

Vlad The Impaler

(c) July 09, 2008 Michael Shire and Rob Valentine

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EXT. CONSTANTINOPLE, 1453 - DAY

COLLAGE:

The walled city of Constantinople is surrounded by the Ottoman Turkish army. Giant bronze cannons has been hammering at the city (6 shots per day) for 3 months. Finally today looks like the day they will break through.

OVERLAY TEXT: Constantinople, Turkey 1453

V.O.

FOR THREE MONTHS THE TURKS HAVE BEEN POUNDING THE WALLS OF CONSTANTINOPLE WHICH HAVE NEVER BEEN BREACHED IN A THOUSAND YEARS.

INT. WAR TENT of the SULTAN - DAY

Turkish artillery officer, MIKAEL, 40, enters the royal tent, and bows to the SULTAN MEHMED. The Sultan is sitting on an ornate throne. He is 50, an olive skinned Turk, and dressed in the finest silks.

Seated near him is his adopted son, RADU, a young Romanian Prince, 17 years old.

MIKAEL

The next shot, your highness, and we should break through.

The Sultan rises, and addresses him.

SULTAN

Prepare the army to enter the city.

(then to Radu)

Radu I want you at my side.

Attendants bring armour for them, and begin arming them.

EXT. TURKISK ARMY, FRONT LINE - DAY

C.U. LOADING CANNON - Giant bronze cannon 40 feet long. Three men are loading a 30" stone ball into the mouth of the cannon. They need 6 foot planks to load the 600 lb. ball into the cannon.

While they are loading, the Sultan rides up on horseback, with Prince Radu at his side. They are wearing Turkish style armour, and are escorted by four other royal guards on horseback.

They come to a halt, and Mikael looks to Sultan. He waits for the Sultans order. The Sultan gives a nod to him.

Mikael raises his sword and shouts:

MIKAEL

Ready!

Everyone covers their ears, and Mikael signals to fire the cannon. The cannon crew has stuffed their ears. The Sultan and anyone near put their hands over their ears.

MIKAEL

Fire!

After they light the fuse, the crew scrambles.

The cannon fires with an earth-shaking BOOM.

The horses jump and rear up, and the Sultan's guards try to control the horses.

EXT. WALL OF CITY - DAY

ON WALL of the city, the stone ball hits very hard, finally breaking through. After the stone rubble falls into a big heap, the top of wall is now missing. Cheers ring out from the Turkish soldiers.

EXT. INSIDE CASTLE WALL - DAY

As the dust settles the SHOUTING and screaming of the approaching army gets closer, hordes of Turks climbing the rubble of the broken wall. It becomes LOUDER.

Christian soldiers, recognized with crosses and different looking armour, are all looking at each other now worried, as they hear their enemy approaching.

Dust settles. Turkish soldiers run through the dust.

The sound of battle and clashing of steel gets louder.

INT. ADRIANOPE CITY, COURTYARD - DAY

A beautiful sunny day in an outdoor courtroom decorated with plants vases sculptures and fine tapestries.

A Turkish warrior dressed in fine silks, VLAD TEPESH, 19, young face, clean shaven, confident, and handsome.

He is walking toward a table. Many other noblemen and ladies are walking about and sitting here. Vlad carries a sword and shows it to some soldiers. It has a dragon hilt.

VLAD

I received the first of my fathers inheritance.

(they look at it)

This is my father's sword !
And his order of the dragon medallion.

Vlad sits at a large table and shows a MEDALLION that he wears around his neck to three soldiers that seem very interested.

The medallion has a motif of a dragon, the 'dracul' .
Vlad admires his sword and raises it to the sun, letting
the sun's rays gleam on it.

Vlad then looks to a GERMAN BOYAR, 50 y.o. , a merchant,
the one who has delivered these items to Vlad.

VLAD

With these symbols I can assume my
father's place now.

I shall leave for my home ...Vallachia.
... and, Allah willing, I will find the
truth behind my fathers murder.

A Turkish MESSENGER enters and walks up to the nobles,
bowing.

MESSENGER

Good news. Constantinople has finally
fallen.

The Messenger gives Vlad a scroll with the news. Vlad opens
it and glances at it. The Messenger retreats and leaves.

The German Boyar turns to Vlad, with a fake smile.

GERMAN BOYAR

Congratulations. The Ottoman empire has
again proven itself superior.

The German merchant bows and he too leaves. Vlad turns to
his right hand man, SPINU, 30, a Turkish officer.

VLAD

Now's the time. Ready the army. We
leave first thing in the morning.

SPINU

Where to milord?

VLAD

Tirgovista, my capital city.

EXT. ADRIANOPOLE CITY GATES - DAY

Vlad, with Spinu, and a dozen officers on horses, exit the city gates. They join an army of 400 horseman and 600 foot soldiers.

BATTLEFIELD in HUNGARY - DAY

KING HUNYADI, 30, sits atop his horse wearing full armour. He raises his sword and leads a large army to attack TURKS.

NARRATION (V.O.)

King Hunyadi of Hungary, known as the White knight, finally gets the terrible news that Constantinople has fallen to the Ottomans.

He is compelled to try and reclaim it in the name of the Holy Roman Empire.

Although there has been Feuds between neighboring country's including Transylvania and Vallachia.

These Leaders put aside their differences for the sake of Christendom.

Valislav the second, who has usurped the Princedom of Vallachia from Vlad's father, decides to join forces with Hunyadi. They start their campaign against the Turkish Ottomans south of the Danube river.

COLLAGE: Battles of Northern Christian armies.

King Hunyadi and Vladislav, fighting Turks. Red CRUSADER crosses on white flags, against the curved moon symbol of the Ottomans.

INT. CHRISTIAN ARMY TENT - DAY

Hunyadi and Vladislav are between battles, and talk about military strategies. They are looking at maps on a table. A few other officers are with them as they point to the map.

HUNYADI

Whatever gains we have made we have lost again this week. I don't think we have enough men to break through.

VLADISLAV

I agree. Reports are that the Turks are even now getting reinforcements from Adrianople.

HUNYADI

Then we might have to retreat across the river and wait for the armies from Austria to join us.

VLADISLAV

There is also a Turkish army now heading for Turgovista and it is said to be lead by Dracul's son Vlad. I thought he was dead!

HUNYADI

Unfortunately we must retreat. But to where? Constantinople or Vallachia?

VLADISLAV

For me, I must try and save my capital city - Turgovista! To regain strength.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA - DAY

Vlad is riding his horse, with 20 officers leading his army of 1000 soldiers into the city gates of Turgovista. The city is almost vacant except for some shop keepers, peasants, and animals. There is no resistance.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA, UPPER TOWER - DAY

In the tall tower, Vlad and Spinu look down over the city.

VLAD

The city is ours!

SPINU

But for how long? Their army
outnumbers us ten to one. Should we
stay and fight?

VLAD

(pauses)

What would be the use of holding the
city if I can not rule it? Now I must
fight Vladislav for something which is
mine! If we hold him off in time to be
saved by the Sultan, he will take the
country from me as well.

SPINU

You and I both know the Sultan intends
for your brother to rule Vallachia.

VLAD

There are too many forces against me.

SPINU

I understand your position my lord, what
shall we do?

Vlad pulls out his sword and shows it to SPINU.

VLAD

As my fathers blood runs through my
veins, I must rule Vallachia for his
sake. Just to make things right again.

My time will come. But for now I must
leave. I will find help from the only
real family I have left. My uncle
Bogdan in Moldovia will support my
claim!

I leave the army in your hands Spinu.
Fight Vadislav as long as you can.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

COLLAGE: Vlad and five other horsemen ride through the Carpathian Mountains, going to Moldavia. CLAUDU, a fellow Valachian officer, is by his side now.

EXT. MOLDAVIA CITY - DAY

Vlad and his men ride into a walled city, through the open city gates, and head toward a large castle.

Many guards watch them from the walls, and many peasants on the ground greet them. Some comment to each other:

PEOPLE IN CROWD

Is that a Turkish ambassador?

Vlad is stopped by a guard and tells him who he is.

VLAD

I am Vlad Tepesh, son of Vlad Dracul.

AT THE CASTLE SUCEAVA - MAIN DOORS - DAY

Vlad rides up with CLAUDU, 25, and they meet the guards.

Stable hands take their horses by the reins. All the riders now dismount.

KING BOGDAN II, 50, a large man with full beard comes out of the large doors, and walks down the few steps to meet Vlad.

VLAD

Uncle !

King Bogdan tilts his head but recognizes Vlad. He opens his arms and gives Vlad a strong hug.

BOGDAN

Good to see you my boy. It's been too many years. You look so much like your father. Last we heard you were imprisoned, we thought we'd never see you again!

Bogdan shouts back toward the open door

BOGDAN

Where is Stefan?

From up above them, in a balcony alcove, STEFAN, 20,
(CONT'D)
shouts down at them:

STEFAN

Here I am, father.

Bogdan and Vlad look up to see him there. He has a few ladies by his side.

One of them is ISABELLA, 19, a beautiful cortesan. Beside her is her handmaiden and assistant, VERA, only 17 y.o.

BOGDAN

Stefan! You remember your cousin Vlad?

STEFAN

Of course.

(he laughs)

... but who is that?

Stefan waves at them and quickly leaves the balcony.

King Bogdan turns back to face Vlad and his men.

BOGDAN

Come on in. We'll have a feast tonight.
You must all be hungry.

They all nod in agreement, and they follow the King in.

INT. MUVDOVIA CASTLE, HALLWAY - DAY

Vlad walks beside Bogdan, followed by his men and the royal guards. They look at the expensive tapestries which Bogdan is proud of, and points out other artifacts like vases and sculptures as they pass. They are not in a hurry.

The CHAMBERLAIN comes up to the King and bows slightly, and looks at him to see if there is any orders from him.

BOGDAN

Prepare rooms for six guests.

Then Bogdan turns to Vlad.

BOGDAN

How long do you think you'll stay with us?

VLAD

I can't say.

BOGDAN

Now that you are here and not in Turgovista means you have problems don't you?.

Come We must discuss your future.

STEFAN now steps into the hallway and walks up to join them. Following him at a distance are the courtly ladies.

Stefan rushes up to Vlad, starts to wrestle a bit with him, pushing playfully. Vlad smiles slightly but is able to push him away.

STEFAN

Of course I remember my cousin. It's a been a few years ...

(he pauses)

... but the last time you were here you were shorter, and you didn't where these funny clothes.

Vlad also now stands back and looks over Stefan in mock appraisal.

VLAD

You were just as short, but if I remember correctly... you were on the ground after your horse threw you. Hope you horsemanship has improved since then.

Vlad looks over at the three ladies behind Stefan. Stefan notices his gaze at one of them and steps over to the women.

STEFAN

Oh, this is Lady Isabella, and her
STEFAN (CONT'D)
 friends. She is the daughter of the
 Countess lizobeth of Lithuania.

Isabella bows slightly to Vlad, she is very attracted to him and tries not to stare.

Vlad steps up to the ladies, then reaches out for their hands and kisses them politely.

Isabella is the last one. He speaks in French as he kisses her hand and then something else in Latin. He is trying hard to impress her.

VLAD

Very good to meet you, my lady.

STEFAN

This is the VLAD, the Prince of
 Vallachia - or should be. He has
 learned a few things since I have seen
 him last.

Vlad keeps looking at Isabella, while holding her hand. There is a mutual attraction. He speaks in Romanian.

VLAD

You are very beautiful

ISABELLA

Thank you, I too know a few languages.

Vlad blushes, smiling, and turns away. He looks at Stefan and his uncle. He then introduces Claude and his other men.

VLAD

This is my best warrior and knight, Sir
 Claude. And my personal best knights
 from Vallachia.

BOGDAN

Very good to have you all here, Lord
 Vlad. Come let's eat.

They all turn to walk to the feasting hall.

INT. SUCEAVA - FEASTING HALL - DAY

This hall is large, with tapestries on all walls, and open windows along one wall.

All the guests and nobles are sitting around a large, long table with lots of food on it - wine, fruits, meats. There is some entertainment like jugglers, musicians, fire-breathers etc.

The nobles are relaxing after the meal, and drinking wine talking happily.

Vlad is seated beside the king as guest of honor. Across from him is Stefan.

The King wants to hear stories of Vallachia, and news.

BOGDAN

What can you tell us of the Turks, and Vallachia, Prince Vlad?

As Vlad speaks the others begin to listen to his news.

VLAD

As you know, my father, Vlad Dracul, sent me and my brother Radu as ransom to the Sultan Mehmed II in exchange for his freedom. That was seven years ago.

Radu and I stayed at his palace in Adrianople, and were taught many languages, religion, and military tactics. In many ways it was not a prison at all.

But, after 4 years, we got news that my father was killed, and so, the Sultan released both of us. We were free and I was given an army to command.

Of course I felt very loyal to him - especially knowing I had no father to guide me.

I became obsessed to find out exactly how my father was killed.

We had many spies that would give us such information. I soon learned that he was killed by Vladislav II, who took my father's place.

I also discovered that the Boyars - the powerful merchant guild of Germans - were paid to betray my father. It was they who opened the gates, and let in Vladislav's sieging army.

My father was soon chased from the city walls and down into the marshes, where they shot him with a crossbow ... in the back.

BOGDAN

I've never trusted Vladislav either.

STEFAN

At that time you were still fighting for the Ottomans as a Turk. How did you feel about fighting against Christians?

VLAD

Warriors are just warriors to me. I thought some day I'd be rewarded by the Sultan. I always hoped to reclaim Vallachia with whatever army I could.

To me it was not about religion. I'm not sure who side God is on anymore.

BOGDAN

I believe you should be a Prince, but in a Christian Princedom. That's the way your father felt. And with our help ...

(Bogdan pauses and put his hand on Stefan's shoulder)

... we'll put you on that throne."

STEFAN

I'm so glad that you've come back to
your family, Vlad.

They raise chalices and drink wine with a toast.

INT. SUCEAVA HALLWAYS - MORNING

Vlad is wearing something different now - more European.
He's been here a few days.

He walks down the hallways of the castle near the chapel
and sees Lady Isabella alone walking ahead. He decides to
follow her. He is twenty feet behind her, and she continues
walking up to the castle's chapel doors.

She goes through the chapel doors. He follows a moment later
and opens it quietly to peer in, then slips inside too.

INT. SUCEAVA CHAPEL - MORNING

Isabella lights a candle at the side of the room, then sets
it among other candles. She looks up at a statue of St.
Nicholas Orthodox Christian, and crosses her chest in a
blessing. Then she walks to the front area.

Vlad is a BEAT behind her and mimics what she does. He goes
to get a candle and light it too, then sets it in the
alcove. He turns to watch her kneel down. He turns to the
statue above and crosses himself too.

He walks over quietly to kneel down near Isabella's side.
He copies her. She clasps her hands, he copies her. She
looks over at him and gives him a small smile. He smiles
at her too. They exchange no words.

Then he has an inspirational moment, and begins to really
get caught up in the beautiful atmosphere all around.

Looking at the statues, the frescos, the stained glass,
Vlad misses seeing Isabella as she gets up. She turns and
walks out the door. Soon, he notices she is gone and
hurries to find her.

INT. SUCEAVA HALLWAYS - MORNING

She waits outside the door to talk to him. Vlad does not see her beside the door and almost hits her with the door. Isabella laughs a little as Vlad regains his composure.

ISABELLA

What were you praying for milord?

VLAD

Its been a long time since I've been in a Christian church. I've forgotten how to pray.

VLAD

To be honest, I didn't pray for anything. I was just hoping to talk to you.

He is focused on her.

VLAD

(mumbling)

Very beautiful.... I mean this church
... I mean yes , you are too.

She blushes at the compliment. They begin to walk slowly side by side.

ISABELLA

How do you pray to Allah?

VLAD

I don't know what God I've been praying to. I've studied many religions now and not really felt anything special in my heart or soul.

Vlad pauses to express himself clearly.

VLAD

But in that chapel ...I felt something, it felt right. I've been thinking that I should commit myself completely to the Holy Roman Empire like my father did.

ISABELLA

That would make me happy ... I mean for you.

VLAD

Have you heard the Order of the Dragon?

ISABELLA

No. What is it?

VLAD

It's similar to the order of the Templar Knights. The Emperor Sigismund created it some time ago. He swore in twenty four knights - and my father was one of them.

ISABELLA

What did they swear to do?

VLAD

To defend the Christian faith, and fight the enemies of Christendom.

ISABELLA

If you're going to swear that oath you'd soon become the enemy of the Sultan ... and your brother. ... not to mention the very army you have commanded.

They stop walking. This is her hallway turn off.

VLAD

I know. My brother considers the Sultan his real father now, but I came here to find my real father's blood-line, and I think now my original faith.

I have come to a crossroads, and I must choose a side.

A short silence. She smiles affectionately at him.

ISABELLA

My Lord Vlad. I'll pray for you.

She turns to walk away down a side corridor. He steps forward and grabs her hand. She turns to look at him.

VLAD

Isabella. Thank you. I'm sure that will help.

She walks away and he releases her slowly and they have a moment.

INT. SUCEAVA - ARMOURY - DAY

Prince Stefan leads Vlad, Claudu, and two of Stefan's knights into a large open hall. It is the armoury, where most of the castle's weapons are stored. Vlad and Claudu have on their Turkish armour.

Along the walls are pole arms, swords, and armour. Vlad pauses to look at particular weapons. You can hear the echo's of their voices.

STEFAN

So how many men do you think you've killed?

Vlad stops and gives him a serious look.

VLAD

Probably more than you. Not Christians or Moslems ... just soldiers willing to die for their cause.

STEFAN

Your experience has made you wise too.

Stefan looks over Vlad's armour.

STEFAN

Let me show you my latest passion. My father's been ordering the latest designs of armour ... some excellent pieces from Austria.

Stefan has his two assistants bring his GOTHIC armour and put it on him.

STEFAN

Why don't you try on this harness?

STEFAN (CONT'D)

I think you'll find it far superior to what you've been wearing.

An armourer assistant helps Vlad to put on legs and body armour. Vlad puts it on and notices more movement.

Vlad and Stefan's faces light up as they face each other, in armour now, and prepare to practice some sword techniques. Each circles slowly, wielding two handed swords, and clash steel on steel a few times. Both look like they about matched in skill.

STEFAN

Tell me about the large cannons the Ottomans use.

VLAD

They are far superior to a Trebuchet or a catapult.

They exhibit some excellent swordplay - attack and defend, countering each others moves.

After a minute of some swordplay they lock up, close in on each other and smile. Vlad nods his approval.

Stefan notices the DRAGON SWORD very closely that Vlad is wielding. Stefan steps back and they both relax.

STEFAN

That is an exquisite sword, cousin.

Vlad turns the sword around and hands it to Stefan, hilt first. Stefan takes it and flips it twice, checking the balance.

VLAD

This is my father's sword. Given to him by Sigismund - of Austria.

My father was one of the knights of the Order of the Dragon. I want to dedicate myself and take his place. I've found his original medallion too.

STEFAN

I'm very happy to hear you say that, I too feel we should take back what the Ottomans have gained ... especially Constantinople.

Vlad pulls out the DRAGON medallion from his chest and shows it to Stefan too. Claudu and the other men are watching.

VLAD

Stefan! We are blood relatives and we should be united. I, Vlad Teppish, soon to be ruler of Vallachia, vow to always defend you ... and Muldovia.

STEFAN

I too shall make this vow!

Vlad and Stefan bring their swords together, soon all the other soldiers join in and raise their swords in solidarity.

INT. SUCEAVA, CASTLE HALLS - DAY

ONE MONTH LATER.

Stefan and one of his knights are walking along. Stefan hears commotion near his father's chambers. Stefan looks sharply to his friend, then dashes for the door. He pushes it open and runs in.

His friend, a BEARDED KNIGHT yells down the corridor.

BEARDED KNIGHT

Guards! GUARDS !

INT. SUCEAVA, BOGDANS BEDROOM - DAY

Stefan rushes into the room, followed by his knight. They see a dead guardsman on the floor, and a crying old lady attendant sitting on floor.

She's beside King Bogdan's lifeless body, which is on the floor, leaning against the bed off the bed, and there is blood all over his chest.

Stefan runs over quickly, kneels down, and looks closer at his fathers face. He shakes him and realizes he's dead.

Stefan pauses a moment now and steps back.

He is suddenly hit with great sorrow and some tears come to his eyes. He tries to hold them back.

More guards come rushing in.

A second knight, TALL KNIGHT, enters the room with news for Stefan.

TALL KNIGHT

LORD STEFAN! The castle is surrounded.
Someone must have let in assassins. We
must leave for your safety.

STEFAN

One minute.

Bearded Knight grabs him slowly and helps him to his feet. He pulls him away from his dead father. They exit the room.

INT. SUCEAVA, HALLWAYS - DAY

The two knights and some guards follow Stefan. They bump into Vlad and Claudu. None of them are wearing armour.

VLAD

What is it?

STEFAN

My father's been assassinated. And the
castle is surrounded. We must get away.
They are trying to kill me as well.

VLAD

Can't we fight them?

TALL KNIGHT

There's too many of them. We can hold them back to give you time to escape.

BEARDED KNIGHT

Your survival is the most important thing for us now. You must escape, you are not safe here.

The knights motion to leave.

STEFAN

Then let's go to the armoury.

INT. SUCEAVA, ARMOURY / STABLES - DAY

Thirty people are getting ready to escape. There are many knights, nobles, and the three ladies are here.

Men are putting on armour, and others are grabbing weapons and wrapping them in cloths.

Through a side door, the stables can be seen. Many people are readying horses for a journey. Everyone is in a hurry.

Vlad is here getting on the breast and backplate only of the Gothic armour. Then Stefan comes up to him. He is very emotional when he thinks of his father killed.

STEFAN

Now I truly know how you feel.

VLAD

I'm sorry it had to happen to you too. Let's focus on getting all these people to safety.

Claudu joins them for a moment.

CLAUDU

We ride to Transylvania, my lord?

Stefan nods, and turns. He goes to the stables. Isabella is letting people pass her as she stands to watch what Vlad is doing. He sees her and walks up to her, then grabs her elbow to guide her to the stables.

VLAD

I'm glad you're here. You'll be safe with me.

They hurry out of the armoury and mount their horses.

EXT. OUTSIDE SUCEAVA - DAY

North of the city, away from the attacking army, the group of thirty nobles on horses gallop hard toward the mountains. They also have pack horses with them, heaped up with tents and poles.

They are pursued by thirty horsemen, but they are far behind them. After a moment the pursuers slow down and turn back.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - NIGHT

The thirty people who escaped are now deep in the mountains. Several tents are set up, and there is a large open campfire that a dozen people sit around. One servant is cooking a few rabbits on a spit.

Vlad, in a night cloak, is warming himself, standing by the fire. Isabella, and her handmaiden VERA walk up to him.

ISABELLA

Where are we going?

VLAD

Soon we will be in Hunyadi's territory. Transylvania.

He sees Isabella is cold and he motions her to come beside him and closer to the fire.

ISABELLA

Who is Hunyadi?

VLAD

He was sometimes a rival and sometimes an ally to my father. Small feuds mostly. And I suspect he had something to do with my father's death as well,

I'm not sure. These days you never know who you can trust.

STEFAN

You can never afford to let your guard down either.

Stefan pokes at the fire and the ground with his sword

ISABELLA

Is there any safe place for us to go?

VLAD

My grandfather built a watchtower near the border of Vallachia and Transylvania. It should still be there.

It was occupied by monks 100 years ago. I know it's abandoned through the winter months. If we can make it there, we'll be safe for a while.

Vlad notices Isabella is still cold. He looks at her and smiles at her. He begins to unfasten his cloak.

VLAD

Would you like my cloak, my lady?

ISABELLA

It's not as good without you in it, my lord Vlad.

Vlad stops unfastening his cloak and instead opens his arm inviting her to come stand next to him, under his cloak. She comes and gets close to him.

STEFAN

I must make alliances and raise an army. Looks like we really need each other now.

VLAD

First we take Vallachia. If we do this first I promise you shall be back stronger than ever!

STEFAN

I feel a strong need for revenge, do you still feel that too Vlad?

VLAD

I'm afraid so, I don't know how to get rid of that feeling.

COLLAGE: A collage of traveling for a week.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Vlad is shaving his beard using his knife and a small mirror. He now has a small moustache.

He mounts his horse and catches up with the rest of them.

He trots up beside Isabella and says nothing. Isabella turns to him with a smile.

ISABELLA

What have you done to your face?

VLAD

This is the look of my father, I want anyone who sees me to remember him, see him in me.

ISABELLA

(she shakes her head, smiling)
It will take me a while to get used to.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY - DAY

It is now AUTUMN, and the leaves have changed to orange.

The group of thirty ride into a small village, high in the mountains. A few chickens, and geese cross the road in front of them.

Vlad is leading, and he rides beside Stefan and Claudi. He sees a small dirty faced peasant VILLAGE BOY, 8 years old. Vlad calls to him.

VLAD

What village is this?

VILLAGE BOY

Pishu.

VLAD

Who is your Ruling King?

VILLAGE BOY

Hunyadi.... Are you a king?

VLAD

I soon will be.

STEFAN

I hope we get to the tower before the snow falls.

EXT. PUNARI WATCHTOWER - DAY

On the border of Vallachia, there stands a single watchman's tower, built atop a very tall ridge. Everywhere is a light layer of snow here. Looking down the valley, the group of thirty on horse come through the narrow valley below and come into view of the tower.

BELOW IN VALLEY -

Isabella looks up at the tower. She is now riding closer to Vlad.

ISABELLA

It's beautiful.

VLAD

And safe. There should be more provisions in there for us.

Vlad gets off his horse. Claudu and Stefan do the same. Vlad motions to Stefan's knights to take the others around the back up a long winding path. Vlad, Stefan, and four others all begin to climb up the steep grass and dirt-covered ridge up to the tower.

Behind them the rest of the horses and riders climb up the path.

AT THE TOWER BASE -

Vlad and Stefan scramble up the steep hike and come upon a big wooden door. Light snow is on the ground around them, and the air is thin. They try to catch their breath.

ON the iron-bound heavy door, they see a big padlock. Vlad looks to Claudu.

VLAD

Claud u, break this open.

Claud u comes closer and pulls out a war hammer from his belt. He strikes at the lock twice, and it finally pops open. He then steps back.

Vlad pushes the door open, and enters, followed by Stefan and the other men.

INT. PUNARI - MAIN ROOM - DAY

It is very dark inside, the only light comes in through archery holes above. They see a stone spiral staircase leading upwards. There's a big, open walk-in fireplace. They see some firewood stacked along one wall. There are a few tables and chairs here.

VLAD

Claud u, let's build a fire. I'm going to look up in the tower.

Vlad leads and goes up the stairs with Stefan.

EXT. PUNARI - TOWER ROOM - DAY

The two princes get to the top room. The ceiling above them is the inside of the steep round roof.

Vlad goes to a shuttered window, and open it, facing south. Stefan goes to the next one and open it too. They look out over the valley and can see far across the mountains.

STEFAN

This is a great lookout. I think I can see TIRGOVISTA from here.

VLAD

Yes this is a great lookout, you can see and hear for miles.

There are also some catacombs in this mountain. When this used to be a monastery in the twelfth century they made large storage rooms. And as a child I would explore them. I think I remember where they are.

INT. PUNARI - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Vlad and Stefan come down the spiral stairs after being in the tower room.

The fire is going now, and there's a man building it up with more logs.

Vlad spots a simple wooden side-table against a wall. He walks over, and kicks away some straw that was piled under the table. Using his foot, he clears away more and can see something wooden.

STEFAN

Looks like you've found something.

VLAD

Help me with this.

He then gets down on one knee and clears away some dirt with his hand to reveal a big iron ring sunken into a large wooden floor.

Vlad gets back up and reaches down to lift the ring. Stefan comes to help him lift it up.

It opens, on hinges, and stays open, hitting against the back wall.

The two of them peer down the square opening, and can see some steep stairs going down into utter darkness.

They look to each other in excitement.

Stefan grabs a candle lantern from the mantle and lights it with a small fire stick fire from the fireplace.

Claudu and other men come to see what they've opened.

VLAD

Claudu come with us. The rest of you
stay here.

VLAD (CONT'D)

(then to Stefan)

Let's get the others.

They go down with the lantern in front of them.

INT. CATACOMBS -

At the bottom of dusty stairs, they enter a narrow
corridor.

They walk along and enter a new area with wider and taller
catacomb with round vaulted ceilings. Many alcoves along
the walls show artifacts, ceramic pots scrolls, bones, and
other stashed items.

They keep going down larger halls that angle downwards, and
go down more steeper stairs.

INT. CATACOMBS, ENTRY HALL -

They enter into a very large room, dark because they only
have one lantern. There are a few passages that run off
from here.

Vlad grabs a stick and walks slowly along the outer wall,
examining it carefully, probing it with his stick. He comes
upon a cobweb covered DOOR, and removes most of the cobwebs
with his stick.

Stefan comes up beside him, with Claudu, and they look at
the archway overtop in stone. There are two doors, ten feet
tall and ten feet wide.

STEFAN

Looks like they haven't been opened in
quite a while.

VLAD

Possibly a hundred years.

There's a big wooden bolt across the door, and they lift it up, removing it.

STEFAN

But where does it lead?

VLAD

I think I know. Help me with this.

Claudu and the men help Vlad to open one door. They soon see a ray of light coming through.

It takes a lot of heaving, but they get it open. They can see sunlight coming in from outside. Many tree roots and leaves and light snow falling on them.

Then they heave and open the other door too. They pull out their swords and hack through roots and leaves. And make their way forward.

There seems to be a tunnel leading outside.

EXT. PUNARI WATCHTOWER, OUTER WALLS - DAY

From outside, the others on horses are looking away. They turn around when they hear noises.

They see a small opening in the side of the mountain appear.

Two riders dismount. They walk their horse towards the sound.

TALL KNIGHT

Who's there?... Is that you Vlad?

VLAD

Yes. It's us. Help us clear the doorway.

They also help to clear the entrance. In a very short time the doorways are clear.

The guards walk inside, leading their horses after them. Then everyone comes inside.

Isabella enters and walks over to Vlad.

ISABELLA

What is this place?

VLAD

This was the hideout for many monks, centuries ago. It was an old monastery and they built the watchtower over it.

Some soldiers start to unpack the horses. Others get out lanterns for everyone, and they light them up.

INT. PUNARI - MAIN ROOM - SUNSET

Most of the knights and ladies are here relaxing in casual clothing, not a lot of armour.

They are sitting in wooden chairs near the large fireplace. Someone is cooking on the pot. Some are pouring wine.

Vlad is standing, watching them all. Isabella comes up to him. She puts her arms around him for comfort.

VLAD

Isabella. Come with me. I want to show you something.

Vlad grabs a lantern, and takes her hand. They leave together going up the spiral stairs.

INT. PUNARI, TOWER ROOM - SUNSET

They come up the stairs and into the top room. The shutters are open and Isabella looks through the windows around her. She sees a colorful sunset over the mountains. Vlad waits a moment then points south.

VLAD

That's my land. Vallachia. Where my family is from.

ISABELLA

It's beautiful.

VLAD

I think it pales compared to your ...

VLAD (CONT'D)

beauty. My heart has been on fire for you ever since I saw you. You must know this by now.

Since I've been near you I have felt a rebirth of life, My faith in God has been lit again.

You give me a new purpose other than conquest.

Isabella. I want you to be my wife, will you marry me?

ISABELLA

(she smiles and laughs a little)
Yes of course! But where would we live? Here?

VLAD

When I regain my rightful throne of Vallachia, you will live as my Princess in Tirgovista.

She kisses him then nods. After the kiss Vlad looks at her. They both have a small tear in their eyes.

VLAD

I vow to you: When I become Prince of Vallachia, I will build a castle for you here. This will be a safe place for us to retreat to.

EXT. PUNARI VALLEY - SPRINGTIME - DAY

* POSSIBLE Shots of melting snow. And forest animals in the woods.

It is springtime now, and the snow is melting.

INT. PUNARI - TOWER ROOM - DAY

Vlad is standing in front of a basin, shirtless, and is frothing up soap over his rough beard. He trims away his beard and leaves his large curled moustache on. He likes the new look.

EXT. PUNARI VALLEY, SPRINGTIME - DAY

In the valley below PUNARI castle, a dozen horsemen are coming. They are from Hungary, and they fly Hunyadi's banner.

EXT. PUNARI - TOWER ROOM - DAY

Vlad and Stefan are looking out of the windows to the valley bellow. Two soldiers have joined them.

STEFAN

I wonder who they are?

Vlad continues to look down and looks for some kind of flag or heraldry. A messenger dismounts his horse and gives a scroll to one of Vlad's soldiers.

STEFAN

That looks like the flag of Transylvania.

VLAD

You're right - that's Hunyadi's flag.

STEFAN

I wonder what they want from us.

Vlad's soldiers come up the stairs of the tower with the scroll.

He gets to Vlad and bows a bit as he hands it to him. Vlad opens it and reads it to himself then summarizes for Stefan.

VLAD

Hunyadi has decided to fight against Vladislav again.

Vladislav has apparently joined forces with the Turks again, and has got word that I am not fighting for the Sultan any more.

VLAD (CONT'D)

Hunyadi wants my alliance. ... and wants me to meet with him as soon as possible.

Vlad looks thoughtful for a moment then turns to his Stefan.

VLAD

This is exactly what we need!

Vlad turns to a nearby guard.

VLAD

Ready my horse I leave within the hour!

EXT. PUNARI - OUTER WALL - DAY

Vlad is with four soldiers who help him get his horse ready to ride. He wears only half harness of armour. Isabella comes to him outside.

ISABELLA

Why are you leaving?

VLAD

I think God has answered your prayers. This could be a trap or a triumph. I am summoned by Hunyadi to join his forces to crush a common enemy!

Vlad grabs her hand and kisses it.

VLAD

Don't worry. I WILL come back.

INT. HUNYADI'S ROYAL TENT - DAY

King Hunyadi is in his royal tent, on campaign near Transylvania. It has a few large tables here filled with maps. The tent doors are open to the outside.

Vlad enters escorted by four guards. He sees Hunyadi and waits for him to look up.

Hunyadi sees him and straightens up, coming over to Vlad. He motions to a seat nearby.

Vlad sits down across from him.

HUNYADI

Vladimir. Thank you for coming.

Hunyadi himself sits across from him now. The guards stand on both sides of Vlad. Hunyadi speaks calmly to Vlad.

HUNYADI

Vladimir. It seems you are of some importance. You must know by now that I had no hand in your father's death.

VLAD

Yes. I believe that now.

HUNYADI

My main concern is ... which God you are fighting for.

VLAD

I wish to take my father's place in the Order of the Dragon.

I vow to defend Christendom to my last dying breath.

Does the Sultan know this? I have been betrayed by the Sultan. He has long favored my younger brother Radu, and plans to put him on the throne of Vallachia.

HUNYADI

We now have common enemies. The Turks have made both our lives miserable, but because you were an officer in the

Turkish army, you have great knowledge that could turn the tide in OUR favor.

VLAD

You want an alliance.

HUNYADI

If I give you back your pryncedom...

HUNYADI (CONT'D)

... what could you promise me?

VLAD

As you must know I have a personal vendetta with him. With your help, Vladislav will no longer be a thorn in your side. And as for the Ottomans, I will fight them all the way back to Constantinople.

HUNYADI

This is what I wanted to hear... but how do I know it's true?

VLAD

Give me an army and I will prove to you how powerful the hand of God can be - through me.

Hunyadi rises then, motioning for Vlad to rise too. He looks over at his PRIEST, who is in the tent too, and waves him to come over. The priest has on white robes, is about 50, shaved head, and carries a large ornate crucifix in front of him. Hunyadi watches Vlad's reaction closely.

HUNYADI

Come closer. Swear your oath on this cross before me and I will grant you an army to do the will of God.

Vlad kneels before the priest. He crosses his body in blessing, then kisses the cross lightly.

VLAD

I vow before God to fight only for the father the son and the holy ghost and the Holy Roman Empire.

As Vlad kneels over, His father's medallion falls out. and Hunyadi sees it and squints his eyes in approval.

EXT. BELGRADE CITY WALLS - DAY

Prince Vlad, now with a full large moustache, and King Hunyadi, are commanding lots of men around them and ...

... fighting the Turks together. The battle here is a thousand men on each side, clashing outside the city walls.

They each have a flag bearer near them , and as they fight, through the battle, they move closer until the fighting slows down.

The two leaders finally come together on the battlefield. Vlad's knight Claudu is here, and he shouts to Vlad:

CLAUDU

They're retreating!

Vlad and Hunyadi look to each other, and are very pleased. Hunyadi smiles and Vlad nods and raises his sword.

Soldiers cheers around them. They move closer still.

VLAD

We stopped their attack, we needed both armies to do it. They'll never take Belgrade! You can hold the city without me.

HUNYADI

Then you must go, take back Vallachia as I have promised.

VLAD

Yes. I shall have my revenge.

HUNYADI

Take your army now. You can follow the retreating Turks.

Vlad dictates a letter to a herald, to summon Stefan and as many men as they can muster , to meet them at Tirgovista at the end of the letter it says: "NOW IS OUR TIME!"

The herald rides off to give message to Stefan in Transylvania.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Vlad leads his army through a mountain pass, Days pass as they get closer to the Capital of Vallachia.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA CITY - DAY

Vlad's army, with banners now bearing the cross of Christianity and the coat of arms for Vallachia, They have surrounded the city.

Rows of archers prepare to shoot arrows over the walled city as Stefan's army rides up to join Vlad.

The two leaders meet. Many soldiers behind them are placing ladders on the walls to climb up. The attack is signaled and the fighting starts.

The defenders inside are soon overwhelmed, and the attackers get on top of the walls, then fight their way to the main gates.

From outside, the gates open and hordes of soldiers on horseback ride into the city, followed by footmen with spears and halberds.

Behind them Vlad, on horse, rides among them, through the gates.

Vlad sees Vladislav and begins chasing him along the walls and into the castle.

One doorway is too small so Vlad now gets off his horse and chases after him on foot with his sword raised. A few of Vlad's knights are right behind him.

A moment later and Vladislav has exited a tower and is again on the city walls.

Vladislav turns to face Vlad, and with his sword, defends against Vlad's attacks.

They have a swordfight for a minute, meanwhile talking to each other.

VLAD

Do you recognize me?

VLADISLAV

You have taken on the look of your father Vlad. Shall we repeat history?

VLAD

Unlike my father I have real allies I can trust.

Vlad finally gets the best of their fight and Knocks Vladislav's sword from his hand.

VLAD (CONT'D)

Where is my brother? I wouldn't be surprised if you've had him killed by now.

Vladislav leaps toward Vlad with a long dagger.

They struggle shortly and Vlad finally stabs him with his own dagger. Vladislav crumbles to the ground, and finally dies.

From on top of the castle walls Vlad looks over the last of the battle scenes. The last of the retreating army has left out the back, and gallop hard to escape. Archers shoot arrows after them.

INSERT: RADU is among the men galloping hard south. He has escaped the castle.

Claudu comes up to Vlad standing on the wall.

CLAUDU

Your Brother RADU, has escaped, my lord.

Vlad nods.

VLAD

So be it for now.

The battle ends with Stefan, Vlad, and Claudu looking over the city walls while the sun sets and the dead are being put on wagons and soldiers gathering arms from the defeated army.

INT. TIRGOVISTA, CHURCH - DAY

The church is filled with people all dressed up. At the front is Vlad, as a groom wearing a princely Doublet. Beside him is Stefan wearing something as noble and royal looking. They are waiting for his bride to enter. On the other side of Vlad is the city HIGH PRIEST.

The big doors open up and Isabella comes in. Her bridal dress is beautiful, and she is followed by her maidens.

She comes down the aisle very royally. - MUSIC

INT. CASTLE - FEAST HALL - DAY

The center of this room is doiminated by a very large long table with white linen coverings, and filled with food of all sorts, fit for royalty.

There are about 100 guests here, eating and talking.

Vlad and Isabella share the head of the table. Near them are Claudu, Stefan, Rosa, then other knights and ladies.

Stefan stands up and waits for people to quiet a bit, then address everyone.

STEFAN

A toast. To the new couple, Prince Vlad and Princess Isabella. We all wish them well deserved happiness.

Everyone raises their Glass to toast, then Vlad stands up, making everyone else stand up. Then he replies.

VLAD

This is a great day for Vallachia. The true ruler is back on the throne, and my marriage today is a symbol of a new start for this country.

My love for my country is as strong as
my love for my new bride Isabella.

There are cheers and music to follow. General
merry making.

EXT. HUNTING FIELD - DAY

The nobles are riding through a field.
Vlad chases after Isabella and they come to a stop where
several other nobles are sitting atop their horses.

Stefan is there, and has a falcon on his wrist.

He spots a hare and then waits for his falcon to see it.
Then he lifts his arm and the falcon flies to attack it.

From a distance a messenger comes riding to the party. He
gallops up to Vlad and holds out a scroll.

MESSENGER

My lord. This message just arrived for
you.

Vlad reads it to himself. The messenger backs his horse up.
Stefan is curious and approaches Vlad.

STEFAN

What does it say?

VLAD

Hunyadi has held Belgrade against the
Sultan's army. Very good news... But -
the black plague is now spreading
through Hungary.

(looks seriously to him)

... and this note is three days old.

STEFAN

The Black Death. He must already be
dead. I have never heard of any one
survive it.

Isabella has a deadly serious face. Vlad is also suddenly
very somber too.

VLAD

The Turks brought it. It's a curse from their God, Allah.

INT. TIRGOVISTA, THRONE ROOM - EVENING

Vlad is sitting here with many councilmen chatting quietly. Among several men is his physician / alchemist PETROV, 40. Also here is his HIGH PRIEST.

VLAD

The plague. How safe are we within these walls?

PETROV

This Plague, No one knows where it comes from. Or how to stop it.

HIGH PRIEST

Much like the plagues of Moses's time - they were a visitation of the wrath of God - it must be brought by the evil Turks.

The only way to be safe from it is for it to pass over us. The Holy bible says there was a blood sacrifice for the curse to miss them.

VLAD

Is this possible? Can we do this?

PETROV

The Hebrew time for passover is too far away. We must find a sooner date.

HIGH PRIEST

Yes. A time which is pleasing to God. We must all pray. A time will be revealed to us soon. We shall confer together.

The priest and Petrov start leaving the room whispering Ideas.

INT. PETROV'S STUDY - NIGHT

This is Petrov's research room, which has charts on walls, and many cabinets and shelves lined with jars and books. Petrov is looking over astrological charts and making measurements with strings and pins on the table.

Vlad enters this room.

VLAD

As my physician, Petrov, you are ...

VLAD (CONT'D)

in charge of my health. I usually consider the needs of my body but not the needs of my soul. Should I be concerned with both?

I see you also study astrology. I too studied this at the Sultan's Royal palace.

PETROV

Very good my lord. Then you'll understand these charts.

VLAD

Show me what you see.

Petrov has chart on wall - calendar, with astrology. He points out some long lines. He shows when certain stars are in alignment.

PETROV

Well, the next date here, where these stars line up, may have the most effect. I will talk to the Priest.

VLAD

Good. Now tell me your thoughts. What is it about the power of blood that can stop this curse? I don't understand. Has anybody tried this before?

PETROV

As you know, according to our faith, the lamb of God is Christ. But before him in the Old Hebrew testaments, they used to sacrifice a lamb for God on an altar. I think it's more than just

symbolism. There must be something in the blood that fights against sin or diseases.

I have heard studies going on in Italia: of the human body, We all know the source of life is blood itself.

VLAD

What if our pass over day is not ...

VLAD (CONT'D)

enough? Is the blood of a lamb itself enough to cure ? - or avoid the plague coming here.

PETROV

This will be a great experiment, and I'm going to document everything that happens.

INT. TIRGOVISTA, THRONE ROOM - DAY

Vlad is seated at his throne. Beside him on a lower chair sits Claudu and they discuss something quietly.

The doors open and two guards come in, followed by six German BOYARS, who are richly-dressed merchants. The leading Boyar is CARL, 50 y.o. He steps slightly in front of the rest and addresses Vlad, bowing.

CARL

Your highness. Bucharest to the south has been infected with the plague. We wish to have our merchant friends from there come to your city, where it is safer.

VLAD

Do you wish to bring death to our city? What if they carry this plague with them?

CARL

These people are not infected at all, and we will compensate you for whatever you need.

Vlad pauses to think about this.

A wise old man near Vlad is an ELDER COUNSELOR, 60. He approaches Vlad and whispers to him in his ear. Vlad does not look at him, but nods. The old man backs away.

VLAD

Everybody will have to be examined so that they have no signs of it. We shall decide a price for this exceptional favor later... but I will agree.

CARL

Thank you. You are very wise and generous like your father.

INT. PETROV'S STUDY - NIGHT

Vlad is alone with Petrov discussing his findings.

VLAD

Have you found a date?

PETROV

Yes I have. It should be 10 days from now.

Also in my studies of blood, I have heard of this flying creature that survives on blood. I'm having one brought to me so I can study it.

VLAD

How do we know what kind of blood to use for OUR Passover ? lamb, or deer? Would it make a difference?

PETROV

This is what I don't know. There is something in the blood that gives the life.

INT. TIRGOVISTA - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Vlad is standing again a nearby wall POSING for a portrait being painted by a PAINTER, 30 y.o. Behind Vlad is a velvet

backdrop. The painter has set up a large easel and canvas and is about half way through completion.

Many other advisers are standing apart from him.

Through the main doors, two soldiers escort messengers into the room. They pause a moment and Claudu talks quietly to the men, then he walks over to Vlad.

CLAUDU

The envoys from Transylvania and Hungary are here, my lord.

Vlad looks at the messengers waiting, and then back to Claudu.

VLAD

Bring them to my table.

Vlad walks over to his large desk and sits down in a chair.

Claud u goes to the messengers and brings them in front of Vlad. They both bow to the Prince.

Claud u gets the scrolls from each man and hands them to Vlad.

Vlad opens them and reads them to himself. Then he gets a large quill pen and signs them.

VLAD

Tell your lords that I sign these peace treaties with the understanding that they will also abide by these letters.

Claud u receives them from Vlad and hands them back to the messengers, who bow and leave directly.

Vlad nods to Claudu, who follows them to the doors.

Vlad meanwhile calls to Stefan, who is talking to the old wise counselor.

VLAD

STEFAN. Come here.

Stefan immediately comes to approach Vlad. Claudu then closes the doors from the inside for privacy. The other nobles are paying attention now to Vlad, who stands up.

VLAD

Now is the time for action. I will give you five hundred of my best soldiers to take back your kingdom.

Stefan approaches him, very happy. He shakes his hand in appreciation.

VLAD

I have also decided that we will have a grand Easter Feast for the Boyars when they arrive. I have thought of a great surprise for them.

EXT. SMALL TOWN - OPEN GATES - NIGHT

There are six horsemen soldiers, from Vlad's army, who are at these gates at night.

Twenty villagers are loosely circling around the soldiers as they have six prisoners on the ground. Three are Turks with turbans, two are peasants and one is a local merchant.

One of Vlad's knights, ZOLTAN, 40, commands the soldiers.

ZOLTAN

These are the sworn enemies of the Holy Roman Empire.

He has his sword out and is waving it in front of the prisoners, who are in fear for their life.

Just then Vlad comes riding up, escorted by Claudu and five other men.

When everyone sees Vlad, they stop what they were doing and bow to him. Zoltan address Vlad.

ZOLTAN

Your Highness.

VLAD

What do you have here?

ZOLTAN

We found some men who were helping the
Turks.

VLAD

I see. Show me what you do to traitors.

Zoltan then turns back to address the peasants.

ZOLTAN

These Turks have sworn to kill us, and
it is our duty to God to take their
lives.

He signals his men and three of them pull out their swords
and stab the Turks through the chest. The crowd reacts with
some shock and fear. Vlad is unaffected by this - even
nodding in agreement.

Then Zoltan turns to the other local Christian prisoners.
He pulls out his dagger and shows it to the crowd.

ZOLTAN

We won't take their lives tonight. But
we will take something from them.

Zoltan gets one of his men to come closer. He takes his
dagger and whispers something to him.

Zoltan grabs a prisoner and cuts off his ear. He lifts it
high in the air.

ZOLTAN

This will make a small souvenir !

The man screams. The other prisoners begin to beg for
mercy. The peasants around are also horrified.

Two other men have their ears cut off, and the soldiers put
the dismembered ears into a satchel, chuckling.

Vlad watches it all from his horse and sees terror on all
who are watching.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA CITY - NIGHT

Within the walls are narrow alleys and many buildings. A strange procession walks along here. In the front is a scary looking PLAGUE DOCTOR, wearing all black robes, and a large cone mask on his face.

This figure has a blood soaked lambs leg in one hand, dipping it in a bucket of blood he carries in the other. He raises the lamb's leg and is wiping the blood over the lintel of the many doors through the town.

Next, a big burley guy pushing two-wheeled cart beside him, which is carrying a larger basin of blood.

He is escorted by two guards with halberds walking beside the cart.

Behind them, a very odd looking PLAGUE PRIEST. He walks along carrying a smoking incense burner on a long stick, and he is chanting.

Lastly, a small group of religious monks, wearing tattered clothes follow them all.

TILT UP: In the castle above, a light is coming through an open window.

INT. CASTLE - ROYAL BED CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Vlad is sitting in a chair staring into the small fire in he room. Isabella gets out of the bed, wearing a white gown, and comes to Vlad's side.

ISABELLA

What's wrong?

VLAD

I can't sleep. Too much on my mind.

ISABELLA

I've noticed the change in you. You seem distant.

VLAD

And for good reason. I'm hardening myself on purpose so that death has

little meaning to me - and something I shouldn't fear.

My grandfather told me to be a ruler that ... "IT IS SAFER TO BE FEARED THAN LOVED."

ISABELLA

I don't understand why men must kill each other so.

VLAD

This is what I think now. I must - as a leader - show my strength, by NOT fearing death. Death by my hands or someone else's.

ISABELLA

Is this what men do to harden their hearts as well? Will this affect your feelings for me?

VLAD

You need not worry, my heart is still soft for you.

He gets up, wraps a royal robe around himself and walks to the door. He pauses at the door and looks back for moment before going through and closing it. Isabella goes back to their bed.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA - DUNGEONS - NIGHT

Vlad goes down steps. Some torches on the walls light the dark hallway. He hears prisoners yelling "Let us out".

Soon he sees an area up ahead light by lanterns and hears voices laughing. Vlad enters a small room and sees ZOLTAN and two friends - guards. They are sitting around a small table, an almost empty bottle of wine on the table. Vlad had been quiet and surprises them.

VLAD

Do you not sleep?

Zoltan suddenly looks up, and he gets to his feet while tripping drunkenly.

ZOLTAN

Oh, your majesty. Is there something we can do for you?

VLAD

You're name is Zoltan, right? You made quite a first impression on me.

ZOLTAN

Do you mean what I did to those prisoners ?

VLAD

Tell me. How many men do you think you've killed?

ZOLTAN

I've lost count after a hundred. With due respects, my lord, I've been killing' men for longer than you've been alive.

(he grins at that).

I don't consider it killing anymore... more like setting them free.

VLAD

Do you have any fear at all?

Vlad pulls his sword quickly out and puts it to his throat.

Zoltan does not react to this. He's a little too drunk. He then lets out a little chuckle.

ZOLTAN

Are you going to set me free?

Then he grabs the sword blade with his two hands and pushes it aside.

ZOLTAN

No, it isn't fear, my prince.... only respect.

VLAD

I need more men like you.

ZOLTAN

Do you mean cruel? Fearless? Or
ruthless men?

VLAD

A man of these times needs all those
traits.

VLAD (CONT'D)

I must have these qualities, I want to
rule with real fear. Like I saw on
those peoples faces. But as for us ...
we must never fear - this gives us the
power.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA, ARMOURY - DAY

Vlad is in padded armour watching Zoltan as he is training
his special executioner forces.

Zoltan and another soldiers stand at practice with each
other and on makeshift wooden dummies, smashing them with
axes and swords. They also use long chains and spiked
clubs.

NARRATION (V.O.)

Vlad recruited the most ruthless men he
could find, they would serve as his
personal body guards and dispense
justice in the most cruel ways.

These men were called The Armassi.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA - OUTSIDE WALLS - NIGHT

Twenty knights and soldiers are here practicing sword
fighting. A few mounted knights ride at a quintain with
lances lowered to practice their aim.

Others strike at each other with flails and other deadly
weapons defending themselves with small steel shields.

Vlad and another knight are on horsebacks fighting with
axes. They have full armour on with helmets for protection.

Vlad finally gets advantage and knocks the other off his horse. Then Vlad removes his helmet.

A squire runs up to him to take his helmet.

Just then a messenger from Muldovia rides up on horseback. He addresses the Prince.

MESSENGER

My lord. Stefan has reclaimed Muldovia!
and is now on the throne again!

Everyone around who hears that cheers for Stefan. They are pleased that they have allies to the north again.

INT. PETROV'S STUDY - NIGHT

In a cage there hangs a live vampire bat. Petrov is making notes at a table. Vlad is also here in the room, pacing, then he goes and stares at the cage. Petrov sees him looking closely at it.

PETROV

The most interesting thing I have found
with that creature , is he only drinks
fresh blood. I have tried feeding him
day-old blood and he wouldn't drink it.

As he talks he comes close to the cage too.

PETROV (CONT'D)

I tried warming the blood and he still
wouldn't drink it. I think blood only
has its power while it still has it's
life force in it.

VLAD

So if I could drink blood like that
creature, What ever strength he gets
from it, it keeps him alive.

Could it sustain me? When we eat meat
do we gain that animal's strength?
Maybe the blood in the meat!

PETROV

I'm beginning to believe so.

VLAD

If I want to become something stronger.
Like a bear or wolf. Do I simply eat
there meat or drink their blood?

Vlad picks up blood in glass looking at it.

PETROV

I'm still studying this , I don't know
at this time.

VLAD

I am willing to drink wolf's blood to
see what kind of effect it has on me.

PETROV

I'm not sure that will be safe.

VLAD

There was a wolf caught last week. I
must know now, this could save our
lives!

INSERT: DARK CORRIDOR -

Two soldiers carry an iron cage, with a blanket over it.
They carry it with two long poles on either side. They
struggle with it as it shakes with a wolf in it. They hear
growling and snarling.

INT. PETROV'S STUDY - LATER

The two soldiers remove the long poles from the cage and
take them out to the hallway. On top of the blanket is a
pole with a rope noose.

Vlad goes close to the cage, removes the rope noose, and
pulls back the blanket. The vicious wolf's face snaps at
him, and then snarls. Vlad is very intrigued and
fascinated. The soldiers come back into the room, but keep
their distance from the cage. Vlad talks to Petrov.

VLAD

This is what I want to be - Fearless.

Vlad pulls out his sword.

PETROV

We don't have to kill him. We should
just bleed him.

Petrov commands the two soldiers.

PETROV

Get the noose and pull him tight
against the side of the cage.

One soldier gets the noose stick and puts into the cage,
looping the wolf's head, then the other grabs it's legs
pulling tight. Petrov takes a dagger and stabs it into the
wolf's rear leg and brings a drinking vessel. Blood drips
out and he fills it half full.

Petrov then releases the leg. The soldiers release the wolf
and the wolf licks the fresh wound. Vlad then dismisses the
soldiers.

VLAD

Leave us.

The soldiers leave, and close the door.

Vlad gets the chalice from Petrov and walks to the cage
where the bat hangs.

He's staring at the blood and then looks at the bat. He
looks at Petrov in anticipation as he slowly raises the cup
and drinks most of it. Some blood drips out the corners of
his mouth. Right beside him the bat in the cage smells the
blood and gets excited.

Vlad lowers the cup, then pours the remainder into dish in
the vampire bat's cage. The bats laps it up hungrily.
Petrov looks at Vlad with curious fear.

PETROV

We shall see something by tomorrow.

INT. CASTLE - ROYAL BED CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Vlad is in the room with Isabella. Vlad has his shirt off and washes his hands and face with cloth, wiping some blood off. He's got his back to her.

She is sitting up in bed, in her nightgown, watching him.

ISABELLA

I really want to go back to Muldovia,

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

... now that STEFAN is ruling again. I miss my family and want to visit with them.

VLAD

Yes. This coming week I'll be going on campaign for several weeks. I want you to be happy, while we are apart.

Vlad goes to the bed with her, sitting on side of bed, then she looks at him. She stares at his eyes a little longer, trying to read his thoughts.

ISABELLA

You seem cold to me. Are you feeling well?

VLAD

Come here and warm me up.

They embrace warmly in bed.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD NEAR FOREST - DAY

NARRATION (V.O.)

A large army of Turks are attacking Villachia's southern border.

1000 Turkish soldiers are hiding in woods in forest, on the edge of a large clearing.

Many Turkish warriors are on horseback, some men on the ground with shields, and two long lines of archers are out front.

Vlad's army is across the field, and they are in a big line. Vlad is in the front, with several knights beside him. The entire army is walking, advancing towards the woods.

The first volley of arrows from the line of woods fly out and hit Vlad's army, which makes Vlad charge.

The Turks charge out of the woods and the two armies meet in the middle of the open field. They engage in battle, mostly with swords and shields.

Close ups of Vlad, Zoltan, Claudu, fighting the Turks.

EXT. VLAD'S ARMY CAMP - NIGHT

Many campfires and tents at night where Vlad's soldiers are camped, eating and drinking, laughing, talking, and fixing wounds.

One campfire has ten men around it, discussing battle. One soldier, ALIN, 20, looks similar to Vlad because he just finished shaving the bottom his beard off to look like Vlad to give his friends a laugh.

Alin pretends to be Vlad and makes the other soldiers laugh. Unknown to him, Vlad and his personal guards are strolling the camp. They walk up quietly behind ALIN, and the other men stop laughing.

Alin looks at them in wonder. None of them speak. Alin turns around and is face to face with Vlad.

VLAD

Who is this I see? A face that is very familiar, but I don't have a name.

Alin is embarrassed and genuinely frightened. He bows to him, shaking.

ALIN

Alin, my lord.

Vlad circles Alin noticing that he's the same height and build as himself.

VLAD

I could have a use for you. How are you with a sword?

ALIN

I killed four Turks today with this very sword.

Pulls his sword out, giving handle to Vlad. Vlad takes it and wields it, then throws it at Alin.

VLAD

Come duel with me.

Vlad takes off his cape.

The two of them duel for very short time; just enough for Vlad to see that he's a good swordsman. Vlad then grapples the sword out of Alin's hand.

VLAD

Come see me tomorrow. I have a job for you.

The men laugh at Alin in relief as Vlad continues to walk to the next campfire.

INT. VLAD'S ROYAL TENT - DAY

In Vlad's tent, officers are around a table and looking at maps, discussing terrain. Claudu sees Alin enter tent.

CLAUDU

There's a young man to see you my lord.

Vlad looks up and recognizes Alin.

VLAD

Come in.

Alin comes all the way in and takes off his hat in front of Vlad, bowing. Vlad turns to his assistants and says

VLAD

Put my armour on him. I want to see how it fits.

While they dress him they talk.

VLAD

I'm planning a ruse to bring out the noblemen from the forest. As you saw - I led the army yesterday - along with my banner man. The Turks know me and what I look like. I am a great ...

VLAD (CONT'D)

distraction to them. You will be ME today on the battlefield.

Vlad looks down at map again, and starts explaining strategies.

VLAD

The ruse will come up through the front, just like yesterday.

(then to Claudu)

But Claudu, you and I will be on each flank. I want to draw their forces in to the middle of the field.

(then to Alin, as he
points to the map)

You will stop HERE. Wait for the Turks to come here and then you make a retreat, pulling all the men back.

Make it look like you're retreating. I have archers here.

Now, from both sides, we'll flank them and crush them.

Claud u nods to Vlad. They both look at Alin in the armour, and nod in agreement.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD NEAR FOREST - DAY

Alin, looking like Vlad, rides a horse and leads a large group of men in a charge down the middle. The defenders shoot arrows, and then ride out to engage them.

Two armies from either side come and attack both sides, and fight hard. After a minute of battle, many Turks are surrounded, and begin to surrender.

The mounted men stop killing the ones who surrender, and round them up, marching them away from the battle scene.

All Vlad's men, have won the battle, and are very elated that they didn't have to fight to the last man.

EXT. BORDER TOWN - DAY

75 prisoners are being escorted by 100 of Vlad's soldiers on a road outside a small town, with walls.

Zoltan comes riding up to catch up with Vlad. Vlad acknowledges him there and they ride together.

ZOLTAN

These prisoners are slowing us down my lord. Is it really necessary to take them? How much are they worth as prisoners. They might escape and we'll have to fight them again someday.

VLAD

Not if they fear me.

ZOLTAN

Perhaps you should kill them all here and leave a message for those who are following us.

VLAD

I'm thinking that we should show them more than just death.

ZOLTAN

I have something in mind.

Vlad and Zoltan are at a distance and we do not hear what they discuss. After a moment, Vlad and Zoltan stop their horses and signal for everyone to stop.

Vlad and Zoltan ride back to where there the 75 prisoners are now standing. The prisoners are in double file, and chained together at their legs.

Zoltan dismounts while Vlad stay seated, watching.

Zoltan's special guards dismount, and then Zoltan whispers to a nearby soldier, who sends the message down the line, whispering in each ear.

Then Zoltan raises his sword and turns and kills the first prisoner.

All the others are in great fear, but despite the shouting and pleading, Zoltan's soldiers quickly kill all the prisoners without hesitation.

EXT. BORDER TOWN - LATER

On the TOWN WALLS: Body parts of the dead are now displayed here, hanging by ropes.

All the nearby trees also have body parts too, and there are several heads stuck on poles near the gates.

The army walks through the gate again, as they are on the move.

Vlad rides beside Zoltan, and comments to him.

VLAD

This will put the fear of death
into their very souls.

INT. TIRGOVISTA, FEASTING HALL - DAY

Vlad is sitting down eating a meal. There are a few others here, eating with him, including Claudu and Zoltan.

Vlad is eating steak - very rare - that has blood on the plate. He cuts a chunk and it drips blood and he eats it.

Suddenly Vlad's messenger, IVAN, comes in.

IVAN

Excuse me for interrupting your lunch
my lord. There are some Turks with an
important message from the Sultan. They
say it can not wait.

The doors open and three Turkish soldiers messengers come in.

They walk in and barely bow to Vlad. The leader is SOREN, 25. They all wear their turbans.

SOREN

Greetings from the Sultan Mehmed...

SOREN (CONT'D)

His highness has heard you are doing quite well. He demands 2000 gold pieces as a sign of appreciation for letting you have the seat of Vallachia.

While chewing meat, Vlad whispers to Claudu... and pauses.

VLAD

It is our custom here to remove your head covering, when addressing noblemen. A sign of respect.

SOREN

It is our custom to keep our turbans on at all times.

Vlad looks angry and stands up. Puts his fork in his meat. He moves to the front of the table to face the men. Vlad waves to his soldiers to come closer.

SOREN (CONT'D)

The Sultan demands safe passage to Transylvania.

Guards each grab one arm of this Turk. The other two are held still. Points down. The guards make them all kneel in front of Vlad.

VLAD

First of all, you shall show proper respect, and bow before me. I am the ruler here. And if you want to keep your hats on, we shall help you.

The guards grab their arms and restrain them. As Vlad passes by them towards the door they came in.

VLAD (CONT'D)

Bring them.

Vlad marches out of the room. The guards bring the three Turks. Zoltan and Claudu follow with a look of wonder in their faces.

INT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - DAY

The men march down back steps, escorting the three Turks. They hear in distance a hammering of steel. Merchants and peasants begin to follow the entourage wondering where everyone is going.

They soon reach the Blacksmith shop. Then they open door and go in.

The Ferrier is startled and stands back. Vlad orders the guards to puts one of the Turk's head on the anvil. They force his head down.

VLAD

You say you must keep your hats on.
Well now I know why, they are nailed to
your head!

He looks at Zoltan.

VLAD

Can you help this man to keep his hat on.

Zoltan gets a few nails from a tray, grabs a hammer, and proceeds to put a nail into the turban.

OUTSIDE THE BARN: Some children and peasants try to look into the barn as they hear the screams.

INSIDE: The other Turkish messengers look on with fear believing they are to be next.

after Zoltan puts 4 nails into the Turks hat and head, he releases him.

Vlad motions to the guards to let them leave.

They release the other Turks so they can carry their friend. They drag his unconscious body between them. There is blood dripping down his forehead.

As the Turks are leaving Vlad yells out.

VLAD

You tell the Sultan he'll have his 2000 gold pieces when I see fit.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE - NIGHT

Vlad comes alone down corridor. It is dark, but he has a lantern. He produces a key and unlocks the Alchemists room.

INT. PETROV'S STUDY - NIGHT

Vlad lights the other lanterns and looks over the notes. He looks on a shelf and sees a dozen jars with labels 'bear, wolf, sheep, deer, falcon. He turns them to read them. The last one is man. He is a bit shocked at the last one.

He goes to the notes on the table. Some sort of genealogy tree. Branches from animals to man.

As Vlad backs up to another table he knocks over the bat cage. The bat escapes.

Vlad can't see him but he hears him fly by. Vlad takes a swing at it and misses. He again flutters by trying to escape out a window.

Suddenly Vlad is bitten by the bat in the back of his neck. Vlad flails about trying to grab the bat.

Finally grabbing it, he looks closely at it, bringing it face to face with himself. In fear and anger Vlad smashes the bat's head against the wall killing it.

Vlad grabs a chalice and puts it in front of him.

Then he finds a knife and cuts the bats head off. He pours what ever blood left in the bat into the glass.

Then in a fury he looks for more blood in jars on a shelf. These jars are labeled bear, wolf, falcon, and one that says man on it.

Vlad is not concerned with the labels and pours all the blood he can find in his glass.

Vlad drinks the blood from the chalice.

INT. FEASTING HALL - DAY

EASTER feast. Music in background. Servers are coming. There is a basket of decorated EASTER eggs. The servers bring it all to the HEAD table, where Vlad is sitting. He looks somewhat evil now, and quiet. Many Boyars are already sitting.

More BOYARS are coming in. Some bow to the head table. The

One server comes to Vlad's table

SERVER

More wine my lord?

Vlad puts his hand over his cup to stop them from pouring it in there.

VLAD

I have my own drink. (blood)

After they walk away he picks up his cup and drinks it.

At the far end of the hall, the last Boyars enter, removing their swords and weapons into a large pile outside the hall.

One of the guards gestures that they are all in. There is a signal to close the doors. They close the doors.

OUTSIDE THE DOOR: A guard locks the doors with a large deadbolt.

Vlad hushes the music with a hand wave. Slowly the talking gets quieter until everyone is quiet. Vlad slowly stands up and raises his glass. Everyone else does the same, expecting a toast.

VLAD

Let me ask you all a question: How many Lords have you served in the last fifty years? Does anyone know?

There is silence in the room.

VLAD (CONT'D)

The reason why you don't know is because there's been too many. And we have gone through so many lords because of treachery and deceit.

VLAD (CONT'D)

It shouldn't be a question of what this country can do for you? but what you will do for this country?

Well first things first, this is not your country. You are foreigners here. Only by invitation are you allowed to do business here.

My father should still be alive and in power. But because of your betrayal we have had five leaders until now. When will this end? As a ruler of Vallachia, I shouldn't have to share the power with anyone. I say it ends now!

Vlad signals to guards to arrest them.

VLAD (CONT'D)

Arrest them all.

The Boyars are all shouting and complaining, and many make threats to Vlad as they pass by him. But there are enough soldiers to arrest them all. They begin to march them out the back door.

INT. UNDER CASTLE - PRISON -DAY

Guards are taking off the Boyars clothing.

They pile up their gold onto a heap, and clothes. There are piles of shoes, hats, coats, cloaks, etc. But they leave the loin cloths on the men.

Vlad is nearby talking quietly to Zoltan.

VLAD

At first I thought prison would be justice enough. But now I have a burning sense of revenge. I think it is my fathers blood boiling up inside me!

ZOLTAN

Death might not even be enough here, remember what we did to those Turkish prisoners. We should make an example out of them too! ...Right outside these very walls.

VLAD

Yes. We're not finished yet. It will be a long night.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA - OUTSIDE WALLS - NIGHT

Scene filled with torchlight. Soldiers are cutting long stakes, ten to twelve feet long, and sharpening one end.

Many others are digging post holes, with small shovels. They are placing them outside Tirgovista city walls.

Naked Boyars, by torchlight, three at a time, are brought out the city gates, by soldiers. Soldiers begin to impale them.

ON TOP OF CASTLE WALL: VLAD looks over and down at the scene and does not flinch when he hears screams.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA - OUTSIDE WALLS - SUNRISE

By the time the morning sunlight is rising, you can see eerie shadows around the castle walls. When the entire scene is revealed, there are 200 people impaled on the stakes.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA - INSIDE CITY - DAY

Lots of commotion as peasants and citizens are trying to escape from soldiers.

The soldiers smash in shopkeeper's doors. They are rounding up all the Boyar's relatives, women, boys, old men.

They have some shackled, and are making a big line of prisoners. Many see their fathers, or husbands there impaled, and weep and wail.

Vlad looks over the city.

VLAD

We'll take them to Punari to finish building my castle there.

INT. MULDOVIA - ISABELLAS BEDROOM - DAY

Isabella wakes up from a nightmare, shouting. Her favorite maiden, VERA, comes to her.

VERA

My lady. Are you alright?

ISABELLA

I've had a terrible dream. So much blood and tears. What scares me is I know men can be like that. Why?

VERA

All men can be cruel. But they need to be like that to defend us.

ISABELLA

I'm sick of war. (cries)

Vera comforts her.

EXT. PUNARI - TOP OF WALL - DAY

This castle is now half finished. Many prisoners, especially Turks, are passing bricks up the hill and then up scaffolds as masons cement them in at the top.

Guards are standing around. Two soldiers look down the valley and see some soldiers bringing the group of Boyars families.

GUARD

Good. More workers.

INT. TIRGOVISTA - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Vlad is sitting on the throne. IVAN, the messenger, bows and is waiting for Vlad's command.

VLAD

Show them in.

Two Turkish messengers, wearing turbans, enter. They immediately remove their turbans. They are nervous and sweating. The first is ABDUL, 25.

ABDUL

The Sultan still hasn't received his 2000 gold and now demands 10,000 gold, and that he should deliver it in person and that you should kiss the Sultan's robe.

VLAD

Tell my stepfather, he must make a decision - if I am ruler over Vallachia, or my brother Radu. This I must know before I kiss his robe. And he can come and get his 10,000 himself.

INT. PETROV'S STUDY - NIGHT

It is storming outside and lightning flashes come in through the windows. Petrov is here working.

Vlad enters, slamming the door open. Vlad has his armour on and strides in.

VLAD

The blood is working. I've never felt stronger in my life. If you could feel what I feel now, It would be hard to describe in words.

PETROV

This experiment has gone too far. It is uncontrolled. You are destroying this research.

Vlad ignores him and goes directly to the blood jars. He opens one and lifts the jar to drink it.

PETROV

STOP! Don't drink that blood !

Petrov tries to Take the jar from Vlad's hand.

PETROV

That blood was from a man with the black plague.

Vlad throws the blood jar across the room in fear and is shocked.

VLAD

I drank from that jar before!

Petrov says nothing. Looks at him astonished.

VLAD

I drank the very thing we are trying to stop...

Vlad comes up to Petrov, grabs him by the throat, pulls out his sword, raises it to strike him.

Petrov sees the rage in Vlad's animals eyes, and Petrov cowers. Vlad's arm shakes as he fights himself.

Instead of striking Petrov, Vlad throws him to the ground and storms out of the room.

EXT. TOP OF TOWER - NIGHT

Vlad is climbing the tower.

It is raining and lightning is flashing. He gets to the top, still wearing his armour. He points to the sky with his sword.

VLAD

I have tasted the life of blood. and
now I have drank the blood of death.
How is it that I still live? Have I
conquered death? I want to LIVE...

Lightning strikes him before he can finish his sentence. Electricity flashes around him. From the stairs, Petrov arrives just in time to see VLAD fall to the ground in a smoking heap. He rushes to see if he is alright.

Then two soldiers come from behind Petrov. They look down and watch Petrov turn Vlad over.

Vlad's eyes are open and he looks dead. Petrov waves the two guards closer.

PETROV

Pick him up. Take him to my study.

The soldiers, struggle with picking him up and begin to take him down the stairs.

INT. PETROV'S STUDY - NIGHT

Petrov enters the room, followed by the soldiers. He pushes papers off the main table.

PETROV

Set him down. Take his armour off. Then
put his body here.

The soldiers remove his breastplate and backplate set, then lift his body and put him on the table.

Petrov rips the shirt open and listens to his chest. He can't hear a heartbeat and has a frightened serious look.

The two guards leave the room gloomy. Petrov is by himself now and begins to put a sheet over Vlad.

As Petrov covers Vlad with sheet, suddenly Vlad's hand grabs at Petrov's hand.

Petrov then gets a towel and some water and begins wiping Vlad's face.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA - INSIDE FRONT GATES - DAY

Somber soldiers talk quietly among themselves, thinking Vlad is dead. Claudu is here and comes up to a group of men.

CLAUDU

I can't believe it.

Vlad opens window shutters second floor, looks down at men below. He is wearing his white undershirt. He looks strong and healthy and has a commanding voice.

VLAD

Is this how you soldiers start the day?

CLAUDU

My lord. ... we heard you ... passed away last night.

VLAD

I don't remember any of last night. And as you can see I am here before you now. Ready my horse I must feel the breeze on my face today.

The men scramble to go back to their posts and duties.

EXT. BATTLEFIELDS - DAY

NARRATION (V.O.)

During the next few years, Vlad embarks upon a campaign of terror as he raids small villages from Turkey to Germany.

He burns most of the homes to the ground, much like a scorched earth policy.

Anyone who was unlucky enough to not escape his terrible grip were impaled on stakes. It seemed there was a new rage in him unlike anything before, a need for revenge.

Even his own soldiers began to think he was insane as they watched him drink the blood of vanquished people.

COLLAGE:

Battle scenes of terror... raiding mostly German towns, with the Scorched earth policy.

Six mounted knights galloping down cobblestone road in town center, hacking at German soldiers, guards, even peasants, knocking carts of food over.

SMALL VILLAGE AT NIGHT: Lots of Vlad's men have torches in their hands and they set thatched roofs on fire.

Soldiers looting houses on fire, emerging with arms full of wooden chests, chalices, soldiers, merchants houses.

Bridge over creek, on both sides in a line, three soldiers lifting and impaled man on a stake to complete the rows of bodies. People running, peasant families screaming.

EXT. ROADWAY / FIELD - DAY

INSERT: PRINT of the WOODCUT of VLAD.

DINING SCENE: The woodcut burns away to reveal Vlad sitting at a table eating raw meat and drinking a chalice of blood, dipping bread in the blood gravy of his raw meat. He is wearing his armour.

He has a crazed look. He is amongst impaled bodies. One or two bodies are still moving. Two soldiers in foreground carry a body to be impaled.

EXT. FOREST - DIRT ROADWAY - AMBUSH - DAY

Vlad leads his army and rides through a forested area. Suddenly they get ambushed by German soldiers, who are hiding in the woods. A volley of arrows hit Vlad's men, surprising them.

German troops, carrying halberds, attack the mounted knights and pull a few off to the ground.

They all engage in hand to hand combat.

Vlad fights from his horse at first, striking down at men with his sword.

Then he dismounts and engages them himself now one-on-one on foot. He kills two men himself.

Then the ambush is over and all attackers retreat.

Zoltan looks around, watching them retreat. He then looks to Vlad for approval.

Zoltan notices a crossbow bolt deeply embedded in Vlad's thigh. Claudu is also watching.

Vlad looks down with puzzlement, feeling no pain. He throws his sword to the ground, and pulls the bolt out with two hands.

CLAUDU

Sit my lord. We will bandage your
wound. (and yells) Get the surgeon!

Men surround Vlad as he stumbles to side of road, sits down on the grass. Claudu removes his upper leg armour carefully. We see the hole where the crossbow bolt was. There is some blood but not a lot.

Claud u cuts the trousers open carefully with a knife, then tears the material to expose the wound, and there is blood on his leg. Everyone around is curious to see how badly he's wounded. Vlad shows no sign of pain.

Breathing heavily from running, a SURGEON, a young man, brings a handful of white rags and water bottle, plus a satchel of ointments.

He squeezes through the circle of men surrounding Vlad. He kneels down beside Vlad's leg.

Looks at Vlad in his eyes, looks down at wound, then pours water on it to clean it.

Surgeon only sees a small scar and it has stopped bleeding.

SURGEON

There's no bandages needed my lord.

Zoltan looks wisely at Vlad. Vlad gets to his feet. Claudiu seems a bit puzzled.

VLAD

Right. Let's ride.

INT. SULTANS PALACE - DAY

Constantinople. In an open courtyard there are several warriors discussing how to invade Hungary and Vallachia. Sultan Mehmed and Radu are sitting in royal chairs.

RADU

I have heard that even his own people are willing to turn against him now.

SULTAN

I have always intended for you to rule there, and Vlad has shown me no respect or appreciation and has no intention of paying his taxes.

SULTAN

This time we will invade with overwhelming force! Violence is the only thing he will respect!

A Turkish officer MIKAEL says to the sultan:

MIKAEL

I can have 60 ships loaded with guns and horses for the campaign.

EXT. DANUBE RIVER - DOCKS - DAY

SULTANS SHIPS. A ship is being loaded with horses, gunpowder etc. To the right, ten other ships being loaded with soldiers and equipment, and further, fifty more ships on the river. They fly the flags of the Sultan and Turks. A Large army amasses and marches forward down road.

NARRATION (V.O)

Sultan decides finally to amass an army (of 60,000), and rides with Radu who has 4,000 Vallachian soldiers of his own. Vlad has scouts follow the progress of the Turkish army. The Sultan crosses the Danube at a town called Turu with 120 cannons. Out numbered and outgunned Vlad is forced to retreat to Tirgovista for his final stand.

EXT. TOWN Near Vallachia - DAY

Vlad's army, 4000 in number, pass through a town on route to Tirgovista, down the main street. People close their shutters as he passes by.

Behind the army a few soldiers look around, then dashing in between buildings to escape and desert. One, two, then group of four, then eight.

EXT. RIVERSIDE AND FIELD - DAY

Vlad is down by the river drinking water. Zoltan is standing near him.

ZOLTAN

Our army is getting smaller. There has been a lot of deserters. What do you think we should do?

VLAD

I have something in mind, that will stop this. And we shall see who our true warriors are.

EXT. IMPALEMENT FOREST - DAY

VLAD is riding up to a forest, and he puts his hand up to STOP.

VLAD

Stop. This will do nicely.

He dismounts and waits for Zoltan to also dismount.

VLAD

Here we shall set a stage of horror to show the Sultan who he is dealing with.

Vlad demands that all the wounded soldiers be brought before him as well as all prisoners.

As all his wounded soldiers stand before him, he is looking for the ones with wounds on their backs.

He takes their weapons from them and has them arrested and rounded up. By now he has thirty and counting.

VLAD

The only way for these men to have their wounds on their backs is from running away in battle.

All noble wounds are in the front of a soldiers bodies. I have no use for these men.

The soldiers bind the prisoners hands behind their backs.

Vlad says Loudly, with sword in hand raised high.

VLAD

Is there any more that do not have the stomach for war?

Vlad walks up to a prisoner.

VLAD (CONT'D)

... like THIS one?

Vlad stabs the prisoner in the stomach with his sword. The man falls down, dead.

Vlad addresses Zoltan and all other guards.

VLAD

Execute them all.

LATER:

The officers mounts their horses. Vlad leads them forward again. The army follows, obediently.

VLAD

Forward. Now we have no cowards in our army.

As the army moves on, they move through this forest of impaled bodies and body parts hanging from trees etc.

EXT. IMPALEMENT FOREST - DAY

It is several days later, and crows are pecking at the (CONT'D) dead bodies and you can hear the flies.

The Sultan, with Radu, and 40,000 men have all stopped and are looking at this horrible scene of impaled corpses, the smell is unbearable.

SULTAN

I've seen enough. I'm losing my stomach for war. I grow tired of this crazed man. Radu, you must take Tirgovista for the sake of your people.

The Sultan turns and takes half the officers. The army column splits and half follow the Sultan as he goes back.

Radu is in front of the entire army looking at the horrendous scene.

Then he spurs his horses forward, as the horses are spooked at what they see.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA - WALLS - DAY

Vlad is looking in the distance. He stands beside Claudiu and two other guards. The messenger IVAN comes up to him. Vlad turns to him.

IVAN

The Turkish army is still advancing. I have heard your brother leads them.

Vlad nods and dismisses him. He turns to Claudu.

VLAD

I started out with 4000 men from Turu. How is it that I only have 500 men left? Aren't they afraid of what we do to deserters?

CLAUDU

I think your fear tactics work against you now. They have all become more like you. Not fearing death anymore, from seeing too much of it.

We are so badly outnumbered I hope what men we have left will stay with us.

IVAN

Where shall we go from here?

VLAD

I have one stronghold left. We ride for Punari tomorrow. Ivan, send a message to my beloved Isabella to meet me there.

EXT. ROAD NEAR TIRGOVISTA - DAY

Radu's army, 1000 TURKS, goes along the road towards the city. Peasants are waving at him friendly but not cheering.

EXT. TIRGOVISTA CITY - DAY

The city looks mostly abandoned. Some small barnyard animals still here. Radu dismounts just outside the gates and walks his horse through. He's accompanied by a few officers.

RADU

They knew we were coming. They were smart enough NOT to fight us this time.

The rest of the army now comes through the city gates and slowly they explore the city's buildings.

A few people, peasants, and some soldiers bow to Radu and surrender.

INT. TIRGOVISTA CASTLE - DAY

Radu's Turkish soldiers wander through the halls of the castle. A soldier comes up to Radu.

SOLDIER

Down here my lord, something
you should look at.

Radu follows him down hallway to Petrov's chambers. The doorway is open and a couple other soldiers are here.

INT. PETROV'S STUDY - DAY

The soldiers open the shuttered windows to let some light in.

Many strange things are here. Cage with a dead wolf, other animals in cages, some still alive.

Strange drawing on walls, charts of the human body, astrology, bones sticking out of pots.

RADU walks slowly to main table and looks at writings there.

The Turks then hear a small noise coming from an armoire cabinet. The guards sneak up with their swords drawn.

GUARD

Come out of there.

Petrov opens cabinet door very slowly, fearfully comes out.

RADU

Is this your work, or of my mad
brother? Well ... speak! What has my
brother been doing here?

PETROV

I have been doing Vlad's bidding, which was to find a cure for the Black Plague.

RADU

I know this curse well. Did you find a cure or something to stop it?

Petrov moves slowly towards his notes.

PETROV

We believe it is some poison that travels in the blood of man. We were studying other animals to see if they could get this plague.

If there was some way to ward off it's symptoms...

RADU

It would almost seem as though Vlad has this disease in his mind. I assume no cure has been found.

PETROV

In your brothers case it seems he was immune to it.

One night he drank blood poisoned with the Black Death. Not only has he not died, but somehow he has become stronger.

RADU

The drinking of blood? He has gone mad!

PETROV

I think so, but I have never seen a stronger madman before. There seems to be no stopping him.

RADU

Stopping him is exactly what I plan to do. I'm going to put an end to this nightmare.

Radu leaves the room, and the few guards follow him, leaving Petrov alone.

One guard on the way out looks at him in anger and knocks a jar of blood onto the floor.

EXT. TRANSYLVANIA MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

The smaller army of Vlad's, now has only ten tents.

INSIDE VLAD'S TENT: Vlad is getting dressed. Claudu comes into Vlad's tent.

CLAUDU

Excuse me for waking you. It seems we have had more deserters again, overnight my lord. This mornings count of your soldiers were 62.

VLAD puts on his doublet and leaves the tent.

Vlad looks over some soldiers as they are taking down a tent. The camp is getting ready to move on again.

VLAD

This is the way it must be for now.

Zoltan walks up beside him.

ZOLTAN

You know I will always be a loyal servant to you.

CLAUDU

Radu's army is still after us... we must stay ahead of them.

VLAD

When we get to Punari, we can hold them off for weeks. I know my Cousin Stefan will come to our aid.

SPEECH: Vlad stands on top of rock, and speaks loudly to the men.

VLAD

I need all of you to see this. Come close.

60 men gather around, among them is ALIN and he pushes his way to the front. Vlad has a dagger in his hand and uses it to emphasize his speech.

VLAD

I want you all to know what you are fighting for. Vallachia is our home, our forefathers homeland. All of you that here were born here know that the land and us are as one. Vallachia has survived many wars as we have. We have been victorious because it is the will of this land. When we survive, this country screams Victory! How many leaders do you know can survive THIS?

Vlad stabs himself in stomach. His men look at him and Vlad shows no sign of pain. He stands there strong, as the dagger sticks out of his body.

He pulls out the dagger which has a four inch blade. He throws the bloody knife down, which falls in front of Alin.

Vlad rips his shirt open, and he wipes the blood from his wounded area, which reveals a small red line, but there is a wound but it is not bleeding.

There is a strange silence throughout the valley.

VLAD

If I can survive this... we will surely be victorious!

The soldiers cheers for their leader.

EXT. PUNARI CASTLE - DAY

Isabella, riding on her horse, with four soldiers as escorts, and her handmaiden VERA.

Her face is happy as she looks up and sees that it is almost finished is almost completed construction.

VERA

It's beautiful.

ISABELLA

This was a promise from Vlad upon our wedding day. This is to be our private sanctuary. Vlad proposed to me here. I have such good memories.

Isabella talks to the soldier ahead and points.

ISABELLA

There is a back entrance up this ridge.

Now Isabella takes the lead and she spurs her horse to go
Up the ridge.

EXT. TRANSYLVANIA MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Radu's officer MIKAEL leads the army of 500 through valleys into the Carpathian Mountains. MIKAEL watches many of Vlad's soldiers, weary from battle, walking opposite of the Turks army, surrendering and giving no resistance.

An ATTENDANT rides up alongside MIKAEL.

ATTENDANT

They are volunteering to fight with us.

MIKAEL

How much madness can soldiers take? I wonder how many men Vlad has left. They won't be any good to us.

ATTENDANT

I don't think we will need them.

INT. PUNARI - KITCHEN - DAY

Against one wall is a large walk-in fireplace. An older Romanian woman is cooking some food in a large pot. VERA is helping her, when Isabella enters, and grabs her maids elbow.

ISABELLA

Come you must see this.

They run up the spiral staircase to the top of a tower. the cone shaped roof is made of wood.

Isabella points up into the ceiling to show VERA some creatures hanging there. (large fruit bats). The girls look scared of them.

ISABELLA

(she whispers)

There. You see them?

They get closer by climbing up some wood crates. They seem to be daring each other. Suddenly a guard comes in and yells up to them.

GUARD

What are you two doing in here?

The girls scream, and hold their hearts.

This makes the bats wake up and four bats fly around the room. The bats fly out the smaller window of the tower. Through the window you can see the sun is setting. The bats fly in front of the full moon.

The two girls shout at the guard, angrily.

ISABELLA

Don't do that. You nearly scared us to death.

GUARD

(chuckling)

I didn't mean to scare you. This tower is still under construction. It's not safe here.

The girls laugh and run off down the hall.

INT. PUNARI - DUNGEON - NIGHT

A big Sloppy guy, big pail of soup, walking in front a long line of jail cells. He pours soup out with ladle into the prisoners shaky cups.

INT. PUNARI - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Isabella sits with VERA taking quietly as they sew patches on some clothing. Vera hears a sound.

VERA

Did you hear that?

ISABELLA

What?

VERA

Come here. It came from inside the fireplace.

They stop what they are doing and creep closer to the edge of the fireplace. They both hear a faint sound that sound like someone in pain.

VERA

Do you know where the prisoners are kept?

ISABELLA

No. There are large rooms beneath this castle I've seen them.

VERA

Show me!

ISABELLA

It should be around here.

Isabella walks toward a table near the wall. They see a mat, under the table, and pull it aside to show a heavy oak door in floor.

ISABELLA

There it is. Come help me.

They both move the table aside and reach down to the door.

Both girls pull up on the big metal ring, and they open it.

A red glow comes from deep below.

They get two lanterns and start their decent.

ISABELLA

Shhh. Listen. Do you hear that?

VERA

That doesn't sound good.

ISABELLA

Come. Let's see.

VERA

I'm afraid, my lady.

ISABELLA

I'll hold your hand.

Isabella grabs her hand and pulls her down the steps. As they climb down the stone stairs the glow gets brighter and the noise gets louder.

The sounds of prisoners yelling at each other, moaning. The two ladies hide around a corner and see the soup man dishing out soup to prisoners.

Isabella puts her back against the wall.

VERA

What is it. My lady?

ISABELLA

These must be Vlad's prisoners. I'm not sure who they are, or if they deserve to be treated this way.

VERA

Let's go back.

The Maiden looks around the corner. The guard serving soup spots her.

GUARD

Hey !

Both girls run back through catacombs but take a wrong turn, and they go down more stairs.

Realizing they are lost, they try to work their way back with one lantern. They get increasingly frightened.

INT. BARREL VAULTED ROOM -

They enter a dark room with bones scattered around and they stop themselves from screaming. They go further and see another room filled with bones.

They walk faster. They suddenly stumble upon a staircase going up. They run up it tripping on steps but finally It leads them back the room they came from.

Both girls are panting now. They quickly close the trapdoor again with a loud SLAM, and cover it with the carpet and table.

INT. VLAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Isabella enters, followed by Vera. They then slam the door and lock it. They jump on bed, holding hands.

ISABELLA

This place is not as beautiful as I thought.

EXT. PUNARI DONGEON & CASTLE - DAY

Men wearing shackles shuffle slowly out of their cells and are pushed along a hallway. They move closer to a small doorway where you can see daylight.

As the men emerge outside, they squint their eyes from the light. They are chained together so they cannot escape.

A guard yells at them.

GUARD

You are lucky you are alive to work another day.

Very skinny slaves with ripped clothing, they look half-dead, are made to carry cement troughs and stones.

There is a man with rope lifting a wooden box with a pulley system high up the castle wall.

People at top are placing bricks on the wall.

One old man drops a stone and a guard hits him with a wooden staff.

VALLEY:

Same day, Vlad and officers on horse riding along slowly reach the bottom of Punari castle. Foot soldiers coming behind. Slaves are still building the castle.

CASTLE HALL / WALL:

Isabella and maiden are walking along the castle wall and are approached by a guard.

GUARD

He's here my lady. Lord Vlad is coming down the valley.

Isabella is excited and runs to the edge of the castle wall. She looks down at the foot of the hill and sees Vlad dismounting his horse along with his soldiers.

Isabella waves and shouts to get his attention.

Vlad looks up and sees her on the castle wall. He then begins walking up to the front entrance.

OUTSIDE CASTLE:

Isabella runs down the castle wall stairs to main entrance and runs down to meet Vlad half way up the mountain. They embrace and kiss.

Isabella looks carefully at Vlad's face and she sees something is very different about him. here happy face slowly turns worried.

ISABELLA

You look tired. You're home now. You can now rest.

Vlad and her enter the castle. Men in background still climbing up stairs.

INT. VLAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Full moon illuminates some of the bedroom. Lots of candles and lanterns. Vlad is sitting in a bathtub here. Isabella is in nightgown, sitting on stool beside the tub with her head on his arm. Vlad looks relaxed.

ISABELLA

I miss you so much. It's like I have to get to know you all over again. and you have changed.

VLAD

I think for the better. I'm different because I have no choice. There are two sides of me.

VLAD (CONT'D)

One as you see me now. And the other which even I don't want to see. there are also things about me that would amaze you.

ISABELLA

I know war changes everyone. Every man I've known that has fought as a warrior grows colder and their eyes change... just like yours. Is it what you see, or what you feel?

VLAD

The only feelings I have left are for you. As for what I've seen ... I can't describe. You would not want to know what I've seen.

ISABELLA

I've had terrible dreams of being chased by a wolf. Strangely, the wolf always turns into you.

VLAD

Dreams must best be forgotten.

ISABELLA

But what about our dreams, of us?

VLAD

Yes. That dream keeps me alive. but I must stay alive to dream.

ISABELLA

So, you still love me? (pause)

VLAD

Of course I can't imagine my life without you. You know you are everything to me.

He stands up in the bathtub, naked. He pulls her closer, and kisses her passionately. She grabs a towel and starts to help him dry off.

VLAD

I wish things were very different. I would rather rule with love

Isabella notices lots of scars. Four new scars.

ISABELLA

How did you get these new scars?

VLAD

That one was from a crossbow.

ISABELLA

And this one?

She points to his abdomen. (He sighs.)

VLAD

Now we need Stefan's help again. We are being pursued by my brother's army.

ISABELLA

It hurts me when I think of the pain you endure.

VLAD

I'm beginning to think it is safer to
be loved than feared.

She kisses her finger, smile on her face, and touches his
wound. Then she grabs his hand, pulls him toward the bed,
then lets his hand go.

ISABELLA

(smiling)

Come, lover. Let me tend your wounds.

She goes into the bed and waits for him.

Vlad finishes drying himself then walk to a night table
with a basin, and a mirror on the wall above it. He walks
by the mirror and notices something strange. He sees
himself as a ghostly image (50% transparent). He's startled
and a little alarmed. Then he composes himself.

ISABELLA

I'm waiting for you.

He goes to the bed. He gets under the covers with her.

ISABELLA

(laughing)

You're so cold. Come I'll warm you up.

Kissing. Then love scene. Moon in background.

INT. PUNARI - DAY

Rooster crows in the castle courtyard.

Soldier is sleeping at his post. Early morning sunlight on
him. A CANNON BOOM startles him to wake up.

ON WALL: Cannonball hits wall and tears a of stone out.

The Guard stands up looks over the edge of the wall down
below. He sees the Turkish army, 500 men, beginning their
siege.

IN BEDROOM: Vlad's bed. Isabella is awaken by noise. She
shakes Vlad awake.

ISABELLA

Did you hear that?

Vlad gets up, throws on his cloak, and goes to the window. Looks down below, he sees army below and just in time to see the second cannon fire at the castle.

The cannonball hits another tower, closer to them this time.

Isabella lets out a small scream.

VLAD

They're here. Get dressed. We're under attack.

EXT. OUTSIDE CASTLE - DAY

TURK ARMY IN VALLEY:

MIKAEL, the Turk army leader, is at the cannons, watching them reload, then FIRE another shot.

MIKAEL

That'll wake them up. It will be a long day for them.

EXT. CASTLE WALL - DAY

As they look up the upper wall crenellations are filling with more of Vlad's soldiers. They have crossbows and start to fire down at the Turks.

TURK ARMY IN VALLEY:

Several archers are behind siege shields and they shoot with Turkish bows up at the castle.

A crossbow bolt hits one of these shields.

INT. VLAD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Isabella is trying to get a dress on quickly and her VERA is there helping her. Vlad is dressed and begins to leave the room.

VLAD

Don't leave. Stay in this room until I
come back. You will be safe here.

Vlad leaves the room.

EXT. OUTSIDE CASTLE - DAY

UPPER BATTLEMENTS:

Many soldiers are loading crossbows and firing down.

A cannonball hits near the top and knocks a soldier off the
wall. He yells as he falls down to the bottom of the
courtyard.

CASTLE COURTYARD:

In the center of castle walls is an open courtyard where
chickens and goats are running about. Knights are gathering
there, with their horses, and getting on their armour.
Zoltan and Claudu are there.

Vlad walks down a large staircase leading to the center of
the courtyard. Vlad yells at the men.

VLAD

Where is ALIN ?

CLAUDU

In the armoury.

CLAUDU motions someone to go get him.

VLAD

I have a plan.

The soldiers all gather around Vlad. Then Alin joins the
crowd with an armful of weapons , Vlad sees him.

VLAD

We have enough provisions and men to
hold out here for a couple of weeks.
But we will need reinforcements to push
them back.

Alin. Remember when you last wore my armour? I want to do that again.

We need to create a diversion while Claudu and I go to Muldovia to get help from Stefan.

Vlad looks at Zoltan.

VLAD

It is up to you to hold them back as long as you can.

Men are getting armour on and preparing for battle. Alin finishes removing his brigandine armour, and hands it to Vlad.

Two of Vlad's personal squires now bring Vlad's armour to him. Vlad motions them to stop and points to Alin.

VLAD

Arm HIM with my armour.

TURK ARMY IN VALLEY:

A TURK OFFICER, RAMI, comes up to Mikael.

RAMI

Should I send men to surround the castle?

MIKAEL

Yes. We don't want anyone to escape. But if you find someone bring them to me.

As Rami walks away to mount his horse, Mikael yells at him.

MIKAEL

I want them alive. Dead men can't talk.

INT. VLAD'S BEDROOM -

Isabella is with VERA, who is packing a chest for travel.

VERA

So we are going to Stefan's castle?

ISABELLA

I don't know... but we must wait here
until Vlad comes back.

An arrow comes through the window and sticks into the wall.

Both women duck and scream a bit when the arrow impacts. It
has a scroll with a message tied onto it.

Isabella goes to the arrow and pulls it out. She removes
the paper, opens it and reads it to VERA.

ISABELLA

Radu will take the throne of Vallachia.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Vlad will be hunted like a wolf.
The Sultan shall have his head.

VERA

They are just trying to break our will.

She crumples the paper and throws it on the ground.

EXT. CASTLE - DAY

COURTYARD - BACK GATE:

Alin and five men in weapons and armour, along with one
soldier carrying a tall banner, are about to open the gate.

Vlad is looking up at Alin, who now has Vlad's armour on,
with open visor.

VLAD

Let them see you, and give chase lead
them all the way to Sibiu. This will
stall their attack.

The back doors open up and then Vlad smacks the horse on
the flank, making them go.

Vlad then tells his soldiers and knights to remove the steel horse shoes from the rest of the horses, turn them around and re-nail them to the hooves again.

VLAD

This will make it seem like we just arrived when we leave.

CASTLE - FAR TOWER:

At the far end of the castle wall there are Soldiers who are loading crossbows, a FIRE arrow comes near them striking a wood crate. It catches fire. One of the soldiers yells down the stairs:

SOLDIER

FIRE! Water, water.

EXT. VALLEY BELOW - DAY

There is a few Turkish archers attaching notes to some arrows. One archer is lighting a oil soaked rag on the tip of his arrow. Mikael is watching and says.

MIKAEL

Burn them out!
I want Vlads head on a spear!

COURTYARD - BACK GATE:

Vlad's men are finishing attaching the last of the horse shoes. Vlad hears the shout of "FIRE", and sees an arrow, on fire, sticking in the back gate door.

CASTLE - FAR TOWER:

Several soldiers are battling the fire with buckets of water. They quickly put it out.

They are all panting and they rest a bit when they see the fire is out. One soldier notices that it is quieter now as if the siege as stopped.

SOLDIER

They've stopped.

The soldiers look out through the crenellations on the castle wall down to the valley below.

They see their decoy party of horsemen surrounded by Turkish foot soldiers, and they are leading the horses down the hill towards the Turkish front line. All the Turks start cheering and raising their swords and spears in the air.

INT. VLAD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Isabella and VERA begin to hear loud cheering outside the window. They both go to the window to look out.

They look down at the scene below. They see what they think to be Vlad being taken off his horse. He is having his hands tied behind his back. The other three horsemen are also being tied up now.

IN VALLEY:

The Turkish General MIKAEL steps in front of the siege cannons, and has ALIN brought before him. One of the soldiers removes his helmet.

IN BEDROOM: Isabella thinks it is Vlad. She stares down.

IN VALLEY:

MIKAEL

Finally we meet face to face. You don't look much like your brother. Or for that matter a madman.

Mikael takes his Turkish dagger out, raising it. He walks slowly around Vlad.

MIKAEL

I have heard from some of your deserters you have miraculous healing powers.

Mikael stops and faces Vlad and says.

MIKAEL

I want to see this, can you show me?

Mikael stabs ALIN in the ribs between his armour, in his side.

Alin is in pain and falls to his knees. He lets out a loud moan, you can see the blood dripping down his side.

IN BEDROOM:

Isabella gasps when she sees that.

IN VALLEY:

MIKAEL

That doesn't look miraculous to me. I have seen thousands of men do this!

ALIN

I'm not ...

Alin is losing his strength now. Mikael walks closer to Alin and holds his dagger to his face.

MIKAEL

I can't hear you. I have grown weary of these tales.

Mikael puts his bloody dagger away. He then addresses all his soldiers loudly.

MIKAEL (CONT'D)

Let's end this thing here and now!

He pulls out his long curved sword.

MIKAEL (CONT'D)

Heal from this !

Mikael cuts Alin's head off with one expert swoop.

IN BEDROOM:

Isabella screams loudly. Then she staggers back into room.

IN COURTYARD:

VLAD is in the open court tightening saddle straps. He looks up as he hears gasps from soldiers watching over the castle walls.

IN BEDROOM:

Isabella puts her hands to her face. She then turns and staggers, putting her back to the wall.

Vera comes to help Isabella. She helps to hold her up. Isabella's knees are weak. Vera looks into Isabella's face, who's eyes are closed, and begins to sob.

The two women comfort each other and embrace.

Then they sit on the bed side. Vera takes Isabella's hand and looks her seriously in the face.

VERA

They'll kill us next... won't they!

Isabella stands up suddenly, confused, startled, panicking.

She goes to the open window again, looking out. Quickly she turns her head back to face inside, and sits on the window sill.

Her hands are over her face again. Vera falls down at Isabella's feet.

VERA

What shall we do?

In silence, Isabella slowly rises to her feet. They both hear someone coming down the hallway outside the bedroom door.

Vera gets up, takes a chair and wedges it against the door. Isabella seems quieter now. Vera turns her head to see Isabella.

Isabella falls backwards out the window, without a word spoken.

Vera sees this and falls to her knees with wide eyes, covering her mouth trying to stop a scream.

CASTLE HALLS:

Vlad is coming up stairs to the upper halls. He runs down the corridor to the bedroom door.

He pushes against it but it is locked. He stands back and kicks it as hard as he can. After the second hit, the door opens. He pushes it open further and enters the room.

IN BEDROOM:

Vlad sees the Vera on her knees. She still has her hands covering her mouth but now with closed eyes sobbing again.

VLAD

Where is she? Where's my Isabella?

Vera now in shock stares at him and her mouth moving but no sound coming from it. She then slowly turns and points at the open window.

Vlad rushes to the window, looks down slowly. He sees Isabella's crumpled dead body on the rocks 100 feet below.

He staggers backwards into room, in silence. Sits down on bed, puts his face in his hands for a moment.

He looks up and we see tears in his eyes, but don't hear him cry. Some tears come down his cheek and they are tinted red from blood.

Vlad slowly composes himself until he becomes calm. He slowly stands up, and Vera also stands up.

He begins to walk to the door. Vera grabs his hand to show compassion for him. He ignores her and slowly pulls his arm away from her.

She then falls to her knees and sobs, as he leaves out the door.

EXT. VALLEY BELLOW

The Turkish Soldiers are now preparing to leave , they have what they think is Vlad's head on the top of a spear.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY

Vlad walks slowly down large stairway leading to courtyard. All his horsemen are there ready and waiting for him to leave.

He walks up to Claudu, who tells him the news.

CLAUDU

You know they've caught Alin, and killed him?

VLAD

Yes , this was the worst mistake I've ever made. I don't think I can ever forgive myself.

CLAUDU

You have sent many men to their death before. Why is this worse than any other?

VLAD

They think they've killed me. Well, maybe they have. Because by their actions I have lost my Isabella. Which is the death of my very soul.

Zoltan is up on the castle walls. He looks down to Vlad and Claudu.

ZOLTAN

They seem to be leaving my lord ,shall
we give chase?

Vlad turns to Zoltan.

VLAD

We still need more men!
(then to Claudu)
You must still leave for Muldovia. This
is not over yet. Go on ahead. I'll
catch up.

They open the gate a bit and horses start filing out.
As Claudu is riding he turns back to Vlad.

CLAUDU

They think you're dead, my lord, you
are free.

After the horsemen exit the gate door, soldiers close it
again. Vlad checks his horse one more time.

Up on a wall walkway, Zoltan is watching Vlad, as he mounts
his horse.

Vlad turns to him and nods goodbye. Vlad seems to be taking
one last look at everything before he leaves.

He then waves his hand to signal soldiers to open the gate.
Once the gate is opened he gallops off into the sunset.

A YEAR LATER

INT. GERMAN TAVERN - NIGHT

A dark figure of a man goes up to an INNKEEPER of the
Tavern. It is VLAD, in a full cloak, with hood up.

VLAD

A top floor room, if you please.

INNKEEPER

Good Evening Sir. I have something that
should do perfectly for a gentleman.
Four florins.

Vlad hands him some coins.

INKEEPER

What name should I put in the register?

VLAD

Johanus Von Schmidt.

Now the innkeeper sees his face clearer. It is Vlad without
a moustache - clean shaven. Youthful looking.

Vlad turns and walks toward the stairs leading up. The
innkeeper watches him walk away.

As Vlad passes a large mirror, the innkeeper notices for a
split second that there is no image in the mirror of the
man - just an empty cloak.

THE END