

## Scene of one of the final battles

EXT. OUTSIDE WALLS OF MAGDEBURG - DAY

Cannon is fired at wall. Maurice's soldiers prepare to charge once barrage stops. Cannon is fired from Magdeburg toward gathering forces, forming a huge blanket of dust outside the city and on the wall.

WILHELM

(removing his handkerchief from his face)

"They've brought bigger cannons in, and they've been firing all day. How long can the wall hold?"

STEFAN

"If we run out of cannon before they do, they'll move those great cannons forward and that'll--"

He pauses, coughs, then shouts below.

STEFAN

"How many more rounds of cannonball?"

Cannon engineer raises four fingers. Each side fires four rounds, and then the cannon attack ceases. Maurice's horn blows to commence attack, but because of the cloud of dust, those on the wall cannot see the Imperial forces until they begin to ascend the ladder. Arrows fly both directions. Wilhelm and Stefan shoot bows while Paulus, Thomas, and Eidleveye throw rocks down on attackers.

STEFAN

(shouting below)

"Look to the gate!"

ON THE GROUND

Soldiers rush to the gate as the pelt and fur-covered armored ram is wheeled close and thrust against the gate.

AMSDORF

"Support it, men!"

Soldiers press against the gate with their bodies, preparing for the strike of the ram.

STEFAN

(to Wilhelm)

"Keep the arrows flying, son!"

(to his other boys)

"Oil! Now!"

An arrow pierces Paulus' neck. He falls and the bucket of hot oil he's holding spills on him. He screams. Stefan kneels down beside him, trying to wipe off the oil with his sleeve. Several men on the wall are struck with arrows, their carcasses rolling off the wall to the ground below. Wilhelm sees his brother injured, but is too intensely trying to drive back the forces to come to his brother's side. He sees Thomas kneel beside his brother.

WILHELM

"Thomas! Shoot now! They're climbing ladders!"

THOMAS

(crying)

"They hit Paulus!"

STEFAN

(putting a palm on his son's cheek)

"I'll take care of him. You defend the city."

Stefan picks up Paulus and begins to carry him down the steps, shouting for reinforcements.

STEFAN

"Reinforcements! On the wall, now!"

His orders are echoed by soldiers on the ground. A huge crash by the gate causes every Magdeburg warrior to turn to the gate with a look of fear on his face. The blunt edge of a huge log has ruptured the frame of the gate.

AMSDORF

"The gate has been breached! Come to the top of the ritalgia!"

The Magdeburg warriors pressing against the gate rush up the steep ritalgia, trying to escape the coming onslaught. Some of them are trying to drag or carry the injured on their shoulders. Maurice's army pulls the ram back, and thrusts again against the wall, shattering it. Warriors pour into the city and face a rain of arrows pouring down steep hills on three sides. The bodies begin to pile up.

AMSDORF

"More arrows! Quick! Gather arrows!"

ON THE WALL

Wilhelm sees a dozen men carrying ladders running southward along the wall. He gets the attention of several archers.

WILHELM

"Their trying to flank us, to the south! Defend the southern wall!"

AT THE REAR OF MAURICE'S FORCES

MAURICE

(looking through his eye-scope)

"The gate has been breached!"

Meckelburg and Prince Henry roar a warrior's cheer.

MECKELBURG

"Send them all! Send the siege engines now. They will be too occupied at the gate to be able to take them out."

Maurice is hesitant.

HENRY

"What are you waiting for? End it today!"

Maurice nods at the horn-blower beside him. A horn blows and all of Maurice's reinforcements sprint toward the city. Slaves begin pushing the siege engines toward the city.

AT THE DOOR OF A HOME IN MAGDEBURG

Stefan hands his son to a nurse at the door of a home filled with cots, upon which lie injured and moaning men. Nurses scurry about, tending to them. A woman and eight children weep around a man on a cot who has just died.

STEFAN

"Oh my dear boy, I'm praying for you."

(rushing back to the gate)

"Everyone to the gate, now! Women and children - to the gate!"

ON THE MAGDEBURG WALL

WILHELM

"Use the poles! Topple their ladders!"

He tries to repel the ladder with the pole, but it is too heavy with too many warriors climbing it.

WILHELM

"Help! Thomas! Help!"

Thomas sets down his bow and they begin to push together, moving it three feet away from the wall. It's too heavy for them. They see a warrior's sword raised above the top of the ladder, and cocked back to swing.

THOMAS

"It's too heavy!"

WILHELM

"Let it go, now!"

They let go of the pole and it falls toward the wall and crushes the warrior's hand between the ladder and the wall. He screams, and Wilhelm picks up his sword and slays him. Thomas picks up a hand-size rock and, with a scream, throws it hard into the face of a climbing warrior. Wilhelm picks up a polearm and strikes a warrior climbing the ladder. An arrow grazes his cheek. He dips his arrow in a pot of oil, lights it with a lamp beside the wall, and fires at an approaching siege engine.

INSIDE THE MAGDEBURG GATE

At the gate, Stefan grabs a bow from the grasp of a dying man, and begins to fire down the ritalgia at those still trying to maneuver around layers of dead bodies up the steep ditch. The thousands of fresh forces that were in reserve now arrive at the gate and the wall, their quivers filled. The air above the city is thick with arrows.

WILHELM

(shouting below, bloody polearm in hand)

"We need more men or we will not keep them off the wall!  
The siege towers are nearing!"

Everyone is too busy fighting to heed Wilhelm's call. Wilhelm continues to wield his polearm at those climbing the ladder. Just as he shoots his last arrow, warriors crest the wall on the ladders. Suddenly, armed women and children of Magdeburg begin join their fathers and brothers on the wall, wielding weapons at every warrior. Soon, the siege engines are engulfed in flames. Momentarily, they hear the army's call to retreat, and the attackers rush back out of arrow range, dragging their wounded.

AT THE CLINIC

Helda rushes into the makeshift clinic with her daughters.

HELDA

"Paulus! Where's my son?"

A nurse points. Helda rushes to him. A nurse is holding a pressure bandage to the entrance and exit wound caused by the arrow. Another nurse is trying to clean his severe burn on his abdomen.

HELDA

"Oh, Paulus. I'm so sorry. Your father shouldn't have let you on the wall."

Paulus cannot speak, but he stirs at his mother's words. The bell rings, informing them all of the noon hour of prayer. Paulus brushes the nurses aside, and tries to kneel beside the bed.

NURSE

(trying to stop him)

"No, wait. It'll start bleeding again."

HELDA

"No, Paulus. No."

They try to force him to lie still, but he persists until he is on his knees beside his mother. He clasps his hands in desperate prayer.

PAULUS

(mumbling and slurred)

"Jesus. Jesus. Jesus..."

At first Helda studies him with a look of puzzlement on her face. Her daughters kneel as they watch Paulus pray. Tears come to Helda's eyes, and she wraps her hands around his, and begins to weep as she hears her son's prayer.

HELDA

"I'm sorry, Lord. I'm so sorry. Help my unbelief..."

All over the city, bloody warriors fall to their knees, weapons in hand, and pray to God, some of them loudly and passionately, for deliverance.