

(A light comes up on LEADING PLAYER)

#9a - Chapel Underscore

LEADING PLAYER

~~INTRIGUE PLOTS TO BRING DISASTER...~~

The royal chapel at Arles.

(CHARLES is *praying*. After a moment, a mysterious hooded MONK enters; it is PIPPIN, although we can't yet see his face)

Start

CHARLES

→ (Sensing his presence)

It's all right, Father. You may come in.

PIPPIN

I'm sorry to disturb you, my son. I know you like to pray alone.

CHARLES

You know who I am, Father?

PIPPIN

Of course, my son.

CHARLES

You want something from me perhaps... a favor... advancement?

PIPPIN

I'm here to be with you for one moment... to look into your eyes.

CHARLES

And what do you see?

PIPPIN

I see two eyes... a little cloudy with age... a sunset.

CHARLES

What else?

PIPPIN

I see the death of thousands... the slavery of more... terror and bloodshed.

CHARLES

You see all that in my eyes?

PIPPIN

Do you deny it?

CHARLES

Deny it? I'm proud of it. I brought order out of chaos. If terror and bloodshed were necessary to achieve that order, so be it.

PIPPIN

Those are words from the past. Time has passed you by, my son.

CHARLES

And your time has come... my son?

PIPPIN

(Taking down the hood on his robe)

Yes, Father.

CHARLES

It's so easy from where you stand to judge the things that I have done. Eagles, ospreys, even vultures had a better view. From the heights all things are very clear. But, when I marched, the dust of the road was in my mouth, and when I fought, the blood of the enemy was in my eyes. But, by God, I blew my breath across a continent and shaped an empire with it.

PIPPIN

Father, maybe you did the best you could, but things have to change.

CHARLES

And you're the one to change them?

PIPPIN

Yes, I am.

CHARLES

Well, if you truly believe that, there's only one thing that you can do.

(CHARLES takes out his knife)

PIPPIN

Thank you, I brought my own.

(PIPPIN reveals his knife)

CHARLES

Then use it. Or go, and leave me to my prayers.

PIPPIN

What do you pray for, Father?

CHARLES

Strength. And may God give you the same—

(PIPPIN stabs his father. CHARLES slowly sinks to the ground.)

End →