse, dropping them both like a ton of stone. The Lutheran's head caves in, spilling blood onto the cobblestone streets.

CHURCH

A few TOWNSFOLK, Brother Batiz and Father Henninger fight the flames. Sarmiento rides to the cleaved Lutheran.

Dismounting, Sarmiento squeezes the injured Lutheran's wound, making the man writhe in pain.

SARMIENTO

Was it Martin Luther who sent you
to do the devil's work?

HURTING LUTHERAN

Yes--

SARMIENTO

There were more of you here. Where
are your cohorts? Where are you
camped?

HURTING LUTHERAN

You will never stop us from
destroying the church--

Sarmiento takes out his knife and puts it under his throat.

SARMIENTO

That doesn't answer my question, so
I will keep you alive--

He makes an small incision, the Lutheran yells in pain.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

--until you tell me what I want to
know.

HURTING LUTHERAN

He is headed for Karlsruhe!

Sarmiento continues cutting through his ear and into his
scalp, the man writhes and screams all the while.

HURTING LUTHERAN (cont'd)

Karlsruhe! Preaching, speaking at
universities! Let me be!

Sarmiento stops cutting, giving the Lutheran a moment of
relief.

SARMIENTO

You have no loyalty to God, none to
your false prophet. Spineless...
irredeemable.

Sarmiento pours gun powder from a pistol onto his head.

The Lutheran fearfully grovels as Sarmiento snatches a torch
from a nearby ONLOOKER. Father Henninger tries to stop
Sarmiento.

FATHER HENNINGER

Stop this! We will send him to
Rome to answer for these
depravities!

SARMIENTO

This is mercy compared to the
dungeon of St. Angelo.
(standing over the wailing
Lutheran)
May God have mercy on your soul--

HURTING LUTHERAN

I repent, I repent--

SARMIENTO

Let Him hear your pleas, for I have
fallen deaf to you on behalf of
Father Von Hof.

Sarmiento drops the torch on the Lutheran's head, igniting him instantly. He rolls around, slamming himself with open hands to quell the flames. The townsfolk are aghast. The Lutheran screams when--

BOOM-- His thrashing stops. Sarmiento puts the smoking pistol away. Father Henninger prays. Brother Batiz covers his mouth, aghast.

Sarmiento, now self-conscious of his brutality, pushes his way through the crowd.

Down a street, Sarmiento spies the CLOAKED RIFLED RIDER watching. The figure, with towering rifle slung behind him, steps into the darkness and disappears.

INT. CHURCH ATTIC - NIGHT

The space is dimly lit by candle, cluttered with old furniture, scattered granite stations of the cross and stacks of books. Sarmiento, stripped of equipment and freshly bandaged, is nearly veiled by darkness.

Sarmiento looks over the leaflet he took from the scholar, shaking his head.

SARMIENTO

The world is consumed with who is
right and who is wrong. How is it
that I always play a part...

Sarmiento scratches himself, discovering blood on his fingers.

Sarmiento counts his new scars and accounts for them in his missalette. Brother Batiz watches Sarmiento in disturbed reverence from across the room.

Sarmiento feels Brother Batiz's eyes upon him.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Allow me to confess.

Brother Batiz turns in his chair to face Sarmiento.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
How do I find peace with what has
been made of me? From soldier, to
priest, to guard, to assassin. How
else can I draw blood in the name
of God? I have defiled the earth
by putting my victims inside of it.
How is my child to survive me...
when his mother did not...

Sarmiento turns his back on Brother Batiz, facing the third station of the cross: The Collapse of Jesus.

The inscription in Latin reads, "Where do we fall?"

Sarmiento back barely heaves, the look of a sobbing man.

Brother Batiz, unable to help, drinks and keeps vigil of his friend.

EXT. KARLSRUHE - OUTSIDE OF TOWN - DAY

Sarmiento dismounts his steed, leaving it with Brother Batiz.

SARMIENTO
Wait for me here. If I'm not back
by morning, find your way to Rome.
I ask you, as friend... break your
silence if I do not return, and
speak on Ignacius' behalf. Take
him back to Spain with you.

Sarmiento hands him a note.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
They will understand the message
when you arrive alone--

Sarmiento makes his way into town.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
--Germany is overrun.

KARLSRUHE STREETS

Sarmiento watches the bustle of the streets from an arms-width alley. He spots a flier on a post:

"MARTIN LUTHER
on indulgences"

The date and location are also printed below. He takes the flier, walking off into the tumult of the streets.

INT. HALL

PEOPLE listen intently as MARTIN LUTHER speaks. He is a stout man, robed outside of his traditional monks garb, balding.

His audience is captivated by his passionate presence. Sarmiento listens to him speak from the back of the room.

MARTIN LUTHER
... therefore those who say that by
the Pope's indulgences a man is
freed from every penalty have
strayed from God's path. May the
Almighty see them right.

Martin Luther smiles, gratified his message is well received with applause.

Sarmiento sees the effect of the speech on the mass.

As Martin Luther steps down from the pulpit, the crowds gather to shake his hand, touch him, thank him, congratulate him.

Martin Luther walks past Sarmiento, who doesn't budge in the sea of exuberant commotion.

KARLSRUHE STREETS

The sun falls, the streets darken, candle lamps light up. Sarmiento inconspicuously follows the GROUP that has followed Luther from his mass to the streets.

Martin Luther stops in front of an inn, the group stops with him as they make small talk.

Sarmiento mills across the road, blending in, while keeping an eye on Luther.

Sarmiento instinctively peeks over his shoulder--

SARMIENTO

As expected, old friend...

He see his tail, the CLOAKED RIFLEMAN, watching him at the end of the road. The rifleman clearly knows Sarmiento is aware of his presence, nodding to him respectfully.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

I am sure we will meet soon enough.

Sarmiento returns his attention to Martin Luther, who bids the group farewell, and enters the inn.

Sarmiento wastes no time in crossing the street, slipping through the PEDESTRIANS towards the inn...

When from the corner of his eye, he sees something that stops him...

He turns and looks through the pedestrians he passed...

He recognizes a face, the pair of young eyes...

Moving with the traffic...

It's Armano, the young Swiss pikesman from the Vatican Library, walking away, oblivious to Sarmiento's presence.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

(bewildered)

What...

Sarmiento's eyes narrow, unsure of what to do next, splitting his attention on Luther...

He looks for his rifled spy down the road, but he is gone.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

It is time for answers.

Armano turns at an intersection, disappearing in the crowd.

But Sarmiento has disappeared as well.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

Away from the town, Armanno discreetly enters a quiet stable on a small farm.

INT. STABLE

Once inside the dimly lit stable, Armanno walks through SIX OF HIS FELLOW SWISS GUARDSMEN, dressed as townsfolk. The lofts and partitions cast dark shadows across the space.

Armanno climbs a ladder to the loft, lying down to rest.

As the men below huddle around a small fire, cooking their stews, keeping warm, a shadowy figure slips in through the rear of the stable.

Sarmiento stealthily creeps his way past the stalls, barely stirring the HORSES within.

Crawling along their heaped belongings, he spies the disturbing color of inside one of the bags.

He pulls the red cloth out... the robe of the Lutheran occultist. He finds a MEDALLION like the one he took from the Father Von Hof's burnt body as well.

One of the men (PASCUAL) steps away from the fire, walking past the hiding Sarmiento to the--

BACK OF THE STABLE

The man drops his pants, uninating in a dark corner. The SOUND of pissing stops abruptly, when the light reveals a knife under his neck.

Sarmiento, veiled in the dark, covers the man's mouth.

SARMIENTO
(quietly)
Continue pissing.

The man, afraid, haphazardly ekes out some intermittent urine.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
What are you doing here? Killing Catholics, and burning our churches?

PASCUAL
(frightened)
I know not of what you speak.

SARMIENTO
I saw the medallion. I want
answers.

PASCUAL
I cannot tell you. They will kill
me.

SARMIENTO
Put your mind to what I will do if
you do not tell me.

AROUND THE FIRE...

The men continue to warm themselves. When they HEAR just the
slightest gurgling, a fading cry...

Horses stir in the stalls... then silence.

SWISS GUARDSMAN 1
Having trouble with your bowels
again, Pascual?

No response. One of the young men stands (LUCIAN), grabbing
his sword, staring into the dark end of the stable.

LUCIAN
Pascual?

No response. Now concerned, they all rise taking weapons.
Two of them begin walking back to check on Pascual when from
the darkness--

BLAM! BLAM! Bursts of smoke flutter from the darkness,
dropping the two soldiers dead. Four men left.

Before the rest have time to react, Sarmiento rushes out from
the darkness, sword in hand. He hacks into the shoulder of
one of the men, dropping him to the ground.

The sliced man screams wildly as Sarmiento faces the other
men.

FROM THE LOFT...

Armanno, now on his feet, looks down on the commotion, to see
Sarmiento ambushing his cohorts.

ARMANNO
(terrified)
My God, he found us...

Armanno rushes down the ladder to enter the fray.

The screaming man continues to wail as Sarmiento continues his onslaught.

Two soldiers strike, cornering Sarmiento, who wields his dagger and sword. He bats away their strikes defensively, stabbing at one while shoving the other away.

Sarmiento, backed into a stall, throws his dagger into the second man, then reaches into his robe to fire a pistol at the striking soldier...

POFF... misfire. Sarmiento does not lament the mistake, continuing his defense.

He hops the next stall, slapping an already unsettled horse, who kicks his hooves up at Armanno. Sarmiento unties the horse, who shoves his way out of the stall.

ARMANNO (cont'd)
(panic, rage)
What are you doing here!

SARMIENTO
You have defiled your faith,
heretic.

Armanno puts up a strong attack.

ARMANNO
This is mandate, you maniac! We
come on the highest authority!

SARMIENTO
Blasphemy.

Slicing wildly, Armanno cuts Sarmiento across the shoulder, sending Sarmiento reeling when--

BLAM! Sarmiento next pistol finds its target, hitting Armanno in his thigh. Armanno staggers his way out of the stable. Three men left.

Sarmiento rushes to the main drag of the stable, taking more space. He stabs the screaming man in the chest, silencing him for good. Two left.

Sarmiento raises his sword, The remaining soldier defends...

BOOM - Sarmiento shoots him through his robe. The shocked soldier swings his sword at Sarmiento in a futile effort. Sarmiento drives his blade into the man's belly, dropping him.

Amongst the bodies... only a frightened Lucian remains.

Sarmiento stalks around him, a cat toying with a mouse.

Lucian sees his cohorts... his sword lags by his side, deflated.

LUCIAN

Who are you to defy God!?

Lucian stabs at Sarmiento, but is disarmed with ease.

SARMIENTO

I am God's bidding. And you do not
work for Him.

Lucian falls to his knees, crying, mumbling his begs for mercy.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

You condemned and murdered innocent
men.

Sarmiento raises his sword to execute Lucian. He sees Lucian is still--

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

(through gritted teeth)
--so young.

Sarmiento sees the tears stream down Lucian's face.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

(recalling Umbretto's
words)

Too young to understand your guilt.

Sarmiento drops the hilt of his sword upon Lucian--

BLACK

EXT. KARLSRUHE - OUTSIDE OF TOWN - NIGHT

Brother Batiz sits near a small fire amidst thicket of trees. He pulls the roasting pigeon off the spit, poking the breast for tenderness, when his horse stirs.

Brother Batiz turns to find Sarmiento approaching the camp, dragging a bound and gagged heap of Lucian behind.

SARMIENTO
How goes dinner?

Brother Batiz is shocked at the cool manner in which Sarmiento has collected a prisoner.

Brother Batiz sees a cut along Sarmiento's side, instinctively handing him his missalette. Sarmiento spies the wound.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Do me the favor--

Brother Batiz, measures the wound with his finger, displaying it to Sarmiento as he tends to the wound. Sarmiento raises his eyebrows, impressed with the length Brother Batiz displays, and finds a blank page.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
(as he writes)
Keep an eye on this man. He has questions to answer.

After Brother Batiz chews up some paper and stuffs it into the wound, Sarmiento hands him the missalette and walks back into the darkness.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
I shall return. Keep my portion warm.

Brother Batiz watches Lucian distractedly. But not distracted enough to keep him from tending to his food.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

Armanno hides in the dark, leaning along side a storage shed, tending to the bullet wound in his leg.

The CLOAKED RIFLEMAN steps forward, only his eyes revealed in the darkness. Armanno sees him, but is more concerned about his injury.

ARMANNO
(pressing the wound)
What now?

SHADOW FIGURE

Sarmiento has made a fine mess of this, as I told them he would. You must go back and report Luther is alive. Tell them I ride to Worms and await the order to finish the job that Sarmiento could not.

ARMANNO

(pained)

I don't know if I will make it with this wound.

SHADOW FIGURE

Rome is far. It would be best if you got moving.

INT. INN - NIGHT

Martin Luther sits at a small desk, writing. He is in deep concentration, when a knock at the door disturbs him. Luther tries to ignore, but the knock persists.

MARTIN LUTHER

Yes, yes, hold on.

Luther opens the door, revealing Sarmiento.

MARTIN LUTHER (cont'd)

How can I help you?

SARMIENTO

I am Arturo Sarmiento. I've been trying to find you for several days.

MARTIN LUTHER

Ah! You were at the gathering. I recognize your garb. It is...

SARMIENTO

Was. Dominican.

MARTIN LUTHER

They're none too pleased with me these days.

(they shake hands)

I am Martin Luther, please come in.

Sarmiento enters. They sit.

MARTIN LUTHER (cont'd)
So. If you have come to hear me, I
assume you are having a crisis much
like mine?

SARMIENTO
A crisis?

MARTIN LUTHER
Looking for God in the church, and
not finding him there? Why else
would you look for me and not
expect repercussions? So what is
it you seek?

SARMIENTO
I needed to hear you speak. To see
the man who drives this revolution--

Luther laughs.

MARTIN LUTHER
Is that what they are calling it?

SARMIENTO
How did you do it? I dream of the
strength it would take me to turn
my back on--

MARTIN LUTHER
--the church? I did not turn away.
Pope Leo takes from the people,
thinking he will build a temple
high enough so he might walk into
the gates of heaven by foot.

SARMIENTO
Perhaps this is God's design.

MARTIN LUTHER
And perhaps it's the meanderings of
the lost. I refuse to be led like
that any longer. I have found
truth--

Luther turns around to grab his Bible. He turns back to see
a pistol pointed an inch from his forehead. He begins to
sweat immediately.

MARTIN LUTHER (cont'd)
--in the Bible.

SARMIENTO

This is the truth. I was sent here to kill you on this night for your insults to God. But I have crossed the red robed occultists who ride in your name, and there is more at work here than just an overweight satanic monk. With whom do you conspire?

Luther, shocked and afraid, mutters as he tries to find the words to answer.

MARTIN LUTHER

Occultists? I know nothing of this!

Sarmiento searches his pockets, tosses the medallion at Martin Luther.

SARMIENTO

Medallions bearing your name. Worn by a murderous horde.

MARTIN LUTHER

Dear Lord, I've never seen anything like this in my life!

Sarmiento, becoming impatient, grabs Luther by the collar, pulling his face into the barrel of his pistol.

Sarmiento closes the distance between them, whispering to Luther's ear.

SARMIENTO

Monk. I have scourged men until they begged for death to find hidden truths within them. Men who had far more calloused skin, who understood suffering long before I reached them, and who spoke with their actions and not with their mouths. What makes you think I will not drive the truth from you?

Martin Luther tries to compose himself, closing his eyes, as if in prayer.

MARTIN LUTHER

Do your worst, I know nothing of what you speak. But let me ask you... what are you willing to live with?

(MORE)

MARTIN LUTHER (cont'd)
 I am guilty of speaking against the church. But I am innocent of all charges you have brought against me tonight.

Sarmiento grits his teeth impatiently... he thumbs the hammer on his pistol, but does not pull it back.

After an uncomfortable moment of consideration, Sarmiento throws Luther onto his ass. Sarmiento pulls a robe from a wall hook, throwing it at him.

SARMIENTO
 Put on your robe. I want you to meet someone.

EXT. KARLSRUHE - OUTSIDE OF TOWN - NIGHT

POV OF LUCIAN waking with a slap, bound, lying on his side. Across the camp fire stands Brother Batiz and Luther in their monks robe, looking fairly similar.

Sarmiento takes a knee next to Lucian.

SARMIENTO
 How good of you to join us. Now, you came from the Vatican. And you are a Lutheran barbarian. Would you care to elaborate which you really are?

Lucian, confused and afraid, hesitates, but Sarmiento pounds him again.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 Which?

LUCIAN
 You saw the red robes. I am a Lutheran.

Sarmiento points to the two monks.

SARMIENTO
 Which one is Luther then?

Lucian scans the faces of the silenced monks. Sarmiento watches Lucian like a hawk, tracking every twitch and bead of sweat on the young man. Lucian takes too long to pick.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 As I feared.
 (to Brother Batiz)
 (MORE)

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
It is not Luther who commands these
men to burn the churches.

Sarmiento shakes his head in disappointment, taking out his sword.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
There are answers in Rome.

He drops the hilt on Lucian once again, pounding him out to--

BLACK

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Sarmiento leads Martin Luther and Brother Batiz back through the tight streets of Karlsruhe.

MARTIN LUTHER
(trying to converse)
How did you come to this wicked
service? Your best thinking led
you to this... hunting academics?

Martin Luther waits, staring at him.

SARMIENTO
I was taken for Ferdinand's army as
a boy. Then, the Dominicans
claimed me for the Inquisition.
Then I spent...
(searches his mind, coming
up empty)
I don't know how long driving
invaders from the gates of Spain.
Since when did serving allow the
luxury of choice?

MARTIN LUTHER
A shame. A servant in the order of
death.

SARMIENTO
I became what was needed of me.

MARTIN LUTHER
You've become this wolf in the
cloak of the Vatican... where do
you find your peace?

SARMIENTO

My scars should tell you God
renounced my peace long ago, old
man.

MARTIN LUTHER

(ponderously)

You... are right. He doesn't have
anything to give you. Why would
He? You haven't given it to
yourself.

SARMIENTO

What I do now, I do for a child.
So until I see him safe, I will not
repent.

MARTIN LUTHER

A child saved by the tip of a sword
has a fine edge to walk.

Sarmiento stops at the inn, facing Luther.

SARMIENTO

Enough of me. The business upon
which I was sent here is erred.

MARTIN LUTHER

So it would seem.

SARMIENTO

You are not free of my suspicion.
Should I learn you are behind this,
I will find you...

MARTIN LUTHER

I have nothing to hide, I will not
change my path. I will stand
before the Emperor at Worms as I
said I would, and I will make my
case.

SARMIENTO

There are those who use your name
for wickedness. What makes you
think they will not come for you?
You will not be safe--

MARTIN LUTHER

You think me so unproficient that I
cannot manage in my own country?
You forget that I do have those who
will harbor me here.

SARMIENTO
Then ride to them, keep your
appearances to a minimum.
(to Brother Batiz)
Go with Luther.

Brother Batiz nods.

MARTIN LUTHER
I do not need an escort.

SARMIENTO
This isn't a favor. He goes with
you until I come back with answers.

MARTIN LUTHER
(to Brother Batiz)
Are you a man of God?

SARMIENTO
He is Carthusian, in the throws of
his vows. He will not speak.

MARTIN LUTHER
No matter. I have plenty to say
for the both of us.

Brother Batiz sighs, it's going to be a long trip. Sarmiento
steps away from the men, he gives Brother Batiz a deferent
bow before turning away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE

A MONTAGE of Sarmiento wheeling through the countryside,
leading another horse with Lucian bound as his prisoner.

They do not rest as they ride through rain, sunshine,
villages, cobbled roads, muddied trail, fields, and sundowns.

EXT. VATICAN CITY - DAY

Sarmiento continues to drive relentlessly even up to the
gates of the Basilica.

VIA DELLA POSTA

Sarmiento shoves the gagged Lucian to the gates of a villa.
Two GUARDS block his path.

GUARD

Halt!

Sarmiento begins removing his weapons.

SARMIENTO

Under order of Cardinal Umbretto, I
come with matters of urgency.
Inform him I am here.

The guards look at the exhausted and bound Lucian, unsure of
what to do next.

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

Sarmiento waits, holding Lucian close. The two guards flank
Cardinal Umbretto and Cara as they stride toward Sarmiento.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

I assume there is reason you've
returned with a prisoner when I
sent you where there were no
prisoners to take.

Cara falls behind, hesitant to be part of the conversation.
Umbretto stops before Sarmiento.

SARMIENTO

The occultists who burn the
churches. They are not the
followers of Martin Luther.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

And?

SARMIENTO

With all due respect, Luther is no
longer your biggest threat.
Someone in Rome is orchestrating
the destruction of the churches. I
suspect someone within the Vatican.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

So... Luther. He is not...

SARMIENTO

No. He is not.

Cardinal Umbretto paces in front of Sarmiento.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

I did not believe when they told me. You came with such a reputation, that I thought you'd lash the very idea of Luther from Germany. But to hear this from you...

SARMIENTO

I fear you do not understand--

The Cardinal stomps into Sarmiento's face, cutting him off.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

It is you who does not understand!

Cardinal Umbretto waves his hand, the high double doors to the hall open... a GARRISON OF SWISS GUARD enter. One of them is ARMANNO, whom Sarmiento shot in the leg.

Sarmiento is in disbelief, turning to the cardinal.

SARMIENTO

You?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

I asked you to complete one simple task. Why did you not do as instructed? What would convince you to commit such a heresy?

Cara is horrified by Umbretto.

SARMIENTO

I stopped the greater threat. I held to our bargain, I protected the church--

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

No, I have stopped you from weakening it. If it were not for the faith I have instilled in my subjects, my work would be ruined.
(to the guards)
Restrain him.

Some guards seize the struggling Sarmiento, as others protect the cardinal.

SARMIENTO

My boy. You must free him. He has nothing to do with this.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Ah! An admission... Vitalo will be disappointed to hear you confessed to me instead of him. But I am sure he will wring revelations from you yet.

Umbretto makes his way over to Sarmiento, inspecting him as if he were an oddity or an insect.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)

(to Cara)

I should have kept your counsel, Cara. You did not trust him. And now the heretic hunter has turned heretic. Such a waste.

Cara averts her eyes from the struggling Sarmiento, unwilling to watch him suffer.

Umbretto guides Cara out with him.

CARA

He has a son.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Irrelevant. He has betrayed the church for the last time, it ends here--

CARA

He accused you of the burnings in Germany--

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

A sign of his delusion--

CARA

But he stopped the horde. This is unfair--

The cardinal restrainedly grabs Cara's hand.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

(so none can hear)

My dear. This conversation not only vexes me, but it borders on sacrilege.

He squeezes her hand... the pain registers on Cara's face.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)
 I decide what is fair. And it was
 he who treated me unfairly.

Umbretto releases her and continues walking.

Cara, standing alone, watches Sarmiento struggle.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)
 (to the guards)
 Take him to St. Angelo's.
 (to Sarmiento)
 We may not do it the way you did in
 Spain, but I hope you find our
 inquisition up to your standards.

The guards drag him away. Sarmiento calls out--

SARMIENTO
 My boy! My boy--

One of the guards smashes Sarmiento's head, all goes to--

BLACK

IMAGES FADE IN AND OUT of blurry stairwells spiralling
 downward, cold passages, cells smothering their hopeless
 prisoners, muddled SOUNDS of chains, of creaking iron hinges,
 of torture, of pain.

INT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS - CELL - DAY

Sarmiento awakens wearing nothing but sack pants. He is
 marked with red paint, indicating his heretic status.

In the dark, dingy cell watching him is PRINCE NASIR, the
 Moorish prince. Emaciated, sores and wounds cover the
 prince's abused body. Sarmiento slowly comes to recognize
 him.

SARMIENTO
 You were going home to bury your
 father.

PRINCE NASIR
 I was, until the Italian armada
 pillaged our ships. They brought
 me here as a trophy.

Sarmiento holds his head as if it were a fragile piece of
 pottery.

PRINCE NASIR (cont'd)
An ironic turn of events, is it
not? A cleric imprisoned in his
own holy city.

From across the way, BASIL SILBER, an Italian Jew, looks into Sarmiento's cell. He too has been tortured, but is healthier than the prince.

BASIL SILBER
(suspiciously)
What kind of cleric?

SARMIENTO
(to Basil)
A Dominican who hunted Jews.
(to Nasir)
And soldiered against the prince's
Moors.

Sarmiento crawls to the bars and checks for guards. The two are silenced by Sarmiento's blunt nature.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Better you hear it from me.

BASIL SILBER
(pointing to the red paint
on Sarmiento's pants)
You bear the mark. So for all your
Jew hunting and Moor killing, you
are still one of us.

Basil withdraws into his dark cell, laughing. Sarmiento, hating the feeling of being watched, turns to Nasir.

SARMIENTO
Would you believe me if I told you
I am here because I tried to save
someone?

PRINCE NASIR
You will be put through the same
atrocities by these barbarians like
you inflicted upon others. Do you
remember? You believed you were
saving people then, too.

Sarmiento hears ANGELO GUARDS coming. He lies down, pretending to sleep.

ST. ANGELO GUARD
(to Nasir)
Has he awakened?

Nasir says nothing. The guard attempts to kick Sarmiento, but Sarmiento catches the guard's foot right before it lands.

ST. ANGELO GUARD (cont'd)
A light sleeper... good to know.

The two of them wrangle Sarmiento to his feet.

PRINCE NASIR
(to Sarmiento)
Submit to God and find peace.

Sarmiento hears him as he is dragged away.

IGNACIUS CELL

Cara, followed by her servant, is led to a cell by a GUARD. He unlocks the gates.

CARA
You can go.

As ordered the guard leaves as Cara closes the gates behind her. She enters what seems to be an empty cell.

Disgusted by the dirty conditions of the cell, she finds Ignacius sitting alone in a dark corner, his small stature consumed by the darkness.

She kneels, holding out her hand as she would to a stray dog.

CARA (cont'd)
Boy. Are you hungry?

Cara takes some fruit from the servant, holding it out to Ignacius.

CARA (cont'd)
Don't be afraid.

He cautiously comes over to her, taking the food, eating voraciously.

CARA (cont'd)
Where is your mother, boy? Home,
in Spain?

Ignacius doesn't know the answer, eating away naively.

Cara delicately dusts Ignacius' clothing with her hand, coming across the WOODEN CRUCIFIX hanging from his neck. She thumbs it.

CARA (cont'd)
Who made this? Your father?

IGNACIUS
He made it for me for when I'm a man.

Cara smiles at the boy, though her eyes betray her sadness.

CARA
(to herself)
Who will care for you...

IGNACIUS
My father. He is coming for me.

Cara settles her hands on his shoulders, looking the innocent boy over.

CARA
Yes. He will. I heard him make the promise.

INT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS - PIT - DAY

Sarmiento, flanked by two ST. ANGELO'S GUARDS, makes his way down a tunnel. A gate opens, he is shoved into a tight pit that is large enough to hold a few men.

SWISS GUARDS, SOLDIERS, Inquisitor Vitalo and Cardinal Umbretto crowd around the rim above to see the oncoming slaughter.

Sarmiento looks up the high walls to see Cara join the circle of onlookers.

Cara and Sarmiento stare at each other for a moment before the gates open again. Three PURPLE-CLAD VIOLA SOLDIERS come down the tunnel. One of the Viola, MALON, enters the pit.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
Those are Viola Guard, the elite of the Swiss. I made you available for their education.

Malon is much larger than Sarmiento, a true Viking. They are locked into the arena.

MALON

You killed my brother in
Wittenberg. His wife is with
child.

SARMIENTO

Let her know her husband was doing
the devil's work.

Malon restrainedly looks up to Vitalo. Vitalo nods soberly.

INQUISITOR VITALO

(to Sarmiento)

Brother. I derive no pleasure from
this.

SARMIENTO

I understand.

Vitalo raises his hand.

Malon, without a moment to lose, kicks Sarmiento's feet out
from under him. He mounts Sarmiento at the chest, pummeling
away. With no place to go, Sarmiento tries to cover his head
as best he can.

Malon finds a loose brick to bludgeon Sarmiento, but has his
arm hooked, pulling him off, throwing the brick from his
hands. Sarmiento tries to crawl away, when Malon punts him
in the ribs.

MALON

Where is all that bravery without
your cannons and swords?

Malon circles Sarmiento... WHAM, another crushing kick.

MALON (cont'd)

(to the crowd above)

This is the feared "Mace of God"?
The famous inquisitor...

Sarmiento, too numb to move, takes another kick. The crowd
cheers. Cara and Umbretto look on with no enthusiasm.
Vitalo is captivated by the violence.

MALON (cont'd)

The wars in Spain must be between
children and invalids.

Malon grabs him by his hair, and drives him headfirst into
the nearby brick wall. Sarmiento falls flat.

MALON (cont'd)
Get up! It is the least I deserve.
I want to face my brother's killer
before I take his life!

Sarmiento slowly crawls up onto all fours, then takes a knee, resting himself on his thigh.

MALON (cont'd)
Face me, heathen!

Sarmiento unexpectedly launches the same brick that threatened to crush his skull, hitting him like a wrecking ball to the face.

Malon falls back against a nearby wall, nose broken open. The crowd is silenced. Sarmiento rushes him, blocking Malon's poor attempt at a punch. Sarmiento levies a blow to the tottering Malon as if he had just started a fight with a pillow.

Malon shoves Sarmiento away. He looks at the soldiers above.

MALON (cont'd)
Help me!

Cara looks at Sarmiento for a split second.

CARA
(to a guard)
Drop your sword in there, for God
sakes!

The guard does as commanded--

INQUISITOR VITALO
(before he has time to
react)
No!

The sword drops into the hand of Malon.

But right as the weapon enters Malon's hands... a punishing kick slams into Malon's crotch. He drops the sword immediately.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)
(to Cara)
That was a costly mistake...

Cara turns away, concealing her satisfied smile.

SARMIENTO

Reserve the sword for the next
lesson.

Sarmiento lands two damaging uppercuts, bobbling Malon's head. He grabs Sarmiento loosely by the neck to keep him at bay. Sarmiento seizes one of his arms.

Sarmiento wrangles Malon using his gravity against him, and breaks his arm at the shoulder so it hangs like a sock full of coins.

Malon screeches in unimaginable agony.

INQUISITOR VITALO

(to the surrounding
guards)

Get someone in there, now!

Two Viola guard enter cautiously, swords drawn. Sarmiento picks Cara's sword up out of the sand, tests its balance. The two attack him immediately.

Umbretto leans to Cara, speaking in private.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

My apologies for yesterday.

CARA

(wincing)

No, it is I who owes you an
apology.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

This Luther business has taken its
toll on me. Ultimately, it doesn't
matter.

The cardinal turns his attention back to the pit.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)

We will get our money from those
heathen one way or another.

Sarmiento makes short order of one of the guards, stabbing him in the stomach, then slicing three of his fingers off his wielding hand.

Cara looks at Umbretto, blown away by his callousness.

CARA

(unbelieving)

Of course. The money.

The guard cradles the fountain of blood that used to be his hand. Sarmiento picks up the loose sword.

SARMIENTO
 (to remaining guard in
 pit)
 Next?

The last guard backs up against the gate. Sarmiento releases a battery of attacks. He disarms the guard, just as the gate opens behind him.

The two St. Angelo guards open the gate in an attempt to pull the Viola into the passage, but Sarmiento jams a sword into the hinge, readying an escape.

INQUISITOR VITALO
 Oh my God...

Sarmiento stabs the Viola guard through the iron bars, throws open the gate, and runs into the passageway. All that can be HEARD down the tunnel is the Angelos guards fatally failing.

The onlookers are stunned motionless. Umbretto makes haste leaving; Cara continues to watch the arena, smiling.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)
 A prisoner is loose! Does that
 concern anyone? Catch him!

The guards rush off. Vitalo looks at Cara, flabbergasted at the turn of events.

CARA
 Well.
 (looks down on the two
 suffering men in the
 arena)
 The Violas won't be visiting much
 anymore.

Vitalo draws his sword, storming off.

ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS

Sarmiento sneaks through the fortress. He can HEAR the guards frantically searching.

Sarmiento shadows a solitary guard on patrol, covering his mouth, placing a sword under his throat.

It's Armano. Again.

SARMIENTO

You have very bad luck, young man.
Perhaps you should pray more.

Armanno face confirms his bad luck.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

Where are the children?

DUNGEON

Sarmiento presses Armanno forward, looking into each cell as he shoves him along, past the other beaten and maimed PRISONERS. They reach the final cell...

INQUISITOR VITALO (O.S.)

Empty.

Sarmiento reigns in Armanno forcefully, turning to find Vitalo walking calmly towards them, sword in hand.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

Let me confess to you, brother.
This was not as I intended.

SARMIENTO

Where is Ignacius?

INQUISITOR VITALO

My intentions were to clear your name and release the boy. But when word returned from Germany that you had not completed your task--

SARMIENTO

I will run this man through...
where?

INQUISITOR VITALO

I had intended this to different.
You were always my favorite.

SARMIENTO

(raging)
Where is he!?

Vitalo looks into the cell that used to house the children.

INQUISITOR VITALO

His will be painless. You have my word.

Sarmiento's grip loosens on Armanno upon hearing those words.

Armanno takes the opportunity to swing around, unhanding Sarmiento of his sword. But Sarmiento offers no defense... he is defeated.

Armanno stands between Vitalo and Sarmiento, his own rage raising.

ARMANNO

You are a menace, Spaniard. And
now I shall quell you for the good
of the church--

Armanno is about to drive the sword into the unflinching Sarmiento, when Vitalo pierces the young man's chest with his own sword.

INQUISITOR VITALO

That is not your right.

Armanno falls to his knees, shocked, bleeding through his shirt.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

(to Armanno)

Look at him. That is the face of
communion. Finally humbled by
God's providence.

Inquisitor Vitalo tosses his sword at Sarmiento's feet. Armanno flops over dead. Sarmiento is too overwhelmed to react to anything.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

I am sorry it is this way, brother.

Other GUARDS flood the passage, taking hold of Sarmiento, who does not resist.

INT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS - TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Odd and horrifying contraptions highlight the room. Sarmiento, hung by shackles to a wall, is nearly naked, with all of his old and fresh wounds on display.

Sarmiento's skin, now seen in totality, is a testament to surviving death in all its forms.

His face drips blood, his eyes are swollen. He is inches away from losing his life.

A GUARD opens the cell door, Cara enters, taken aback by the sight of the flayed Sarmiento.

She stands before him, but he does take notice.

CARA
I heard what you said to the
cardinal. You were right.

Sarmiento doesn't budge.

CARA (cont'd)
You are not who I judged you to be.
I am sorry.

SARMIENTO
(through thick lips)
None are more sorry than I.

Cara steps closer to him to speak outside of the guard's purview.

CARA
I will try to help you, but you
must continue your fight.

SARMIENTO
"My fight". All my fights. The
brutality. The suffering. It rose
to this. My highest achievement.
My boy is to die, as I am.

Sarmiento fixes his eyes on her ROSARY CRUCIFIX, unable to concentrate on her words.

CARA
What you did in Germany was for the
greater good... you have saved an
innocent man, it was righteous.

SARMIENTO
(mocking her)
The right...
(finally eye contact)
Your crucifix. Still hides a
blade?

CARA
(she holds the crucifix)
Yes.

SARMIENTO
Left of my throat. The spot
between the muscle and the wind
pipe. The dark vein.

Cara steps away from the weak Sarmiento.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Feel the soft spot so the cut is
true. You must run the blade from
left to right.

CARA
No.

SARMIENTO
(whimpering a prayer)
God, afford me this moment of
cowardice...

She whispers to him.

CARA
There will be a bloodless
purification tomorrow. If you
choose to save yourself, I will try
to help you then.

Sarmiento musters his strength to yell...

SARMIENTO
(wide, tearing eyes)
I have nothing left!

Cara steps away from him, signalling the guard to open the
cell.

CARA
No. You cannot see it. But I do.
And your boy does too.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Sarmiento and Nasir squint as they are slowly wheeled out on
a wooden wagon into the bright sunlight flanked by guards.

Nasir turns to Sarmiento.

PRINCE NASIR
You prayed over the body of my
father.

Sarmiento's beaten face remains stoic.

SARMIENTO

Yes.

PRINCE NASIR

Pray for the life of my son.

Sarmiento's disposition changes.

SARMIENTO

Your son. What is his name?

PRINCE NASIR

Momar ibin Nasir.

Sarmiento lowers his head, quietly invoking his prayer.
Nasir does the same in his language.

SARMIENTO

I invoked the prayer of Saint
Ignacius. May it not be a curse on
your boy, as it was on mine.

PRINCE NASIR

You are a father as well?

SARMIENTO

Was.

Nasir turns his eyes away from Sarmiento deferentially.

PRINCE NASIR

Your son is in paradise, take
solace.

SARMIENTO

There is nothing in this world that
God has given me to take solace in.

PRINCE NASIR

Your actions have denied Allah. Do
not deny him any longer.

SARMIENTO

What would your God have me do?
Fight the world to undo what I have
done? Sack Rome? All of Europe?
Bring Christianity to its knees? I
have given all to one God and He
has shown me nothing. What will
Another have me do to please Him?

Sarmiento turns his head down.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
I never denied God. It is He who
hates me.

PRINCE NASIR
No. He loves you. But your life
has been a test, He has pushed you
to see where your heart lies, and
He has asked you to make a choice
to believe, now. For at this
point, where we have descended to
the closest point to Hell, He is
nearest to you. You hurt, this is
his proof. This calamity is his
question. It is never too late to
make amends. Never.

EXT. TIBER RIVER PIER - DAY

Inquisitor Vitalo and a PLATOON OF SOLDIERS wait on the pier.

ON a raised viewing platform, Pope Leo X, cardinal Umbretto
and Cara watch the executions.

Two preceding PRISONERS are taken to the pier's end. Their
hands are tied to 100-pound anchor stones. Vitalo invokes a
prayer, then gives the "Thumbs down".

The guards tip the wagon, and the prisoners are plunged into
the river.

Sarmiento and Nasir's wagon slowly wheels onto the pier.

SARMIENTO
I have a question.

PRINCE NASIR
Ask it.

SARMIENTO
What is *As-Salamu Alaykum*?

PRINCE NASIR
Where did you learn this?

SARMIENTO
Your Moors would say this in
Granada.

PRINCE NASIR
It means "peace be upon you."

They reach the end of the pier. The guards secure the ropes, the preparations are met.

ON THE VIEWING PLATFORM...

POPE LEO
I do not know why I have to attend these things, Umbretto. You know I abhor violence in my presence.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
It shows the people that your hand can guide as well as punish. Fret not, we will be done shortly.

POPE LEO
(casually)
What must be, must be, I suppose.
(swatting away flies)
How goes our problem in Germany?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
(staring at Sarmiento)
Into the river in the near future, I promise you.

Cara and Umbretto watch the executions under shade.

CARA
(to the Pope)
May I place my rosary on the Spaniard? To save a soul at its last moment.

POPE LEO
I am sure that man is as soulless as the stone he is tied to. But as you wish.

ON THE PIER

Cara walks over to Sarmiento and places her ROSARY CRUCIFIX around his neck. Sarmiento stands rigidly as she whispers--

CARA
Your fight is not over.

Inquisitor Vitalo eyes Cara as she leaves the pier, returning to the platform. The cardinal eyes Cara for a moment, expecting some response to their dialog.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Yes?

CARA

I forgave him for his trespasses.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

How quaint.

Vitalo addresses the two men on the wagon.

INQUISITOR VITALO

Heretics. Do you recant your wicked ways at your last moment before Almighty God?

SARMIENTO

I spent my time in your dungeon like an animal tendered for slaughter. And I was shamed. But it is you who will kill a child who's only offense is his existence. This is not the Lord's work. I took part in this cabal, I am not above the blame. Send me into the water so I may ask my Maker's forgiveness to His face.

Vitalo pulls the crucifix from around Sarmiento's neck. Cara is quietly stunned at this turn of events.

INQUISITOR VITALO

I allowed you to confess to me, and you reject this gift. Damn you to hell.

PRINCE NASIR

(to all)

There is nothing to recant, as I bear witness to the one true God, Allah, and his prophet Muhammad. Blessings be upon him.

The guards raise the plank, sliding Nasir's stone towards the water.

SARMIENTO

(to Nasir)

As-Salamu Alaykum, Nasir. May God bless your son.

PRINCE NASIR
Peace be with you and to yours as
well.

They peacefully smile to each other--

The water breaks with a heavy swash, plunging Nasir below
cloudy water like a rag doll, disappearing instantly.

Sweat beads on Sarmiento's face.

CARA
What of the Spaniard's child?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
This isn't the time--

POPE LEO
(overhearing)
His child?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
Yes. A formality. Vitalo will
handle it--

CARA
You promised the boy would not be
harmd.

The Pope looks at Umbretto, taking interest in his response.
Aware he's being watched...

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
And I will keep my word.

Umbretto gives Vitalo the "thumbs down".

The boulder dives from the pier into the water, dragging
Sarmiento below.

UNDERWATER

Sarmiento's stone is driven to the floor, thudding onto weak
wood debris. The water hangs him upside down, as the air in
his lungs pulls his body upwards. Pulling at his binding, he
flips himself over to survey the opaque waterscape--

He sees a GARDEN OF FRESH AND DECOMPOSED BODIES FLOATING
UPSIDE DOWN, gently swaying in the current.

Not far from him, he sees Nasir, gagging his air back in,
fighting the desire to breathe.

TIBER RIVER PIER

Cara restrains herself, but her panic is becoming noticeable. Umbretto notices her discomfort.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

What.

CARA

That rosary is damned now. May I take it from Inquisitor Vitalo?

The Cardinal holds his hand out, allowing her to pass. Cara walks over to Vitalo, putting her hand out.

CARA (cont'd)

The crucifix, please.

Vitalo dumps it in their hands.

CARA (cont'd)

Let this rosary be the last thing he sees before the river consumes him. Might I?

The Vitalo shrugs.

INQUISITOR VITALO

If it helps you overcome this mess...

Cara walks to the edge of the pier. Aiming for the rising bubbles, she throws her ROSARY CRUCIFIX into the water.

UNDERWATER

Still holding his breath, Sarmiento sees the CRUCIFIX float down. He tries to grab it, but it's just out of his reach.

Panicked, he searches for a solution. There is none. He stares at the CRUCIFIX, when the wood debris gives way under the weight of the stone, dropping him into range of the knife, which he pulls from the muddy river floor.

Frantically sawing at the rope, he undoes one hand. He pulls at the other, freeing it only after chafing his skin from his wrists.

He swims to his friend to cut his bindings, but Nasir can no longer resist... he breathes--

Nasir convulses immediately, a frantic expulsion of energy, his demise upon him.

His last jolt turns Nasir upside down like the others, locking his dead gaze on Sarmiento.

Unable to hold his breath any longer, Sarmiento begins his mad dash to the surface.

He enters the shadow of the pier, ascends, breaking the surface of the water.

ON THE VIEWING PLATFORM...

POPE LEO

Thank God that's finished. I have
a luncheon to attend.

The Pope and his ENTOURAGE stir as they leave the platform. Umbretto waits with Cara until they've left earshot.

CARA

I am off to Florence.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

This is not the time to be
traveling. You will stay here.

CARA

What is it that makes this time
inopportune?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

The same thing that makes you test
me as often as you have of late. I
cannot have any distractions. My
designs hang in the balance, and I
do not want you caught were I
cannot help you.

CARA

You mean control me.

Umbretto says nothing.

CARA (cont'd)

There is a Censure that must be
overseen. Or do you not care that
Luther's work may have found its
way to Italy?

Umbretto turns back to the river, considering her question.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Go.

Umbretto steps in her way before she can leave the platform.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO (cont'd)

Make haste. I will not tolerate
waiting for you should there be...

CARA

Trouble? I will not keep you
waiting, I promise.

UNDER THE PIER

Sarmiento is caught between the automatic panic of breathing his first breaths, and remaining silent to those above.

The guard's shadows cast through the cracks in the pier, checking the water, making sure there are no survivors. Sarmiento watches them pass overhead.

After a few moments, they leave. He can hear others above engaged in idle conversation.

Sarmiento grabs hold of a pile. And waits.

DISSOLVE TO:

UNDER THE PIER - NIGHT

Cold and wet, Sarmiento shivers uncontrollably. A small boat floats its way towards him. A cloaked Cara offers her hand to Sarmiento. She pulls him aboard and throws a blanket over him to conceal his presence. She continues to maneuver the boat with the oar.

SARMIENTO

I should be dead. And my son--

CARA

Your son is sacrificed for you to
enter the work of the greater good.

SARMIENTO

Too high... too much to bear...

Cara does not know how to console the heaped Sarmiento, and cannot look at him in this state.

CARA

(focusing on the river)
When you returned to Rome, I
learned of a shadow assassin
ordered to Germany as insurance if
you did not complete the task. He
now awaits Luther to arrive in
Worms.

SARMIENTO

I saw this man. He followed us.

CARA

You are more powerful now as a dead
man than you were alive. No one
will look for you. You no longer
exist. This will give us an
advantage when we head back to
Germany. There is enough time to
stop Luther's assassination.

Sarmiento takes his eyes off her and instinctively curls up
to warm himself.

SARMIENTO

What now... am I to side with you?
Or the church, after all this?
Have I become the heretic I have
sought to dispatch all these years?
The only thing I know with
certainty... my son had been marked
for death the moment he was born.

CARA

Then do not make his life and yours
a waste.

She uncovers weapons from under a cloth: a solitary pistol, a
bag of ballasts and gun powder... and a mace. Sarmiento
handles the mace curiously.

SARMIENTO

A mace. Ironic.

CARA

I couldn't recover your weapons. I
apologize. This was all I could
put together. I did, however, find
this.

Cara hands him his missalette. He palms the small book as if
he found the hand of a long lost lover.

EXT. EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

MONTAGE of Sarmiento and Cara riding across Europe. Images of them speeding through villages, stopping in an open field to eat briefly, waiting in a barn to avoid the pouring rain.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Cara sets up her sleeping area, Sarmiento is already lying with his back to the orange glow of the fire. Cara takes a seat. She looks over to the motionless Sarmiento.

CARA

Your son. He was born whilst you were a Dominican.

Sarmiento says nothing.

CARA (cont'd)

Where is his mother?

SARMIENTO

Ignacius was half Moor. And Vitalo set us upon Jew, witch and Moor alike, with all the vigor and resource imaginable.

CARA

And... what happened to her?

SARMIENTO

Vitalo would have you believe that our business was a hunt for purity by the purest... but what befell women if they were marked by the pent rages of the inquisitors was a Hell unleashed. She was not ignorant of this reality. And she was aware of my trade when the inquest turned to her village.

FLASHBACK

INT. VILLA - DAY

Through the muted gauze of distant memories, A BEAUTIFUL MOORISH WOMAN kisses a hand wielding a pistol.

CARA (V.O.)

Tell me it was not left to you...

The hand belongs to Sarmiento. Tears stream down both their faces.

SARMIENTO (V.O.)
I made it to her before the others.
I have come to see this as the
final favor given to me by an angry
God.

She turns the weapon on herself, holding his hand through the trigger guard.

SARMIENTO (V.O.) (cont'd)
I did not have the time, I could
not devise a plan...

Unable to deal with the horror of his situation... both in the past and fresh in his mind in the present, he watches the scene unfold in horror.

SARMIENTO (V.O.) (cont'd)
She made the decision I did not
want to make.

The Moorish woman lifts her thumb onto his index finger...

FLASH TO

CAMP

Sarmiento eyes are shut, denying the haunting memory.

SARMIENTO
This was how I came to run from the
Order with a baby in hand. I did
not run far enough, it seems. All
I wanted was to raise him a
Spaniard in peace. There is
nothing left to take from me now.

Cara turns away from him as she straightens out her sleeping arrangements, pursing her lips in guilt.

She notices a wet spot on Sarmiento's back. She touches him, surprising him out of his melancholy.

There's blood on her fingertips.

CARA
You're bleeding.

He pulls his shirt up to see, but can't see the wound. Cara is aghast by the obscene amount of scars covering him.

CARA (cont'd)
You have never known a day's mercy,
have you?

SARMIENTO
Why would I.

He takes out his missalette and pencil, waiting for her account.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
The wound. Describe it to me.

CARA
I have no idea how to describe it.

SARMIENTO
Try.

Unnerved at the prospect, she studies it closely.

CARA
It's jagged and inconsistent. Not
from a blade.

SARMIENTO
(remembering)
The wood beneath the pier.
How long is it?

She measures it with her small finger.

CARA
(showing him)
A quarter finger length.

Sarmiento, concentrates on his notations, doesn't notice her placing her crucifix knife in the fire.

CARA (cont'd)
Discolored liquid is bleeding from
the wound. It needs to be cleaned.

The blade cooks for a moment, she wipes it down, and places its broad side to the wound.

Sarmiento launches, not expecting the burn.

SARMIENTO

You must warn someone before you
burn them alive!

CARA

Stop it. Sit down.

He walks off the pain, then seats himself uneasily. She finishes the cauterization, tearing a strip from her bedding, wrapping Sarmiento's torso. He finishes the wrap for her.

He attempts to smile in thanks. She smiles at his exchange, and they share an awkward moment.

CARA (cont'd)

We have a long ride tomorrow.

SARMIENTO

Yes. We do.

They both lie down. This time, they stare at each other through the fire for a moment before turning away.

EXT. WORMS - STREETS - DAY

Sarmiento and Cara ride into the town of Worms, Germany.

CHEERS can be heard nearby. They ride over to an adjoining street to see a procession, the streets lined with PEOPLE cheering Luther's arrival. Martin Luther, overjoyed by the unexpected turnout, rides a wagon, Brother Batiz sitting behind him.

CARA

Come, we must warn him.

SARMIENTO

All your efforts to erase me will
be wasted if this assassin spots
us. Follow the procession on foot.

CARA

And where are you going?

SARMIENTO

I will try to find a better vantage
point. The assassin will make no
attempt in front of these people
here.

CARA
If he does, he will disguise
himself.

SARMIENTO
Or never be seen at all.

They both look to the--

ROOFTOPS

Sarmiento carefully traverses the rooftops following the procession below. He sees Cara moving through the crowd on foot, cloaked to keep her presence unknown.

He scans the profile of the buildings, searching for others.

As he continues to move with the procession, his foot breaks through a weak patching on a roof. He pulls his foot free and looks inside. A MAID is looking back up at him through the hole.

SARMIENTO
(embarrassed)
This hole... needs repairs.
(searching for a
concession)
Bless this roof, may it... be
fixed.

He makes the sign of the cross and scurries away.

Sarmiento thinks he sees SOMEONE on another rooftop.

The crowds continue to cheer as Luther's wagon draws towards the courthouse. Sarmiento crawls, keeping low, so not to be seen. He again spots someone moving along the rooftop.

He sees a long rifle being positioned. As the rifled assassin adjusts himself, belly down on the rooftop, Sarmiento finally catches a glimpse of who it is: PINTADO.

Sarmiento finds a better shooting position. He preps his pistol, pops up to fire, but Pintado is gone. He looks around frantically.

He catches a glimpse of Pintado, ducks instinctively behind a chimney--

BOOM! Pintado fires his powerful rifle, demolishing some bricks that make up the smokestack.

Sarmiento checks the crowd below. The procession has moved on; they are too loud to be alarmed by the gunshot.

PINTADO
(taking cover, yelling
from across the way)
I missed you. Even though we were
never far from each other.

SARMIENTO
Pintado! Why?

PINTADO
You take the tone of naivety.
Perhaps now you should try learning
from *my* decisions, brother, so you
might make better ones in the
future.

SARMIENTO
This is evil work you've been put
to.

PINTADO
(reloading his rifle)
Poor Sarmiento, still the bloodied
idealist. I followed you, and
Inquisitor Vitalo, in his wisdom,
spoke to me shortly after you left.
He thought it fitting that I take
up the tract you abandoned.

SARMIENTO
Pintado... please. Put your weapon
down and let me speak to you as a
friend.

PINTADO
Or?

SARMIENTO
I will ask only once.

Pintado FIRES and runs for it. The bullet lands dangerously close to Sarmiento's head. Sarmiento rolls from his hiding position to give chase.

They run parallel to one another, firing their weapons, missing by mere inches. One of Pintado's bullets flakes on a nearby smokestack, cutting Sarmiento on the scalp. They both dive for cover.

PINTADO

Why are you not along my side,
ending the abhorrence of Luther?

SARMIENTO

Luther's path will continue, with
or without my help.

Sarmiento touches his wound. His hand is red with thick blood. He instinctively takes out the missalette... but thinks better of it and puts it away.

PINTADO

What has become of you, Sarmiento?
You were once the cornerstone to
the conquest of Christendom.

SARMIENTO

It is by God's hand I have become
this. And today I fight for
myself, as God wishes.

PINTADO

Stop fooling yourself. You and
I... we have always fought for
ourselves.

Pintado fires at Sarmiento, then hides to reload his pistol and rifle.

Sarmiento looks down to the street: a good two stories down, enough to break his legs if he falls.

Sarmiento takes advantage of Pintado's reloading. He runs towards the building across the narrow street and jumps--

barely catches the edge of the building--

STREETS

Cara searches for any sign of Sarmiento, sees him hanging from a rooftop in the distance.

HANGING FROM ROOFTOP

Sarmiento tries to pull himself up, but the weight of his weapons drag him down; the loose wood shingles pull from the roof like cards in a deck.

Pintado turns from his hiding space to see his mentor in peril. He paces arrogantly over to Sarmiento, pulling a pistol from Sarmiento's hand, tossing it away.

Pintado slings his rifle, and points a pistol to Sarmiento's head.

PINTADO

This pistol is new. Not given to
me by the King of Spain, of course.
You always had the best.

Sarmiento sees Cara running towards the building in the reflection of a nearby window.

SARMIENTO

Will you hear my confession,
brother? A final mercy for your
mentor.

Pintado is genuinely moved by the request.

PINTADO

Of course, it would be... a great
honor. Please, go ahead.

SARMIENTO

I have committed great sin.

PINTADO

That I know, brother. Please, save
the list.

SARMIENTO

I lost everything. My family, my
faith, my love. I never realized
I was at fault... I was too afraid.

PINTADO

You, afraid? Of what?

SARMIENTO

Afraid that there was a God, and
that he hated me.

(tearing from his
realization)

So I hated him back. Forgive me,
please. God, forgive me.

Pintado, captivated by Sarmiento's genuine confession, snaps out of it.

PINTADO

I have little time, so I forgo the penance and forgive you all your trespasses. May I have someone to do the same for me when I am at my end.

Pintado makes the sign of the cross on Sarmiento's forehead, then compassionately touches his straining hands.

PINTADO (cont'd)

Thank you, brother. I will cherish that moment forever.

Pintado presses the rifle to Sarmiento's head, when an BALLAST LODGES ITSELF IN PINTADO'S ARM. He drops the rifle off the building, staggering back, holding his spouting wound.

Sarmiento finds the strength to pull himself back up--

ROOFTOPS

Sarmiento takes the smoking pistol from Cara's trembling hands. Pintado, agonizing over his arm, steps away from the now armed Sarmiento.

SARMIENTO

Drop the musket.

Pintado lowers his shoulder, letting the slinged rifle slide, falling at his feet.

PINTADO

If you would have only done what was asked of you--

SARMIENTO

We both suffer from the same affliction then, Pintado. We only do what we are asked, never what should be done.

Pintado defiantly resists taking a knee... eventually collapsing in pain.

CARA

(to Sarmiento)

Are you okay?

SARMIENTO

Yes.

She notices he's bleeding from his neck. She walks over, removing a sash to bandage his wound.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
It's fine.

CARA
No, it's not. Let me see.

She tends to his wound, dabbing it clean. Sarmiento diverts his attention from Pintado--

BANG-- Cara shudders. Smoke flutters from a new hole in Pintado's robe, revealing a new pistol. Sarmiento's eyes widen as Cara falls. He takes hold of her.

Pintado staggers away from them. He pulls the arrow from his arm. Sarmiento cocks his pistol and takes aim --

CLICK. Empty. Pintado exhales in relief. They stare at each other.

No longer able to hold her up, Sarmiento sits, keeping pressure on her wound.

PINTADO
Have I not learned? You thought me incapable, uncompassionate? Stay with her. Let me finish what I came here for, and all will be at peace.

He runs off along the rooftops, picking up his rifle as he goes. Sarmiento is torn between staying with Cara and chasing down Pintado.

He checks her wound; dark blood flows from the shot to the chest. He takes the sash and covers it.

CARA
Do not bother to write this one in your missalette.

She struggles to remove something from around her neck. It's Ignacius' WOODEN CRUCIFIX.

CARA (cont'd)
He asked me to give this to you. Ignacius is alive, the cardinal promised his protection in front of the Pope. Vitalo has not harmed him--

SARMIENTO
My son... you lied to me?

CARA
Forgive me... how could I get you
here... I could not do this alone.
Forgive--

Sarmiento wraps the crucifix around his wrist.

SARMIENTO
We must get you down from here--

CARA
I will survive this wound, but
Luther will not survive that
assassin.

She swats his hands off her wound. He tries to invoke a prayer for her, but she shoves him away.

CARA (cont'd)
You fool, do not waste my time
praying over my blood. Go!

She whips her head at him, angered by his lingering. Pained, she applies pressure to the wound as she watches him take off in an all-out run following Pintado.

EXT. WORMS - COURTHOUSE - DAY

Luther's wagon drives towards the courthouse, crowds still in tow. Pintado now follows along in the mass, rifle hidden under his robe.

The wagon pulls up to the entrance of the building, Luther and Brother Batiz dismount. Pintado discreetly looks around for a place to range his target. He detours away from the hordes.

He sneaks his way onto a parked cart, and hides amongst the baskets and sacks. No one notices him taking aim at Luther through the slats.

POV - DOWN PINTADO'S RIFLE

of Luther shaking hands, embracing his followers. Brother Batiz watches Luther, gratified for him.

Pintado sets the matchlock to fire. He fingers the trigger. Right as he is about to fire, WATER POURS DOWN onto the matchlock.

Pintado searches for the source of the water, sees Sarmiento looking down on him from the rooftop a story above, pouring his wineskin.

Pintado bolts from the cart, Sarmiento jumps down to follow.

Pintado makes his way through the crowd, straight for Martin Luther. He keeps his composure as he pushes his way forward.

Sarmiento rushes towards him, desperate to stop Pintado.

Brother Batiz is surprised and alarmed to see Pintado, whose focus is squarely on Luther. Brother Batiz blocks his path.

Before he is a mere two yards from Martin Luther, Pintado draws his dagger discreetly. As his hand readies for the strike, Sarmiento grabs hold of his wrist, stopping Pintado.

A silent arm wrestle for the knife begins.

PINTADO

Don't stop me--

Brother Batiz sees Sarmiento and comes over to aid him--

Martin Luther notices the struggle in the crowd, but is distracted--

Pintado kicks the portly monk, dropping him to his knees. Sarmiento uses the diversion, releases Pintado, who impulsively slices at him.

The moment the knife passes, Sarmiento strikes Pintado's neck, stunning him, then arm locks Pintado, disarming him.

Using the downed Brother Batiz as a step, Pintado kicks free of Sarmiento's half nelson. He reaches into Sarmiento robe, grabs his pistol, and points it at Martin Luther.

Before there is a chance to fire, Sarmiento DRIVES CARA'S CRUCIFIX DAGGER INTO HIS CHEST. Pintado goes limp.

SARMIENTO

(to Brother Batiz)

Your robe--

The onlookers sees the tumult between the men, but Brother Batiz throws his robe over Pintado's wound.

BROTHER BATIZ
 (to onlooker)
 The man is sick.

Sarmiento is shocked to hear Brother Batiz speak, but wastes no time dragging the body away before anyone notices.

Martin Luther, largely unaware of the commotion through the surrounding crowds, enters the courthouse unharmed.

ALLEY

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz pull Pintado behind a mound of chopped wood in an alley.

PINTADO
 (final moments)
 May I confess?

SARMIENTO
 We were both lied to. We have been
 wronged, brother.

Pintado tries to hold his breath, trying to sustain himself longer... but he doesn't have the strength to hold on.

PINTADO
 I am sorry...

His lungs deflate, leaving him limp.

Sarmiento hangs his head, tired of seeing those around him perish. Brother Batiz pats him on the back.

BROTHER BATIZ
 I am glad to see you.

Sarmiento embraces Brother Batiz. He relaxes, perhaps for the first time in years, feeling safe in his old friend's arms. Sarmiento composes himself.

SARMIENTO
 Your vow--

BROTHER BATIZ
 Had to be broken. I would have
 gone mad if I didn't tell Luther to
 shut up. Did you ride alone?

STREETS

Sarmiento and Brother Batiz look up to the sloped roof where Sarmiento left Cara. She sits there, hunched over, eyes looking into nothing, frozen still. Her blood runs down the roof, dripping into a puddle on the street.

Sarmiento can do nothing but stare at her, undecided whether to cry or to become angered. Luther joins them.

MARTIN LUTHER

Dear God. This has been all too costly.

Luther puts his hand on the motionless Sarmiento.

MARTIN LUTHER (cont'd)

I will pray for your suffering.

SARMIENTO

That woman is the one who saved your life, Luther. Pray for her.

Squatting down to hide the welling tears in his eyes, Sarmiento runs his hand through her puddled blood. He rubs his fingers together, feeling her for the first time.

BROTHER BATIZ

How does the hearing go?

MARTIN LUTHER

The emperor will side with Rome... but it makes no difference. Whether I am the face or someone else, the people want change. It's not what I wanted, but it's not what the Pope wanted either. Where will you both go now?

BROTHER BATIZ

(to Sarmiento)
To Spain?

SARMIENTO

To Rome.

Brother Batiz

That's suicide. Let's go back to Granada... seek your peace finally.

Sarmiento raises his arm, showing Brother Batiz the WOODEN CRUCIFIX.

SARMIENTO

There is a chance Ignacius is alive
somewhere in that fortress. So I
will return.

BROTHER BATIZ

God have mercy on any who stand in
our way, he's alive... to Rome
then.

Sarmiento pats Brother Batiz solidly.

MARTIN LUTHER

Sarmiento...

Sarmiento stops to listen.

MARTIN LUTHER (cont'd)

Have you found God in this journey?

SARMIENTO

I have found myself.

EXT. EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE

MONTAGE of Sarmiento and Brother Batiz tearing through
Europe, day and night, only resting to change the exhausted
horses they push to the brink.

Sarmiento takes out his missalette and makes a new notation
in his scripted, poetic cursive:

"Ignacius. My son. I will not rest until you are by my
side.

Allana. My love. Forgive me."

Sarmiento closes the missalette and tosses it in a fire.

EXT. ROME - NIGHT

Speeding through the emptied streets of Rome, Sarmiento and
Brother Batiz stop at an--

EMBANKMENT

--near the Tiber river. They tie their horses, leaving some
weapons within the horses' packs.

He loads the remaining pistol, slings his mace, and takes Cara's rosary knife from a pack. He hangs it from his neck.

BROTHER BATIZ

Are you ready?

SARMIENTO

Are you? This could end up being very bloody... even costing your life.

BROTHER BATIZ

I've never had a better reason to live and die than this.

Brother Batiz slings a sword on his back.

SARMIENTO

Very well.

They make their way along the embankment toward the colossal St. Angelo Fortress.

TIBER RIVER

A bored ANGELO'S GUARD paces the pier. The low tide has exposed the muddy river bank. The guard leisurely looks down into the mud... and notices a conspicuous rope moving under the pier.

Curious, the guard makes his way under, wading through the thick mud. He grabs the end of the rope, seeing that it leads back up onto the other side of the pier.

He walks back up to the pier, still holding the rope, to see it is tied to one of the drowning boulders.

Unease settles on the guard, he turns around to find Brother Batiz smiling at him, and Sarmiento tossing a noose around his neck, tightening to the point of strangulation, leaving the guard only a wheeze as his cry for help.

Sarmiento pulls the guard to the boulder, they tie him tightly to the stone.

ST. ANGELO GUARD

(wheezing)

Don't kill me, please.

SARMIENTO

You're fortunate today. I am here to save lives instead of take them.

(MORE)

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
(to Brother Batiz)
Prepare those boats, more will be
returning with me.

BROTHER BATIZ
What are you planning?

SARMIENTO
I am a heretic, just like the men
in that dungeon are now. They
deserve to be as free as my son or
I.

BROTHER BATIZ
Go, all shall be ready for your
return.

Sarmiento slips into the night at the guard struggles.

BROTHER BATIZ (cont'd)
(to the guard)
So. I imagine you weren't
expecting an invasion tonight, were
you?

The guard shakes his head, defeated.

EXT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS - WALL - NIGHT

Sarmiento scales the high walls of the fortress carefully,
making no sound to alarm the SENTRY above. Sarmiento creeps
onto the walkway, behind the clueless man.

The priest knocks the helpless sentry out without so much as
a struggle.

Running along the fortress wall, he passes over the iron
barred barrier, takes note of a massive iron cauldron.
Inside, congealed oil.

The next SENTRY unknowingly makes his way into a obscured
turret. Sarmiento follows him in... a short and silent
commotion, and the threat is over.

Sarmiento emerges from the turret and throws the alarm bell
into the muddy moat below. He snags a torch from the
gangway, makes his way back to the cauldron, and ignites the
wood below it.

COURTYARD

A young guard MICKAEL patrols the courtyard lazily with ANOTHER GUARD. Mickael stops to adjust his shoe.

When he rises, his companion is dead a few feet in front of him, with an arrow dug into his neck.

Mickael is about to yell, when a pistol touches the back of his head.

SARMIENTO

(from behind)

Not a sound, or I will remove your brain from your head.

MICKAEL

You will not escape, the fort is shut tight.

SARMIENTO

On the contrary, I am trying to get in.

MICKAEL

What do you want here?

SARMIENTO

(pointing)

I want you to push that cannon over there.

MOMENTS LATER

Mickael pushes the cannon from its position, pointing it at the barrier separating the fort from Rome.

SARMIENTO

Where are the rest of the guards?

MICKAEL

On duty in Tuscany, or at the Basilica. The rest sleep.

Finished pushing, Mickael submissively raises his hands.

He reluctantly turns around to see his captor.

MICKAEL (cont'd)
(recognizing Sarmiento)
My God... I saw you die in the
river.

SARMIENTO
You did. I've returned to haunt
this place, as the Lord has cursed
any who have come in contact with
me.

Sarmiento cold cocks Mickael, knocking him out.

INT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS - DUNGEON

Sarmiento plucks the cell keys from a now DEAD GUARD.

THE PRISONERS remain silent, either too weak to make a
commotion, or too aware that Sarmiento might be their only
salvation.

He looks at the men behind the bars. Their spirits are
broken from torture and starvation. Basil Silber snaps awake
when Sarmiento opens his cell.

BASIL SILBER
How is this possible...

SARMIENTO
How often are the guards passing
through?

Basil rises to check the walkway and sees the dead guard.

BASIL SILBER
He was the only one. What are you
doing here?

SARMIENTO
Trying to undo what I have done.
For whatever it's worth.

Sarmiento unlocks Silber's cell.

BASIL SILBER
You intend to free all of us?

SARMIENTO
Everyone.

BASIL SILBER
Have you gone mad? We will never
get out alive!

SARMIENTO
You can stay in your cell if you'd
like. I can assure you won't
survive what they have in store for
you.

Silber rushes out of his cell to grab the dead guard's sword.

Sarmiento tosses the keys to Basil.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
I have secured a path to the river.
If these men can survive the cold
water...

BASIL SILBER
A sea of ice will not keep us here.

They opening cells, aiding the weak prisoners out.

BASIL SILBER (cont'd)
You came back.

SARMIENTO
Let's hope my coup will go
unnoticed for as long as possible
so it has some meaning.

EXT. COURTYARD

Sarmiento leads the prisoners, some aiding each other, some
now wielding swords, across the courtyard to--

TIBER RIVER

Sarmiento and Basil aid the men down to the river bank where
some run into the water and swim away, others wade carefully,
trying to avoid a scene.

The tied up guard watches droves of prisoners dash away into
the river. He shakes his head soberly... he'll be in deep
shit in the morning.

Brother Batiz comes to Sarmiento.

BROTHER BATIZ
The boy?

SARMIENTO

Not yet...

A guard can be HEARD YELLING from a distant corner of the fortress... they have been found out.

BASIL SILBER

Your son is in there?

SARMIENTO

Yes. There is a chance he is still alive.

BASIL SILBER

Then I will stay with you.

The remaining men come to Basil's side and join him.

SARMIENTO

I would try to dissuade you... but
I need as much help as I can get.
Follow me.

INT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS

Sarmiento, Brother Batiz, and the crew rush into the fortress. Guards can be heard stirring.

SARMIENTO

There are only a few stairwells up
and down... we will control those
places.

They run the halls. Sarmiento points to different stairwells, sending a few men up each one as they pass them. The rest exit into the--

EXT. COURTYARD

Sarmiento points a few men over to the cannons as they stream in.

SARMIENTO

(pointing out the cannon
he set up)

Pull the other cannons next to that
one.

BASIL SILBER

It is pointed at the gate.

SARMIENTO
I know. I put it there.

BASIL SILBER
You plan on using cannons?

SARMIENTO
If I could remember a time when I
didn't need cannons...

Brother Batiz and the men pull the cannons to the desired location.

Sarmiento and a few other men run up another stairwell to the-

WALL

--where the prisoners dispatch a GUARD. Sarmiento rushes across the wall, past the now-boiling oil, to another GUARD, who is ringing a bell.

The guard defends himself, slashing wildly at Sarmiento. Two prisoners rush past Sarmiento and overcome the guard.

Sarmiento looks into the courtyard, to see soldiers hustling behind windows of a middle floor. Using all his force, he turns one of the cannons on the interior wall, packs the barrel and...

BOOOM! He fires the cannon, blowing a hole in the courtyard walls! Soldiers are flung across the room.

SARMIENTO
Prepare yourselves, it comes!

INT. VITALO'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Awaken from the tumult, Vitalo shudders at the SOUND of explosions roaring through his fortress. He throws open the door and grabs one of his PERSONAL GUARDS.

PERSONAL GUARD #1
We're under attack!

Vitalo slaps the guard across the face.

INQUISITOR VITALO
I know that, you ass! From where?!

EXT. COURTYARD

Sarmiento rushes into the courtyard as a pack of GUARDS come out. Sarmiento points to the makeshift cannoneers to stay at their posts.

Sarmiento attacks along side the armed prisoners.

Vitalo looks into the courtyard through a demolished wall to see the chaos of cannons and swords attacking St. Angelo's.

He finds Sarmiento in the thick of the battle.

INQUISITOR VITALO

I cannot believe my eyes... you're alive.

Sarmiento sees Vitalo, pointing his sword at him.

SARMIENTO

I've come back for my son.

INQUISITOR VITALO

(to his guards)

Stop him!

Vitalo runs back into the fortress. Sarmiento pursues.

INT. ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS

Sarmiento rushes past the skirmishes, chasing after Vitalo when--

BLAM! Sarmiento ducks the fragmenting stone from the wall. Vitalo's personal guard prepares another shot.

One of the ARMED PRISONERS tries to stop Vitalo from descending the stairwell, but Vitalo makes short work of the prisoner, running him through with ease.

As Vitalo and one of his guards race down the stairs, Sarmiento chases up to the other who is about to point his rifle--

BLAM! Sarmiento bats the rifle away, blasting a nearby wall. The personal guard draws his dagger, but Sarmiento locks his arm, continuing the direction of the draw--

--directly into the guards own belly. Sarmiento slices him once more for good measure before taking off down the--

STAIRWELL

Sarmiento rushes down the stairs. The commotion, cannon fire and screaming can be heard from the fortress above.

DUNGEON

Vitalo, at the end of the block, tries to unlock a cell with his various keys. His guard stands watching the stairwell tensely, his sword at the ready.

INQUISITOR VITALO

Keep watch.

PERSONAL GUARD #1

I know, I know!

Vitalo fumbles with the keys, dropping them accidentally. He picks them up frantically, returning to the lock.

INQUISITOR VITALO

That man is more cunning than
you'll know, be ready--

SLIKT... Vitalo turns around to see his guard... with a dagger flung into his forehead.

As the guard falls over dead, Vitalo turns calmly, staring down the long hall at Sarmiento. Vitalo cracks his knuckles and draws his sword.

Sarmiento, mace in hand, paces towards Vitalo.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

The Mace... and his mace. Did you
plan that for me?

SARMIENTO

Sadly, I am not that clever.

INQUISITOR VITALO

I was told not to harm the child.

Sarmiento looks through the thicket of bars... making eye contact with Ignacius.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

I knew that would come back to
haunt me.

SARMIENTO

You now have the chance to kill me again.

INQUISITOR VITALO

What a penance you have delivered yourself, Arturo.

They enter striking distance, immediately taking up a fray. Sarmiento handles the mace adeptly, Vitalo strikes at Sarmiento sharply, leaving little room for error.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

To continually die at my hands is a horror I do not even wish on you.

Vitalo scores a small victory when he punctures Sarmiento's skin. Sarmiento is surprised.

SARMIENTO

You are better than I remember.

INQUISITOR VITALO

I did not become the chief heretic hunter of Castille by kissing rings.

Vitalo strikes again. Sarmiento knocks him in the mouth, drawing blood.

Sarmiento thuds him in the side with the mace. Vitalo kicks him back, almost enjoying the pain.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

I wish you were still by my side, brother.

Sarmiento drives Vitalo back, plucking the sword from the dead guard's hand, doubling the attack. Vitalo, however stays in pace, the exchange is heated and even.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

Together, we could have stopped any fire at the gates of Rome.

With precision, Sarmiento ducks a barreling slice from Vitalo.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)

But now, I will put you and your son in the fire for this.

Sarmiento blocks another slice and stuns Vitalo with a glancing blow to the head with the mace. Sarmiento then chops Vitalo's hamstrings, folding him at the knees to the floor.

Without hesitation, he drives the sword through Vitalo's stomach, staking the blade through to the ground.

INQUISITOR VITALO (cont'd)
We are not through. Our fates are intertwined--

SARMIENTO
Then we will continue this fight in Hell.

Sarmiento takes Vitalo's sword in hand and drives it through Vitalo's chest, as a toreador would to a dying bull.

Vitalo hangs dead, suspended by the two swords staked through him. Sarmiento drops the mace at Vitalo's feet.

After a moment catching his breath, Sarmiento takes the keys from the floor, and opens--

THE CELL

Sarmiento enters, falling to his knees before Ignacius.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
I am sorry my son.

Ignacius races into Sarmiento's arms, hugging him tightly.

IGNACIUS
I forgive you.

Sarmiento cries into the boy's shoulder.

INT. VATICAN CITY - TOWER OF NICHOLAS - NIGHT

The Pope, coughing thick bloodied phlegm, hears the turmoil from his bed high up in his tower. Cardinal Umbretto comes to his side.

POPE LEO
(groggy and weak)
What in blazes is happening...

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
I don't know. We have sent a squadron of Viola to--

Cannon blasts can be HEARD in the distance, buckling stone walls.

POPE LEO
(coughing)
A squadron?! Send them all! We
are under attack, you imbecile!

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
As you order, your Excellency. But
please, come back in. Your
sickness will not be helped by this
cold air.

The cardinal closes the balcony doors.

POPE LEO
Where is that infernal doctor?

Umbretto pulls a vial from his pocket.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
Let me prepare you another remedy.

ST. ANGELO'S FORTRESS - WALL - NIGHT

Cannonballs launch, soldiers and prisoners broil on all
floors, decimating the innards of the fort as if it were a
battlefield.

Sarmiento returns to the courtyard with Ignacius in hand.
Brother Batiz sees the boy, and rushes over to him. Brother
Batiz embraces the boy as if her were his own son.

A LOOK-OUT PRISONER peeks over the wall to see the VIOLA
SQUADRON riding toward the bridge. He calls down to
Sarmiento.

LOOK OUT PRISONER
The Viola are coming!

Sarmiento calls to OTHER PRISONERS on the wall.

SARMIENTO
Raise the barrier!

The prisoners look at him as if he were crazy, and hesitates.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
(to Brother Batiz)
Take the boy back to the horses.
Wait there for me.
(MORE)

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 (to Ignacius)
 I will be right behind you.

Brother Batiz rushes out of the courtyard with the boy.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 (to the prisoners)
 I have fought hordes with less men
 than we have here. Do as I say,
 and I promise you, we will have a
 chance.

BASIL SILBER
 A chance? That's not very
 inspiring.

SARMIENTO
 Inspiration comes easily to those
 who want to survive.

Sarmiento points to the boiling oil.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
 Man that lift. You'll know what to
 do.

Sarmiento stands at the mouth of the bridge, tempting them to
 come. The horses' hooves pound the bridge as they race
 towards Sarmiento.

Sarmiento runs back through open gate. Sarmiento takes up
 fighting a guard right as the horsebacked Viola guard are
 about to enter, when--

The boiling liquid pours from the wall, burning horses and
 riders alike, dropping them like withering flowers.

COURTYARD

The battle has taken a turn for Sarmiento's forces, the
 fighting has abated, aside from small skirmishes that still
 rage within the fortress walls.

The prisoner on the wall calls to Sarmiento once again.

LOOK OUT PRISONER
 More on the way!

IN THE DISTANCE

A BATTALION of Viola guard, Swiss Guard, wagons and horsemen
 snake their way toward the fortress.

Sarmiento can hear the insurmountable odds coming. He runs up a stairwell to the wall.

SARMIENTO

(to look-out)

Use everything we have... collapse
the bridge--

(he points)

At that corner stone. Then run for
the river.

The battalion begins crossing the bridge. The wall fires into the mass. Guards are flung off the bridge, into the moat below...

The weight of the horses, soldiers and wagons collapse part of the bridge. Half are stranded on the Rome side, while a portion now rush the Fortress on the remainder of the bridge.

Sarmiento, with the gate still open, points to his cannoneers on the courtyard ground. When they draw within range, he signals them to fire-- wiping the remainder away.

SARMIENTO (cont'd)

(to those manning the
chain lock to the
barrier)

Close the gate!

The lock comes loose, dropping the barrier.

COURTYARD

Basil, bloodied from the battle, finds Sarmiento coming out of a stairwell.

BASIL SILBER

What now?

SARMIENTO

They will be upon us with odds that
we will soon not be able to match.

(to everyone)

Escape. While there is any chance
left.

EXT. TIBER RIVER PIER

Sarmiento aids a few of the injured as they make their escape on a remaining boat. The tied up guard continues to watch the coup.

Basil, ignoring the guard, pushes the boat off and watches stoically as Sarmiento rushes down the embankment, and into the darkness.

EMBANKMENT

Sarmiento sneaks up on Brother Batiz and Ignacius. He takes a horse.

SARMIENTO

The soldiers will swarm that fortress and find nothing. This gives me the space I need for the final ploy in this mess.

BROTHER BATIZ

The Cardinal.

SARMIENTO

It is only fitting he know the end to his own story.
(to Ignacius)
Then we go.

EXT. ROME - STREETS - NIGHT

Sarmiento rides at blazing speeds into the streets of Rome, towards the Vatican.

EXT. ROME - SIDE ENTRANCE TO VATICAN - NIGHT

TWO LETHARGIC GUARDS stand watch at a small gate at the rear of the Vatican. They look like they've been given the worst post... for good reason.

The streets are empty, not a soul is stirring. In the very distance they hear a gunshot--

POP! The wall fragments behind them. Startled, one looks around, more curious than alarmed. The other inspects the shattered brick.

LETHARGIC GUARD #1

What in blazes was that?

LETHARGIC GUARD #2

Looks like a ballast hit this.

STREETS

Sarmiento, driving his horse like a missile careening to it's target, readies his pistol again. The side entrance to the gate is at the very end of the long road--

He's basically taking shots at them from across the city...
BANG!

SIDE ENTRANCE TO VATICAN

LETHARGIC GUARD #2
(referring to the gunshot)
Did you hear that?

Another brick pops behind them, they are becoming alarmed.

LETHARGIC GUARD #2 (cont'd)
Are we being sacked? Again?

LETHARGIC GUARD #1
(looking down the road)
Hey... look there--

He points to Sarmiento riding towards them in the distance.

LETHARGIC GUARD #1 (cont'd)
A courier?

STREETS

Sarmiento readies his pistol. As the horse draws closer to the gate, he takes his time to aim...

SIDE ENTRANCE TO VATICAN

Both the guards squint, trying to make out the barreling horsemen, when BANG! Another shot ring out.

LETHARGIC GUARD #2
He's shooting at us!

A mere moment later--

The ballast pounds the wall behind them. They look at each other... drop their pikes and run for it.

Sarmiento rides up to the gate and enters.

INT. VATICAN CITY - VILLA - NIGHT

The Cardinal gathers his belongings, grabbing a SERVANT who's stirred by his commotion.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Where is Cara? Go find her! She should be back from Florence by now. Take her to the country villa and make sure she waits for me there. Understood? She must be away for the coming turmoil.

He shoves the servant away, continuing his panicked packing.

SARMIENTO (O.S.)

The turmoil is within your doors, cardinal. It is you who orchestrated this mess. I will inform the Pope of your betrayal, and it will finally be you who hangs.

The servant runs in fear upon hearing the disembodied voice. The cardinal, however, doesn't run, holding a coal lamp aloft, illuminating the creeping Sarmiento.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

Pope Leo is not taking audiences anymore. He will not see the morning, as he is taken with the malaria... or whatever it is that the doctors will end up diagnosing.

SARMIENTO

You've fouled the church.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

I have saved it. The Germans needed to see Luther as he is: the devil. I merely helped reinforce the notion. If it were not for me, the church would be lost in a few short years...

SARMIENTO

You have lost more than you know.

Sarmiento tosses her ROSARY CRUCIFIX at his feet. Umbretto sees it is the same she threw into the water at the executions.

The cardinal drops the lamp... the hot coals spill across the floor.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
Where... where is she?

SARMIENTO
She died on a rooftop in Germany.
Saving Martin Luther. Can you
suffer that betrayal?

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
My daughter... no.

Sarmiento is paused by Umbretto's disclosure.

SARMIENTO
Your child paid for your
indiscretion with her life. You
are now like I was when you sent me
to the bottom of the river...
you've lost all.

The flickering coals light a tapestry in the hall. Neither
of the men budge, the fire is appropriate for the moment.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
(tears and rage)
And whose side did you herald? The
reformers will not have you, the
church has erased your name, you
will be nothing, remembered by no
one... all for your own cause.

SARMIENTO
I have my son. I found myself.
God favors me today. Amen.

The walls catch fire.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO
The only thing I had! Cara... is
dead!

SARMIENTO
All for your own cause.

The cardinal charges at Sarmiento, almost seeking consolation
in his arms. Sarmiento grabs the weak old man by the throat,
holding him away as he trembles in despair, rage.

CARDINAL UMBRETTO

(tears, panic)

For what! What have I now! Kill
me! Damn you, do what I ask!

SARMIENTO

You do not get the honor of dying
by my hand.

Sarmiento shoves him back. Umbretto falls to his knees,
heaped on the floor, crying as the building burns all around
him.

The building whips into an inferno. Sarmiento watches
Umbretto, who has no intention of leaving. The flames become
even too much of a threat for Sarmiento.

EXT. VILLA

As Sarmiento walks out of from the fire, Umbretto screams,
both in sorrow and in pain.

MONTAGE

Brother Batiz and Sarmiento, with Ignacius saddled with him
slowly ride the countryside, back to Spain.

EXT. SPANISH VILLA - DAY

Sarmiento stands at the porch of a quiet country villa,
watching Brother Batiz and Ignacius play in the grass.

Ignacius runs over to Sarmiento, pulling him over to join
them. Sarmiento finally smiles as his son leads him.

Sarmiento overlooks his stretch of peaceful land... and sees
a SCOUT watching them from atop a hill. Sarmiento maintains
his composure as he pats Brother Batiz on the back.

SARMIENTO

Take the boy inside for supper. I
am going for a brief ride.

PAST THE HILL...

Sarmiento rides over the hill to find TWENTY MOORISH RIDERS
waiting for him there.

Sarmiento makes no motion for his sword or the battery of pistols slung from his horse.

A WARRIOR dismounts to face Sarmiento.

MOORISH WARRIOR
Allah has delivered you back to
Spain.

SARMIENTO
So it seems.

MOORISH WARRIOR
The sultan of Morocco, his
greatness, Ahmad al-Araj demands
your capture for the death of King
Nasir.

The warriors unsheathe their swords carefully, beginning a ceremony of the utmost importance.

MOORISH WARRIOR (cont'd)
You will come to answer for your
crimes.

SARMIENTO
I wash my hands of this. Go back,
find your resolutions elsewhere. I
seek only peace.

MOORISH WARRIOR
Prepare yourself, Christian. You
come with us, preferably alive, but
dead will suffice.

SARMIENTO
Soldier. You saw me with my
family. We have both had our fill
of blood. Our God wants no more of
this, I promise you.

MOORISH WARRIOR
Take your sword, Spaniard.

Sarmiento goes to his horse, slaps it to drive it away from him, showing he is unwilling to take his weapons.

Another warrior tosses his sword at the feet Sarmiento.

MOORISH WARRIOR (cont'd)
I saw you fight. I have heard
others tell their stories. You are
a scorpion in the skin of man.

The sword rests as his feet.

MOORISH WARRIOR (cont'd)
Two things are certain. We came
here for you. And you will fight.
You cannot help your nature.

SARMIENTO
I heard your soldiers say many
times, "may the merciful Allah
choose my fate."

The warrior charges. Sarmiento does not budge.

The warrior, sword now above head, is almost upon Sarmiento.

The sword begins to fall. Sarmiento takes his last breath--

SARMIENTO (cont'd)
Forgive me...

Before kicking the sword into his primed hands...

Sarmiento blocks. He slashes through to--

BLACK