

START EPISODE FIVE

A.

Irene's ladies sit casually on the ground, tired, hanging out between shifts.

NARRATOR

Five years later. Irene's ladies are between shifts. Caring for Irene. Caring for her small son.

LADY 1

A child bride is a child mother.

CYRA

She's twenty, not a child.

MEGARIS

She cries only when she's in pain.

LADY 2.

We should let her have more syrup.

MEGARIS

No, if she doesn't stop bleeding, she should go to the healing springs.

LADY 2.

For sure. She shouldn't still be bleeding.

CYRA.

Hm, but that's not it, she holds him like they're both being painted.

She demonstrates what she means.
Some of the LADIES laugh.

MEGARIS

She is a blessed Mother.

LADY 1.

Yes absolutely.

Silence. IN ANOTHER ROOM, A SMALL CHILD STARTS TO SHOUT "NO, NO, I DON'T WANT TO".

MEGARIS

Excuse me.

Megarıs exits.

FOOTSTEPS

LADY 1

No she's not!

BIG LAUGH.

CYRA

(quietly, but encouraged by the laughter)

Can I tell you something?

She looks around for support.

She has an icon.

LADY 1

Oh stop it.

CYRA

She's making Megaris hide it for her. Remember her screaming that only she can touch the Kaiserissa's sheets? Why are we not allowed near her bed or her boxes?

LADY 2.

So we're not allowed near her bed... and?

CYRA

If it's found *all* her ladies would be judged. As traitors.

Silence. This is true.

So maybe we should think about/

A savage intake of breath from the other ladies, like a HISS.

LADIES

We lie
for our Lady.
We lie as
she needs us.
We lie to protect her
and keep her safe
at court.

CYRA

But/

LADY 1

/The old Emperor
is dying *

LADY 2.

maybe
his son*

CYRA

Will you
listen to me?

LADY 3.

* won't care *

LADY 2

* about "icons"

LADIES 1 AND 2

* and then
you'll feel a fool.

CYRA

It won't happen that way!

LADY 1

Can't you see *

LADIES 2 AND 3

* Leo is falling
out of cold love *

LADY 2.

* owed to his father *

CYRA

No.

LADY 3.

* into warm love *

LADY 1.

for his wife?

Megariss enters, holding the hand
of a small boy. This is Leo and
Irene's son, Constantine VI, who
is about four or five.

CYRA

But I've seen it! I've seen it with her!/
/Shhh. Megariss is back! She's brought you
Constantine... Have you forgotten his lesson?

LADY 1

No. I have not forgotten.

CYRA

No. I have not forgotten.

She crosses the room.

Megariss, I have him, you can let go of his
hand.

MEGARIS

If I let go, he'll run away.

CYRA

Constantine, it is time for your lesson.

Annoyed, Cyra walks over to
Megaris and takes Constantine's
hand away from her.

CYRA (CONT'D)

Do you remember our words?

Constantine VI is distracted.

CYRA (CONT'D)

(sung)

DO NOT MAKE IDOLS

(speaking)

Are you listening?

No put that down.

We are doing this now.

(singing)

DO NOT MAKE IDOLS
OR SET UP AN IMAGE
OR A SACRED STONE
FOR YOURSELVES/

Constantine VI runs off.

Cyra runs after him.

Constantine VI switches directions
laughing

(shouting)

Bad boy! I am not playing!

Constantine VI looks at her
surprised.

Are you going to be a good boy now and stop
running around?

Constantine VI nods.

(singing)

DO NOT MAKE IDOLS
OR SET UP AN IMAGE
OR A SACRED STONE
FOR YOURSELVES

(getting faster as Constantine VI starts
to run away again)

AND DO NOT PLACE A CARVED STONE

IN YOUR LAND
TO BOW DOWN BEFORE IT

Constantine VI isn't listening at all. He runs laughing to Megaris, who scoops him into her arms.

MEGARIS
Is the lesson done?

CYRA
Yes.

THE SOUND OF CYRA LEAVING.

MEGARIS
There goes nursie....
Now... wait a minute....

CONNIE WONNIE, CONNIE BONNIE,
LUVVIE HONEY,

WHAT HAVE I GOT FOR YOU?

Megaris pulls something out of her pocket.

It's a little lady!
carved small for a pocket!

Is she pretty like your Mommy?
Go on give her a little kiss.

Constantine gives the icon a BIG
SMACKING KISS.

If I were your nursie
this is how we'd say your prayers.

Constantine gives the icon ANOTHER
KISS.

Let's take it to your Mummy
and go see how she feels.

Megaris walks away holding
Constantine VI by the hand.

B.

CUT TO IRENE

Irene, lying in bed, is delighted to see Megaris come in with her son.

WALKING, DOOR?, SOUND OF CHILD
BOUNCING ONTO BED

MEGARIS (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

IRENE

Better now I see my little boy.

MEGARIS

(impatiently)

Tsk, are you worrying again?

IRENE

What's a head without worries?

Outside, there's a BANG of metal
being hammered out.

Irene GASPS.

What's that?

MEGARIS

Nothing.

IRENE

No, that's armor being prepared.

MORE RHYTHMIC BANGING OF A HAMMER
(2 against 3)

IRENE (CONT'D)

LAST NIGHT

LAST NIGHT,
I DREAMT
A FLOCK OF BIRDS
FLEW IN THE ROOM
AND STOLE MY BABY
CONSTANTINE'S SHOES
AS HE SLEPT.

LAST NIGHT,
I SAW YOU
COME OUT OF THE SHADOWS
NEAR HIS BED

LAST NIGHT,
YOU PUT YOUR HANDS
OVER HIS TOES
TO KEEP THEM SAFE,
EVEN AS THE BIRDS
PECKED
AT YOUR FACE.

YOU HAD NO EYES
BUT KEPT YOUR HANDS
IN PLACE

AND SANG TO HIM
A BATTLE HYMN.

Bii.

MEGARIS

I'm putting your lady back under your pillow.
She's there if you need her.

IRENE

Please will you go ask Staurakios/

Megarisis shakes her head.

MEGARIS

No. I'm not doing that.

IRENE

But I can hear/

CONSTANTINE VI

/Bampas!

MEGARIS

Oh it's your Daddy! Look at him doing his Peek-
a-Boo.

SOUND OF SOMEONE ENTERING A ROOM
AT A PLAYFUL RUN.

Leo enters Irene's room and joins
her and Constantine VI on the bed.
He starts to play peek-a-boo with
Constantine VI.

LEO

Constantine, quick, I need you to do some
magic. Make me disappear!

SOUNDS OF BLANKETS BEING THROWN

He burrows under the sheets.

Then his head pops back out.

What? Oh no, I'm still here! Try again!

IRENE

What's happening?

LEO

Listen, I may need to go away this week. My father wants us to sweep through the countryside hunting out icons.

IRENE

Oh.

LEO

Of course we need to, but I feel like...

Leo COUGHS.

Beat. Irene waits patiently.

IRENE

Take your time. Megaris can get you honey for your throat.

LEO

... there is still so much we could do for my father's health with prayer.

MEGARIS

You're sick too! You can't be riding anywhere!

IRENE

Megaris...

Megaris walks away to get honey.

LEO

I should go. I'm meant to be there...

IRENE

I remember what it was like. Soldiers coming in to our village. It took a whole year before the smell of burning disappeared.

LEO

I know. Half the men at court are probably still silent iconophiles. Burn their home villages and we'll be at war.

SOUND OF METAL AGAIN

C.

CUT TO DRILL YARD

NARRATOR

Over in the Drill Yard, the whole Court has been summoned to stand in front of the Emperor sitting on a raised chair. Staurakios looks around for Leo, who isn't there. He tries to melt into the shadows of the room.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Now the Emperor's own eunuchs have been dismissed, he is the most senior eunuch in the room, but, whatever this ceremony is, it's been organized entirely without him.

In front of him are the Court.

And his armor laid out. A helmet and a shield.

He gives a signal to his attendant who brings a dish and water.

SOUNDS OF A SPONGE BEING SQUEEZED OUT

CONSTANTINE V

I want them to wash my face in front of you, so you can see -- this is what the idol worshippers have done to me.

The attendant gently washes the paint off Constantine V's face.

WASHING SOUNDS

The Court SUCKS IN ITS BREATH

My son urges me to rest. He urges me to pray. But to escape weakness you have to fight.

The sound of Constantine V standing.

THE SOUND OF METAL BEING MOVED

COURT 1

What's he doing? He can't stand.

COURT

He has to, look they're putting on his armor...

THE SOUND OF METAL PIECES BEING PULLED ONTO A BODY

COURT 2

He's doing it. He's standing.

COURT 1

Yes, but not with a sword.

CONSTANTINE V

Who will hunt the iconophiles with me?

PHILES

(whispering)

Why now? Why this? Let's keep our differences hidden as normal. Keep the peace.

CONSTANTINE V

Oh! I see The Argyros standing straight away!

COURT 2B

And we are here! The sons of your dear third wife,

CONSTANTINE V

But other voices are silent?

Silence. Constantine V's breathing is getting worse.

CONSTANTINE V (CONT'D)

Where is my first wife's son?

Silence.

WHERE IS MY LEO?

NOW, NOW (EARLY MOTIF)

CLASTS

NOW. NOW.
NOW WE DIVIDE.

PHILES

UNWILLINGLY.

The COURT divides into two groups: the PHILES (formally COURT 1) and CLASTS (COURT 2).

CLASTS AND PHILES

NOW
WE BECOME

CLASTS

ONCE AGAIN

CLASTS (CONT'D)

ICONOCLASTS

PHILES

(reluctantly)

AND ICONOPHILES.

D.

NARRATOR

Constantine V looks at those who are keeping quiet. He reaches out for his ten pound sword.

Constantine V makes A HUGE SOUND OF EXERTION AS HE RAISES HIS SWORD IN THE AIR

CONSTANTINE V

I WILL HUNT YOU FOR YOUR/

CONSTANTINE V GASPS.

CONSTANTINE V (CONT'D)

/I need help.

CLASTS

NO DON'T TAKE AWAY HIS SWORD! That's not what he means/

CONSTANTINE V

/Lay me down, lay me down, lay me down.

The assistants help Constantine to lie down on the floor where he gasps for breath. Everyone stares at him.

SOUND OF CONFUSION

STAUAKIOS

Here are all these bearded man, utterly confused, the body of State has fainted on the floor.

Time to speak up and tell them what the rule books say to do.

Staurakios holds up his hands, poised, but unsure.

STAUAKIOS (CONT'D)

But..

If I clap now....

the sound will be like a light upon me...

On the ground, Constantine V GROANS.

CONSTANTINE V

Ahh...

Staurakios CLAPS his hands.

STAUAKIOS

Carry the Emperor to the Purple Room!

COURT

Who is that clapping?

CLASTS

(hissing)

Leo's eunuch!

Constantine V is picked up off the floor.

NARRATOR

Constantine V's sword is left on the floor as he's carried through the crowd.

As he goes past the iconophiles whisper...

PHILES

(whispering)

Wait! *Has* war been declared on us iconophiles?

STAUAKIOS

(sweetly)

I don't know. The Emperor is dying and this is not the correct room for that.

Staurakios puts his chin up and CLAPS again.

END OF AUDIO EPISODE 5