

EXODUS

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Draft 7.6.13

Legend

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1,300 years BCE, the world was dominated by two great powers - the Egyptian and Hittite Empires.

Bordering the two - Syria - the crossroads of commerce.

Any change by either power in the number of troops stationed in the area was ~~seen~~ by the other as a violation of the *status quo* and a threat to its security.

1

INT. ROYAL PALACE WAR ROOM - MEMPHIS, EGYPT - DAY

1

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A group of men meet in what functions, in times like these, as the WAR ROOM.

And like any wartime leader, SETI - the Egyptian Pharaoh - has gathered together his advisors, intelligence officers and generals.

While two of the uniformed generals - his son RAMSES and nephew MOSES are young - early 30's - none of the men present are much ~~past~~ 50, including Seti.

Old age is a luxury that won't be enjoyed by most for thousands of years.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

(to Seti)

It's true they have 15,000 troops encamped outside Kadesh. What's less clear is why.

*

RAMSES

Obviously to cross our border, what else would they be doing.

The Intelligence Officer, who wasn't speaking to Ramses, tells him that by ignoring him and speaking to Seti again -

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INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Anticipating an invasion by us, according to our information. They think we're preparing an attack - which we aren't.

(when Seti fails to respond)

Are we?

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Instead of answering the question, Seti asks one -

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SETI

You have this information how?

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

The usual way. Spies.

SETI

There's such a thing as
counterspies.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

These are trustworthy.

SETI

Everyone's trustworthy until they
aren't.

As Seti deliberates with himself, the silence is broken by
his son again -

RAMSES

There's one way to find out. Ask
them again under duress.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

(to Seti; not Ramses)

I'd rather not do that.

RAMSES

I'd rather not do a lot of things
but I do them when they have to be
done. And so should you.

Now both the Intelligence Officer and the Pharaoh regard
Ramses in a way that says he has spoken out of turn again.

MOSES

May I say something?

Everyone looks to Moses with interest instead of annoyance.

SETI

Please.

MOSES

I'd be concerned about the quality
of information in the future once
it's known we extract it under
duress. And information is
everything.

Ramses watches his father consider the wisdom in that in
another silence.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

So what do you want to do?

Seti regards Ramses and Moses and what each said, and, in effect, splits the baby -

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*

SETI
Information is everything, but
not if it wrong. What I don't want
to do - and won't do - is sit and
wait until we're fighting Hittite
armies outside the palace walls.

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2

INT. TEMPLE OF SEKHMET - MEMPHIS, EGYPT - DAY

2

A woman - the HIGH PRIESTESS of the Sekhmet cult - pokes at the organs of an eviscerated raven.

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*

SETI
What do the entrails say?

*
*

HIGH PRIESTESS
They don't say anything, they
imply. And that's open to inter-
pretation.

*
*

SETI
So ~~interpret~~ interpret them, it's not that
intricate a question. We'll win or
we won't in a preemptive attack.
It's yes or no.

*
*

HIGH PRIESTESS
And it's not clear. But something
else is.

Seti - and Ramses and Moses, the only other people present -
wait for it.

*
*

HIGH PRIESTESS
In the battle, a leader will be
saved, and his savior will someday
lead.

Ramses and Moses exchange a glance. Moses' looks says, this
is a waste of time. Ramses is less sure of that.

*
*

3

EXT. TEMPLE OF SEKHMET - DAY

3

*

Ramses and Moses, leaving the temple together -

MOSES
(joking but meaning it)
Your first order of business when
the time comes? Retire her.

*

RAMSES
I will. I don't know why my father
hasn't.

(MORE)

RAMSES (CONT'D)

(then)

But just in case, if you see me in
any real danger out there, ride the
other way.

*
*

Thinking he's kidding, Moses smiles. Ramses doesn't.

*

RAMSES

I'm serious.

*

4 INT. ROYAL PALACE WAR ROOM - MEMPHIS - DAY

4 *

A royal servant stands with a long, varnished wooden case
in his arms.

Seti opens it, revealing two gleaming medium-length bronze
swords set side by side into leather cushions.

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*

SETI

I just had these made for you.

Moses and Ramses each take a sword from the case to examine
them.

SETI

Long enough to be effective from
horseback - not so long that you
trip over them. May they keep
you both from harm.

As the young men feel along the sharpness of the blades -

5 EXT. MEMPHIS - DAY

5

Two thousand chariots and cavalry - 15,000 men - stretch
back from the temple through the city. A huge, thunderous
crowd of Egyptian citizens cheers them.

Ramses embraces his mother TUYA and climbs atop his white
steed. Moses embraces his mother BITHIA - attended by her
personal maid, MIRIAM - and climbs onto his black one.

*
*

From a palace balcony, Seti - alone - stoicism hiding his
concern - watches his son and nephew trot on their horses to
the vanguard of the assembled army and move out.

*
*

6 EXT. SOUTHERN SYRIA - DAY

6

The Orontes Plain: vast, arid, inhospitable.

In the distance: a cloud of dust as the Egyptian forces
approach from the south.

- 7 EXT. KADESH HITITE ENCAMPMENT - SAME TIME - DAY 7 *
- A vast encampment of tents, men, horses, chariots, weapons. *
- The Hittite army. Not at battle ready. Not yet. *
- 8 EXT. SOUTHERN SYRIA - DAY 8
- The cloud of dust is closer. Well ahead of it, riding north
- at full gallop, a small Hittite unit. Lookouts.
- 9 EXT. KADESH HITITE ENCAMPMENT - DAY 9 *
- The lookouts arrive with the news of the approaching
- Egyptians.
- Now the Hittite soldiers - 15,000 of them - cavalry, *
- infantry and chariotry - prepare to move out, readying their *
- weapons, greasing the axles of their chariots, yoking their *
- horses to the machines. *
- 10 EXT. HILLTOP - DAY 10
- Ramses and Moses have reached the top of a hill overlooking *
- the plain on their white and black horses, accompanied by an *
- escort of signallers and four Divisional Commanders. *
- They can see the Hittite encampment - tiny in the far *
- distance - now in a flurry of activity. *
- RAMSES *
- They know we're here. *
- He regards what will be the battleground below. *
- RAMSES
- Not very prepossessing, is it.
- I don't think I'd want to be seen
- dead here.
- (to Moses, joking) *
- But don't get any ideas.
- MOSES *
- (drolly back)
- Don't give me a reason to get any.
- RAMSES
- (to the commanders)
- Deploy Amun Division to the
- north, Ra Division to the center,
- Ptah to the south. Hold Seth in
- reserve.
- COMMANDER KHYAN *
- In reserve ... *

RAMSES

Yes.

*
*
*
*

Khyan and the other three Divisional Commanders given the orders steal a glance at Moses, perhaps for confirmation that holding more than 3,700 fighters in reserve is wise.

RAMSES

Don't look at him. Go.

The commanders salute Ramses and gallop off. He glances at Moses.

RAMSES

What.

MOSES

No, I agree.

This comes as a relief to Ramses, even if he tries not to show it.

11 EXT. ORONTES PLAIN - DAY

11

The Egyptian Divisions are being deployed as ordered by Ramses: The 1,500 two-man chariots, 12,000 infantry in three divisions. ~~Seth~~ Division, the reserve force, deploys further back.

A column of the Hittite's heavier three-man chariots gallops onto the plain.

*

Ramses, in a chariot now, leads the charge down the slope, drawing his sword.

The three Egyptian divisions - Amun, Ra and Ptah - converge, headed straight for the Hittites.

The heavier Hittite chariots cut a swath through its enemy's forces.

Hittite and Egyptian infantrymen lock in close-quarter combat, slashing with swords, thrusting with spears.

From his chariot, Ramses cuts down passing Hittites with his sword in the thick of the battle.

His shield-bearer takes an arrow and slumps dead over the side.

Undaunted, Ramses charges a larger Hittite chariot, tries to sweep around it, careens and crashes down.

He drags himself up off the ground to find the Hittite chariot turning around, coming back toward him to finish him off.

Seeing what's about to happen, Moses, on horseback, lets fly an arrow that kills the Hittite driver - but that still leaves two remaining to guide it to and over Ramses.

Moses fires another arrow, its shaft driving into another charioteer, killing him.

But there's still one more, and the massive ~~chariot~~ ^{chariot} is almost upon Ramses.

And he knows this is it, he's finished, about to be trampled to death, his sword gripped helplessly in his fist.

The third of Moses' arrows sails past Ramses and buries into the neck of the last charioteer.

The now-driverless Hittite chariot tumbles onto its side just inches from Ramses.

And time seems to stop as Ramses stares at Moses -

He has clearly just saved Ramses' life, as the High Priestess predicted.

Ramses isn't angry to be alive, but is chagrined by the prophesied ~~circumstances~~ ^{circumstances}.

The melee all around him falls silent to his ears as the Hittites, beleaguered by the smaller, faster Egyptian chariots, attempt with little success to retreat.

Ramses pushes a dead Egyptian from a chariot and, with the rest of his armies - though no longer at the vanguard - crash into what's left of the decimated Hittites.

Moses watches as Ramses kills fallen, wounded Hittites with savage intensity.

12 EXT. MEMPHIS - DAY

12

To cheering crowds, the Egyptian army returns - victorious but in bad shape, many of the soldiers missing arms or legs or both.

Seti, apart from Ramses' mother Tuya, his other wives, and his sister Bithia, watches soberly from the main terrace of the palace.

13 INT. ROYAL PALACE WAR ROOM - DAY

13

Cleaned up and changed, Moses comes into the War Room, summoned by Seti. Unlike before, it's almost empty. Just the pharaoh himself.

SETI

Sit.

Moses does.

SETI

I tried to congratulate Ramses.
You know what he did? He walked
past me without a word.

(pause)

What happened out there?

MOSES

Nothing.

Seti is unsatisfied with the answer.

SETI

I asked the commanders the same
question. They, too, lied, and I'm
tired of it.

MOSES

He thinks something happened, but
it didn't.

SETI

Meaning?

MOSES

The priestess. Her prophesy.

SETI

She said she couldn't see who would
win.

MOSES

The other one. A leader will be
saved, and so on.

Seti regards Moses for a long moment ...

SETI

You saved my son's life?

Moses shrugs. Seti studies him.

SETI

Thank you is not sufficient ...
but thank you.

Moses nods. Then -

SETI

I know you don't believe in omens
or prophesies.

(smiling)

I'm afraid to ask you about gods
these days. But I do believe.

MOSES

And I respect that. But this
isn't anything. It's less than
nothing. It doesn't even make any
sense.

SETI

Because you're not my blood.

(Moses nods)

It's true you can't succeed me.
At least not in the usual way.

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*
*

MOSES

In any way.

SETI

In any way we can imagine sitting
here now.

He studies Moses again, with more affinity than he ever has
with Ramses.

*
*

SETI

You know how I feel about you.
And him. It's horrible to say this
about one's own son, but I'd trust
you more than him to lead.

*
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*
*

14 INT. MEMPHIS STATE (THRONE) ROOM - EVENING

14 *

Ramses and his mother sit in silence, some distance apart
from each other. Eventually -

*

TUYA

It's beneath a king to sulk.

RAMSES

I'm not sulking. I'm thinking.
I'm thinking this is your fault.

*

TUYA

Mine?

RAMSES

I don't know where exactly you
are on his list at the moment, but
you've never been his favorite.

*
*

TUYA

Chronologically, which is all that
matters, I'm first on it which puts
you first on it, you ungrateful ...
(trails off)

*
*

RAMSES

Ungrateful what.

*
*

His sharp look to her says, say it - brat, child, whatever it is. But she doesn't say it. Rather she collects herself as she resolves something in her mind -

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*
*

TUYA

I've endured worse than this.

*

RAMSES

This is about me, not you.

TUYA

If you're not king, I'm just another dowager. And you're less than that. You won't let that happen.

*
*
*

RAMSES

I can't reverse a prophesy!

TUYA

Yes you can. You can kill him.

*

Ramses stares at her. Is she serious? There's no way he could kill his own cousin.

15 INT. MEMPHIS STATE (THRONE) ROOM - DAY

15

*

It's weeks later. Seti dealing with matters of State in his throne room. Counselors and various government officials lined up to present him with reports and advice.

Presently, a SCRIBE stands before a mural-sized sheet of papyrus stretched on a frame leaning against a wall. Slightly under his breath - as if he can't wholeheartedly endorse what the hieroglyphics say - he reads from it -

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*

SCRIBE

- the Hittite Chariotry crashed through our defense and began its assault. Panic ensued. Survivors fled. I found myself surrounded by the enemy - no other officer with me, no soldier, no shield-bearer - facing a desperate fight for my life. Only with the help of the gods did I defeat the attackers and rejoin Ra Division -

*

SETI

Stop there.

SCRIBE

There's more.

SETI

I'm sure there is.

Seti regards Ramses, the author of this inaccurate account of the battle, then the other generals there, including Moses. *

SETI

Does anyone have anything to add to - or perhaps more to the point - subtract from - Ramses' account of the battle so far?

GENERALS

No.

SETI

Moses?

MOSES

No.

SETI

You sure?

MOSES

I'm sure.

SETI

Ramses? Anything you'd like to rephrase? *

Nothing from Ramses but a look that says he's not pleased by his father's quiet, public, reprimand. From the silence - *

SCRIBE

Shall I continue?

SETI

No, I'm sure the rest is -
(with a glance to Ramses)
- fine. Carve it and have it installed somewhere in the south corridor of my tomb. What's next? *

The ADVISOR with the agenda checks it.

ADVISOR

Tax Report.

SETI

Unless there's something startling in it, I'm not in the mood. What else.

ADVISOR

Building Report.

SETI

Again, anything startling, or can we move on?

ADVISOR

There have been several delays on the temple reconstruction. We have a revised completion date.

SETI

I said startling. I'd be startled if there weren't delays. I'm used to delays on this and every other building project - painfully used to them. What else. I'm getting tired.

And he looks tired. And not altogether well. A doctor who has been mixing some powder in water, hands the potion to the king.

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*
*

ADVISOR

Goshen.

SETI

What about it.

ADVISOR

It's on the agenda again.

SETI

What is.

ADVISOR

It's assessment.

SETI

Forgive me for not understanding a word you're saying.

ADVISOR

Last year you said to bring it up to you this year, so it's been that long since anyone in an official capacity has made a trip there to report on it.

*
*

SETI

On 'it.' On what.

ADVISOR

The situation. The slaves.

SETI

There's a situation with the slaves?

ADVISOR

According to the viceroy, there could be. He's requesting more troops to maintain order.

SETI
Fine. Ramses.

RAMSES
What.

SETI
Do it.

RAMSES
Do what.

SETI
Go up there. Meet with the
viceroy. Look around. Make a
report.

RAMSES
Me - ?

Such a task is beneath a prince - and it escapes no one in
the room this is Ramses' punishment for his battle fictions -
but Seti ignores his son's protest by ignoring him.

SETI
(on to the next thing)
What else.

16 INT. PALACE SERPENTARIUM - DAY

16

Moses watches unseen from the entry archway of Ramses'
Serpentarium - a large man-made yet naturalistic habitat for
his large collection of snakes.

As he gently grasps a cobra and milks it, the venom dripping
into a small onyx jar, he notices Moses.

Both know he's troubled about what the Goshen assignment
says of his stature, and even more with his father's thinly-
disguised derision of his romanticized war chronicle.

MOSES
I'll go to Goshen.

RAMSES
No, I'll do it. If only to delay
his next humiliation.

MOSES
It's beneath you.

RAMSES
It's beneath you. Any general.

MOSES
I'll do it.

Ramses doesn't object this time, but also doesn't thank Moses. Instead -

RAMSES

Do you know that a little venom
in your blood is a good thing? It
makes you less vulnerable to the
next poisonous bite.

He lets the cobra strike him in the face. Moses recoils slightly at the blindingly fast strike, but Ramses just looks at him calmly as rivulets of blood from the two punctures drip down his cheek.

RAMSES

Maybe even my father's.

Moses knows this isn't all that's troubling him, and tries to assuage it --

MOSES

About the other matter.

RAMSES

(knowing what he means)
What other matter is that.

MOSES

Neither of us believes in
prophecies, so can we forget about
what happened on the battlefield?

Ramses doesn't say; just gently returns the cobra to its habitat.

17 EXT. THE NILE - DAY

17

Moses is aboard the lead barge of a flotilla, traveling up the Nile with an entourage of SOLDIERS and SCRIBES, their horses tethered on the decks.

On the riverbanks, shadufs raise water for drinking and irrigation. On the river itself, other barges and fishing boats oar and sail upstream and down, carrying produce, livestock and chiseled quarry stone.

On a particularly large barge coming past rests a 200-foot-long stone obelisk.

18 EXT. THE NILE - PITHOM DOCK - DAY

18 *

Moses' vessels dock.

As the horses are being off-loaded, he approaches a man clearly waiting for him with a small retinue of aides and horses.

MOSES

Viceroy. Thank you for meeting me.

AIDE

I'm not the Viceroy, sir. I'm his aide. He asked me to come down and welcome you.

Moses stares at the underling.

MOSES

Is he ill?

AIDE

No, sir.

Moses glances to the members of his own entourage. An uncomfortable silence.

AIDE

(not knowing what else to say)

Welcome to Pithom!

19 EXT. PITHOM - DAY

19

As the ~~two~~ groups - Moses' men and the Viceroy's aides' - crest a ~~rise~~ on horseback - the vantage point affords a panoramic vista of the city and its environs -

At the heart of the city, a bustling civic center of monuments, shops and stalls -

Adjacent to it, a vast ghetto of huts -

Beyond the ghetto - rock quarries - where tens of thousands of slaves - appearing from here to be the size of ants - work in the brickfields.

Dark smoke rises from kilns and pyres - the ash of burning bodies floating in clouds over the entire area.

AIDE

You get used to the smell.

20 EXT. THE VICEROY'S ESTATE - DAY

20

Moses and the others ride across the hilltop land of an estate more befitting a pharaoh than a viceroy.

Slaves are working here, too - constructing an addition to an already-too-grand villa.

21 EXT. THE VICEROY'S VILLA - BALCONY - DAY

21 *

Moses stands alone in a room which - though palatial - is still a waiting room.

He waits, listening to the echoing sounds of the construction outside.

Finally, the Viceroy comes in and greets him -

HEGEP

Welcome. And let me say I'm very glad you're here. Sorry I couldn't meet you at the river.

*

MOSES

Why.

HEGEP

Excuse me?

MOSES

Why couldn't you meet an envoy of the State on his arrival.

HEGEP

You didn't get the message?

MOSES

I think I did.

The Viceroy regards the General a bit uncomfortably.

HEGEP

I apologize. I had a meeting.

Moses doesn't even nod. The Viceroy notices there's nothing on the table next to his guest.

HEGEP

No one offered you anything to drink?

MOSES

No.

22 EXT. THE VICEROY'S VILLA - BALCONY - DAY

22 *

The two men sit on a large balcony overlooking the brickfields. Beyond that lies the city. This is Hegep's 'country house.'

An elaborate spread of food and drink has been laid out by servants who now stand around at a respectful distance.

HEGEP

You know what the problem is?
Modern medicine. People are living
too long. Every year the death
rate lags further behind the birth
rate. And these people? They
reproduce like it's sport.

MOSES

This is the 'problem.' A growing
workforce.

HEGEP

No, that's good. That's good for
production, of course. But only to
a point. Beyond that point - when
you're talking about a population
that wants you dead - it's a
problem.

MOSES

A population with no means to
accomplish that.

HEGEP

They do have the means. Their
rising numbers and my non-rising
security budget is the means. One
of those two things has to change.
Either I'm given more troops to
maintain order, or I start thinning
out the herd.

MOSES

You start slaughtering people for
no reason other than this - I'm
going to say precarious theory -
you'll provoke the very thing you
say you want to avoid.

HEGEP

Fine. Then give me the troops.

Moses looks away, off to the distant brickfields.

MOSES

Let's go down there and talk to
them.

HEGEP

The guards will tell you the same
thing I'm telling you.

MOSES

The slaves, not the guards.

HEGEP

The slaves? Why on earth.

MOSES

You're worried about sedition?
Let's find out how real that worry
is.

HEGEP

By *talking* to them?

MOSES

By looking at them as I talk to
them. You can tell a lot about
someone looking him in the eye.

As Moses is doing with Hegep right now, which makes him
uncomfortable. Hegep sighs.

HEGEP

Let me tell you ~~something~~ about
Hebrews. They're ~~conspiring~~,
combative ~~people~~. All they do is
plot and ~~schem~~ and argue. Even
among themselves. They argue all
the time. About everything. It's
their ~~nature~~. You know what
Israelite means in their language?

MOSES

Yes -

HEGEP

He who fights with god.

MOSES

He who wrestles with god. There's
a difference.

Moses looks at Hegep like he's beneath him in every way,
which he is.

HEGEP

Look, I may not be as educated as
you - which you apparently want to
remind me - but I'm here. I'm with
them every day. I have to deal
with them every day. I know what
I'm talking about.

MOSES

You don't have to come, I'll go
down there myself.

HEGEP

That's not safe. I can't permit
it. I won't endanger my men.

MOSES

I have my own. You can stay here
and attend another 'meeting.'

23

EXT. THE BRICKFIELDS - DAY

23

Moses and his entourage of soldiers and scribes ride slowly through the brickfields.

Some of the slaves are hauling great stone slabs on sleds. Others are cutting the blocks to size, chiseling them into shape. Others are carving statues, inscriptions, tributes. Others are mixing mud and straw to make housing bricks.

Moses pauses to consider a long line of men being lashed. Seems less horrified than curious. Trots over to the guard who seems to be in charge of this activity -

MOSES

What'd they do?

HEAD GUARD

What do you mean?

MOSES

What specifically are they being punished for?

HEAD GUARD

It's their turn.

MOSES

Their turn.

HEAD GUARD

One has to set an example.

MOSES

Of what.

HEAD GUARD

Whose hand holds the whip.

MOSES

You don't think they know that?

HEAD GUARD

(w/a grin and a shrug)
I know I shouldn't overeat, but
purging every now and then helps
remind me.

*

24

EXT. THE BRICKFIELDS - LATER

24

The envoy regards one of the pyres of burning bodies. Slaves trundle more corpses to the open fire and dump them into the burning pit. The supervising guards all wear cloth over their faces like bandits. One of them is talking to Moses -

*

*

GUARD

They object to it on religious grounds. I object to the smell of it. But it has to be done, to help keep down disease.

MOSES

How many deaths a day.

The guard realizes he's never bothered to count, but takes a guess -

GUARD

A hundred or so?

25

EXT. THE BRICKFIELDS - GUARDS TENT - LATER

25

Moses has taken over one of the large Bedouin-like guard-tents. Only his men are there, not Hegep's. The scribes sit at desks. Four older slaves (40s), having no idea why, stand before Moses.

MOSES

When the sun goes down and you return to the ghetto, what are you going to do?

Knowing that no answer is usually better than the 'wrong' answer, the men say nothing.

MOSES

It's not a hard question. Whatever it is, you do it every night.

Finally, one of them dares to speak.

SCHOLAR

Eat with our families. Sleep.

MOSES

That's it? You don't pray? I was taught you pray all the time. What do you pray for?

None of the men answers him.

MOSES

Is there a difference between praying for something, and plotting it?

Again, no one answers.

MOSES

You weren't gathered up at random.

(MORE)

MOSES (CONT'D)

I asked to see some scholars.
You're the quietest scholars I've
ever seen.

SCHOLAR

We pray to see Canaan again.

MOSES

Again? You've never seen it.
There hasn't been a Hebrew slave in
Canaan in 400 years.

(nothing from the
scholars)

I've seen Canaan, and I can tell
you it's a nice place. I can also
tell you it's occupied by tribes
fiercer than Egypt's military. You
won't be returning to it. Or if
you do, from it.

SCHOLAR

God says otherwise.

MOSES

He's wrong.

Nothing from the scholars. Moses, like he told Hegep he
would, looks at the slaves in the eye.

MOSES

I can see you're not convinced.
And I see that as a problem.
Because right next to unrealistic
beliefs lies fanaticism, and next
to that, sedition, and next to
that, revolution. And revolution
always starts with the scholars.
What's your name?

*

SCHOLAR

What's yours.

Moses stares at the man. That simple question - the
insolence of it - is grounds alone to kill him. It's also
what keeps him alive - the nerve of it. Moses smiles.

*

*

*

MOSES

The Viceroy described your nature
as combative. He's right.

*

SCHOLAR

You won't tell us your name?

*

MOSES

No, I'll tell you - and also tell you, you should be more careful how you speak to someone who's not only a general but a member of the Royal Family. Moses.

*
*
*

The name - strangely - seems to mean something to the scholars, but Moses has already turned to the scribes -

MOSES

Record their names and bring in the next group.

25A EXT. THE BRICKFIELDS - LATER - DUSK

25A

*

As the Royal entourage is leaving the still-working brickfields, a slave boy appears and runs alongside Moses' horse. Moses only glances down at him, but one of the soldiers menacingly admonishes -

*
*
*
*

ROYAL SOLDIER

Get away!

*
*

The boy does, but not before furtively slipping a small piece of papyrus under a saddle strap, which only Moses notices.

*
*
*

26 INT. THE VICEROY'S VILLA - EVENING

26

The Viceroy breezes into a room in a cheerful mood.

HEGEP

You survived the adventure!

Moses, in discussion with his scribes, only vaguely acknowledges Hegep's presence, which throws the Viceroy off his rhythm.

HEGEP

Sorry to make you wait again.

MOSES

I'm not waiting. I'm in a meeting.

*

HEGEP

Oh.

(pause)

How'd it go in the mud pits?

MOSES

Fine.

HEGEP

You saw what I'm up against.

Moses all but ignores him, turns back to his scribes. Uncertain if he's supposed to stay or leave, the Viceroy just stands there, listening to the ever-present sounds of the construction going on outside.

HEGEP

Is there anything else I can do for you before you leave?

MOSES

I'm not leaving yet. *

HEGEP *

Oh. I thought I saw your horse being readied outside. *

MOSES *

You did. And yes, there is something you can do for me. You can tell me if the expansion you're doing to this villa was reported to Memphis. And if it was approved. And if you have that in writing. *

The Viceroy just stares at him rather dumbly.

MOSES

If that look is trying to say you've forgotten, you can just show me the records. The authorization will be there or it won't. *

HEGEP

Naturally it's on record.

Moses gets up to leave. As he goes - *

MOSES

Then you won't mind if we check. *

HEGEP

We.

MOSES

(indicating the scribes)
The Royal Accountants.

HEGEP

(pause)
Of course I don't mind.

Hegep watches uneasily as Moses leaves the room. *

As Moses and his soldiers ride slowly through the squalid ghetto, dark figures duck into alleyways.

Behind thin curtains, other figures in huts watch the progress of the small military unit led by Moses, all hoping it passes without incident. *

Moses looks at the note the slave boy slipped him at the brickfields - a crude map and some writing - then at candles in 'windows' extinguishing as the horsemen continue on. * *

They reach a particular hut in which every 'window' is lit. Moses dismounts and approaches it, flanked by two of his soldiers, while the others wait.

Moses knocks on the door. It opens halfway, revealing the 'talkative' scholar, who regards the soldiers on either side of Moses unhappily.

SCHOLAR

We asked that you come alone.

MOSES

I'm not an idiot.

SCHOLAR

Can they at least wait outside?
We're not dangerous.

Moses looks past the scholar to some other men - and one woman - in the hut.

MOSES

No.

28

INT. SCHOLAR'S HUT - NIGHT

28

Silence hangs over the strange melange of Egyptians and Hebrews. The soldiers - and one of the Hebrew men and the woman - sit apart from Moses and the scholars.

SCHOLAR

Do you believe in coincidence?

MOSES

As much as anything else.

SCHOLAR

So do I, but I don't think this is one.

MOSES

What isn't.

SCHOLAR

You coming to Pithom. Why did you come?

MOSES

Business.

And that's all he's going to say about his business. The men exchange a glance before the scholar continues -

SCHOLAR

Who's your father?

The question comes from so far afield, Moses can do nothing but regard the scholar in complete puzzlement.

SCHOLAR

You don't have to answer that. I know you don't know. Only that he was a general in Pharaoh's Army - unnamed by your mother.

(pause)

I can see this is making you uncomfortable.

MOSES

I can see you didn't hear me when I cautioned you how to speak to someone like me.

SCHOLAR

We're just having a conversation.
(glances to the soldiers)
But I'll lower my voice.

He turns slightly away from the soldiers to make it even more difficult for them to hear.

SCHOLAR

We all live with the circumstance of our birth and compensate as best we can. It's the one thing we have no say in, no matter who we are. And the one thing we can't change. I live here. You live in a palace. We're both respected in our homes, but I'm more accepted.

Moses looks at the man like he looks at Hegep - as someone so far beneath him, only his great patience keeps him seated.

SCHOLAR

You've tried to put out of your mind the circumstance of no known father, and to a great degree you've succeeded. You've risen to a position of authority. High authority. But that's as far as it'll go.

The severe look Moses gives him is the same as when the man dared ask him his name, only this time it's not at all tempered with amusement.

*
*
*

MOSES

I'm accepted - and respected in my home. More than in this one apparently.

*

SCHOLAR

Do you deserve to succeed Seti?
Yes. Will you succeed him? No.
But not for the reason you think.
(pause)

There was no general. Your ~~mother~~
- the woman you call your ~~mother~~ -
has no children. You were ~~born~~ to
them.

Moses follows the scholar's look to the man and woman sitting apart from the others, who are looking at him with no more recognition of him than ~~he~~ of them, and almost as much skepticism.

Moses gets up to leave.

SCHOLAR

Don't go.

MOSES

Of course I'm going.

SCHOLAR

If you leave, you'll just come
~~back~~. Because you know something's
~~wrong~~. You've always felt it.
Don't go all the way back to
Memphis just to turn around again.
Sit. Please.
(re: the soldiers)
And tell them to wait outside.

29 EXT. GHETTO - NIGHT

29

The soldiers - all of them - wait outside the hut in the street.

30 INT. SCHOLAR'S HUT - NIGHT

30

Moses wears the same expression of denial the scholar wore when Moses informed him that 'god is wrong.' He barely seems to be listening.

SCHOLAR

The year you were born was the
year of the last cleansing. The
Edict from Memphis to reduce our
population - for the same reason
it's again being contemplated - by
killing every newborn Hebrew boy.

He glances to the man and woman who've come a little closer.

SCHOLAR

These two people here - your
parents - didn't wait for that to
happen. Any chance for your
survival was better than no chance.
They handed you to your sister.
She took you to the banks of the
river where she knew Pharaoh
Paramesse's daughter Bithia bathed,
and offered you to her. She took
you - and your sister as a maid -
and raised you as her own. She
probably even loved you. But she
never told you - or anyone else -
the truth.

*

*

Moses regards the scholar in a long silence before -

MOSES

The truth? It's not even that
good a story, and I thought you
people were supposed to be good
storytellers. Now I'm leaving.

He gets up and starts for the door -

*

SCHOLAR

Moses.

*

*

Moses slows, but doesn't look back at the man.

*

SCHOLAR

That's your name.

*

*

Unconvinced and unmoved by anything that's happened here,
Moses leaves, without so much as a glance to his supposed
real parents.

*

*

*

31 EXT. THE VICEROY'S VILLA - BALCONY - LATER - NIGHT

31

*

Moses strides through Hegep's grand house on his way out,
Hegep trying to keep up with him -

HEGEP

I don't understand what's wrong.
Have I displeased you in some way?

MOSES

You've displeased me in every way.

HEGEP

I'm sorry I didn't meet you at the
river. I've tried to apologize for
that. I don't know what else I can
do.

*

MOSES

You can stop living like a king.
You're not one.

Moses climbs onto his horse and gallops off with his unit of soldiers. Hegep watches after him, then glances unhappily to the retinue of accountants Moses has left behind.

31A EXT. HEGEP'S ESTATE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 31A *

As Moses and his soldiers gallop from the estate, he seems both anxious and relieved to return to Memphis, riding fast as if perhaps to more quickly distance himself from the mad tale the scholar told him. *

They pass a pair of men on mules, almost running them over, and, for some reason, we stay on these two men as they look after horsemen galloping away, almost smirking at them. *

31B INT. THE VICEROY'S VILLA - LATER - NIGHT 31B *

As the accountants Moses left behind pore over records by candlelight in one room of the villa - a retinue of servants in other rooms crates Hegep's most valuable possessions. *

Like all about-to-be-deposed despots, he isn't fleeing empty-handed. *

The main house-servant enters and dares to approach his foul-mooded master to whisper something to him. Hegep stares at the servant nonplussed, but then manages - *

HEGEP

Hebrews?

HOUSE SERVANT

Yes, sir, two of them. Outside.

HEGEP

Why?

HOUSE SERVANT

I don't know.

31C EXT. THE VICEROY'S ESTATE - LATER - NIGHT 31C *

The two men Moses passed on horseback - Hebrew slaves and brothers - DATHAN and ABIRAM - now off their mules - sit in Hegep's stables, guarded by his men. *

Apparently, they've told him something intriguing, if they can be believed.

The Viceroy finally responds - *

HEGEP

Do you expect a reward for this information?

DATHAN

Our reward is knowing we've been of service.

ABIRAM

That said, if you had some token in mind beyond that, we wouldn't refuse it.

Hegep regards the two spies for a moment. Then -

HEGEP

How about this? I don't kill you.

Dathan and his brother exchange a glance. And -

DATHAN

That would be sufficient payment.

As Hegep strides off in disgust -

HEGEP

You people.

32 INT. ROYAL PALACE - MORNING

32 *

Moses is admitted into Seti's bedchamber, only to find he can't see the Pharaoh - or his bed - what with all the physicians and priests around it.

What he can see is Ramses and his mother Tuya, his own mother Bithia with her trusted maid Miriam, and several other family members dotting the large room like statues. *

Moses approaches the crowd around the bed, not knowing if he'll find beyond it his uncle, or his uncle's corpse.

It's not his corpse. Seti is unwell, but alive.

SETI

You're back. I'm glad you're back.

MOSES

So am I.

SETI

How'd it go.

MOSES

We can talk about it later.

SETI

We can talk about it now, if only
as a respite from this army of grim-
faced physicians.

33

INT. SETI'S BEDCHAMBER - LATER

33

Everyone has cleared out, leaving Seti and ~~Moses~~ alone.

MOSES

We're taking a thorough look at
the city records, but he's clearly
a thief - misappropriating labor
for his personal projects,
misreporting goods received, and
I'm sure withholding his full share
of taxes.

*
*
*

SETI

One of life's more depressing
ironies? - That men who crave power
are the best fitted to acquire it
and least fitted to exercise it.

(then)

I wonder in what fashion he'd like
to work off this mounting debt.

MOSES

I can think of several I'd enjoy
watching.

SETI

Is there anything at all to his
fears about the slaves plotting
against him.

MOSES

Not as much as we are.

Seti smiles for the first time in days, but looking at the
way Moses is studying him - as if debating whether or not to
ask him something - it fades.

SETI

What's wrong.

MOSES

You're sick.

SETI

What else is wrong?

MOSES

Nothing.

Seti coughs, and there's an awful kind of rattle in it.

MOSES

They don't know what it is?

SETI

One of those Hidden Maladies.
They're the worst kind. All you
can do is attack it with everything
you've got - herbs, spirits,
incantations, animal dung - and
hope something works, if only by
accident.

They regard each other in a silence ...

34

INT. MUMMIFICATION CHAMBER - DAY

34

Approached by a narrow tunnel, ~~the~~ chamber where royal
bodies are embalmed and ~~mummified~~ is a secret underground
place forbidden to all ~~but the~~ specialists who carry out the
work where -

Seti's body lies on a stone slab.

An embalmer removes the pharaoh's brain with a hook inserted
through the ~~nose~~; ~~the~~ extracted matter set aside.

A second ~~embalmer~~ makes an incision in the abdominal wall and
removes ~~the~~ lungs, stomach, liver and intestines.

These ~~are~~ put into canopic jars bearing the heads of
protective gods - human, baboon, jackal, falcon - with whom
~~they~~'ll reside until being repacked back into the dried body.

A third embalmer washes the interior of the splayed-open
corpse with preserving fluids - careful to work around the
~~heart~~ which has been left untouched in the chest cavity.

Seti will need that most of all in the afterlife.

35

OMITTED

35

*

36

OMITTED

36

*

37

OMITTED

37

*

38

OMITTED

38

*

- 39 EXT. VALLEY OF THE KINGS - DAY 39 *
- A cortege - led by priests and the High Priestess and followed by mourners including the extended royal family, cabinet, generals, and those citizens who have paid enough - escorts the deceased pharaoh's ornately-carved and ~~paid~~ gold-leaf wooden sarcophagus toward a pyramid. *
- 40 OMITTED 40 *
- 41 INT. SETI'S TOMB - DAY 41 *
- Ramses, Moses, Tuya, some other ~~wives~~ and Bithia - and the royal family's most-trusted servants carrying the essentials Seti will need in the afterlife - treasure, furniture, his organs in jars - follow the priests and anthropoid sarcophagus along descending tunnels deep beneath the ground. *
- They come to and cross a stone catwalk that traverses even deeper shafts to either side that collect dripping rainwater, preventing it - hopefully - from ever flooding the tomb. *
- 42 INT. SETI'S TOMB - DAY 42 *
- Torchlight ~~mis~~ mimicking moonlight illuminates a kind of graph of northern sky constellations painted on the vaulted ceiling of the chamber. Scenes painted on the walls tell the story of Seti's life.
- The mourners, assembled around a translucent alabaster sarcophagus - empty at the moment - watch as a priest leads Ramses through the Opening of the Mouth part of the ceremony.
- Ramses is led to his father - standing upright in his ornate wooden sarcophagus that will later be placed in the alabaster one - and handed a ceremonial carved adze.
- He touches it to Seti's lips, then, at the priest's urging, uses it to actually open the mouth.
- He looks to the priest to see if he's done it correctly. The priest nods, that's fine, and instructs him with another nod to say what he was told to say.
- RAMSES
- May you be alert - rejuvenated -
and protected by the gods every
day.

43

INT. MEMPHIS STATE (THRONE) ROOM - DAY

43

*

Alone in the throne room, Ramses regards his father's collection of headdresses and crowns signifying with their colors and accoutrements Seti's - and now Ramses' - control over the various parts of the Egyptian Empire.

*

*

*

*

Ramses selects the grandest of them - Seti's gold and black striped Nemes headdress with its cobra figurine rising from the forehead.

*

*

*

He puts it on, adjusts it for fit, and slowly drifts through the large room trying to feel its power. He picks up a bronze hand mirror and sits with it on his father's throne trying to feel its power.

*

*

*

*

He raises the mirror and regards his reflection sitting on the throne. When he eventually lowers it, he notices Moses standing in the archway, and there's a moment as Ramses tries to decide if he feels kindly, or embarrassed, or both.

*

*

*

*

He climbs down off the throne, takes off the headdress, and sets it and the mirror aside -

*

*

RAMSES

*

Let's talk over here.

*

He sits on a more normal chair at a scribes' table. Moses joins him. Gesturing to the gilded throne -

*

*

RAMSES

I'll be honest. I'm uncomfortable in that.

MOSES

Anyone would be. Your father was a great man. It's a hard chair to fill.

RAMSES

So's that of Chief Advisor. My mother expects to fill that one.

Moses doesn't say what he's thinking, so Ramses does -

RAMSES

I know. It's not a good idea. That's why I'm not going to do it.

MOSES

A wise first decision of a king. Don't tell her I said that.

Ramses smiles and grimaces at once, knowing the kind of explosion his first decree as pharaoh will spark in her.

RAMSES

Will you accept the position? I
need you to.

MOSES

Yes.

44 INT. ROYAL PALACE - LATER - DAY

44

Ramses strides along a colonnade, trying to outpace his
mother.

TUYA

You're putting the man you've been
told will replace you next to you?
Are you insane?

Ramses halts and yells at her -

RAMSES

*I'd be insane to listen to the
ravings of an old woman.*

She stares at him aghast, speaking of her that way.

RAMSES

Not you. The priestess and her
~~bird~~ entrails. I don't believe her
or them.

He starts off again. She starts after him again.

TUYA

Appointing him won't stop me from
telling you what I think.

RAMSES

That I believe.

45 EXT. PALACE PAVILLION / NILE - DAY

45

*

Moses' mother, Bithia - a much more pleasant woman than
Ramses' - bathes - clothed in linen - along the same bank of
the Nile she has since she was a girl.

46 EXT. PALACE PAVILLION / NILE - LATER - DAY

46

*

Draped in dry linen now, she runs a comb through her long wet
hair.

BITHIA

He's fortunate to have you.
You've defended him all his life
against those less fond of him.

*

We see now she's speaking to Moses. He nods, but that's about it. His attention is more on his mothers' maids at a portable table laden with soaps and perfumes - one of the maids in particular.

MOSES

How old is Miriam?

Bithia regards him like someone speaking a ~~language~~ she hasn't learned.

MOSES

Do you know?

BITHIA

I don't exactly. And I feel terrible having to ~~admit~~ that.

(pause)

Why would you ask such a question?

MOSES

I remember her as far back as I remember anything, but she must've been very young to be hired as a maid. ~~Not that~~ I would have realized it then.

*
*

A moment as Bithia wonders, *How could Moses have discovered the truth?* In case he hasn't, she covers it with -

*
*

BITHIA

I think she's older than she looks.

And now Miriam is approaching with perfumes. As she begins ~~applying~~ some to Bithia's skin, she notices Moses looking at her in a way he never has before.

*
*

BITHIA

Ramses just named Moses Chief Advisor.

MIRIAM

He's fortunate to have you.

*

BITHIA

That's what I said.

Moses tries not to study Miriam - but can't help himself - perhaps looking for a resemblance.

*
*

47

INT. MEMPHIS STATE (THRONE) ROOM - DAY

47

*

Advisors, generals and scribes - the same men we saw here before with Seti in the last Session of State Affairs - are here again, with Ramses presiding. In the chair next to him sits his Chief Advisor, Moses. To all -

*

RAMSES

My father didn't like building projects, as you know. And he was right there's a lot not to like about them. The time, the expense, nothing turning out the way you're told it will by architects who think they're more important than their commissioners. I don't like the process either, but I appreciate its importance more than he did. Monuments are monuments for a reason.

Silence. Are they waiting for him to explain the reason? Isn't it obvious to them?

RAMSES

They inspire. And the larger they are, the more they inspire.

ADVISOR

Inspire what, in this case.

RAMSES

In ~~this~~ and every case: Awe.

(pause)

You don't agree?

Like the Division Commanders at Kadesh did, the advisors and cabinet ministers here look to Moses.

MOSES

(deliberately matter-of-fact)

There's nothing wrong with monuments.

*
*

Satisfied - or beaten down - the advisor relinquishes the debate with:

ADVISOR

We'll arrange to have you sit for the artists at your earliest convenience.

RAMSES

Sit? I'm not sitting for them. Why would I?

ADVISOR

So they can capture your likeness.

RAMSES

You're missing the point. My likeness doesn't matter. How I should appear is what matters.

(MORE)

RAMSES (CONT'D)

Have them bring me models of that
to evaluate.

While Ramses was explaining public relations to them, an official entered and is now whispering to the Sergeant-at-Arms.

RAMSES

Say it out loud, whatever it is.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

The Viceroy of Goshen is outside.
He's not on the agenda.

RAMSES

Then he can go back to Goshen until
he is.

MOSES

We should deal with this.

RAMSES

With what.

MOSES

Your father would want it taken
care of.

(to the official)

Bring him in.

Viceroy Hegep is escorted in. He bows to Ramses, but before
he can speak, Moses does --

MOSES

If you're here to beg the new
king to tolerate what you know the
old king wouldn't, it won't work.
All you've done is save us a trip.
Arrest him.

HEGEP

Wait. May I at least respond? *

MOSES *

Make it short.

HEGEP

(smug) *

I will. To the king alone. *

Both look to Ramses, who has no idea what their innuendos
could be about. He regards Hegep, then Moses, and finally
gives a small royal flick of the hand to tell everyone to
leave the room. *

And everyone, including Moses, files out, leaving the
pharaoh alone with the conniving viceroy. *

48 EXT. MEMPHIS - DUSK 48 *

Hegep, having had his audience with the Ramses, gallops away from the palace with his guards. Obviously, he has not been arrested. *

49 INT. ROYAL PALACE - SERPENTARIUM - EVENING 49 *

Ramses lifts a cobra so that it's face to face with him. They regard one another, each with the calm that comes when you both know the other could kill you. Or love you. *

Ramses draws the snake closer and kisses it. *

He notices Moses and, unlike when he was observed trying on his father's headdress, is completely unabashed being seen kissing a cobra. *

RAMSES *

Come in. *

Moses does, and watches Ramses move about the Serpentarium tending his slithering pets. *

MOSES *

So, The Viceroy. You didn't arrest him. You didn't take your Chief Advisor's advice. *

RAMSES *

Sorry.

Then, as Ramses tends his snakes - *

RAMSES

He told me the most ... unbelievable story. Told to him, he said, by reliable sources. When pressed, he admitted they were a pair of Hebrew spies. I said, a pair of Hebrew spies? Are you serious? Why would you listen to anything they'd say? He said, it's not just them - it's everyone. This story - like any scandalous story - has spread throughout Goshen. He was surprised I hadn't heard it on the streets of Memphis.

(pause)

Do you know what I'm talking about?

MOSES

Yes.

RAMSES

What do you make of it.

MOSES
It's ridiculous.

RAMSES
It is, isn't it. How can I believe
a story like this?

MOSES
You can't.

RAMSES
How can I take the chance of ~~not~~
believing it?

Petting a particular ferocious-looking ~~serpent~~, Ramses
studies Moses. *

RAMSES
(genuinely torn) *
What am I ~~going to~~ do? *

50 INT. MEMPHIS STATE (THRONE) ROOM - NIGHT 50 *

The Throne Room, where Bithia stands near Moses before the
King and ~~Queen-Mother~~, Tuya. Not only isn't Bithia cowering,
she seems ~~more~~ in control of the situation than they do -
superior to ~~them~~ in every way except official title. *

BITHIA
~~The~~ man is a thief. And not a
~~petty~~ one. This thief steals on a
grand scale. My son discovers this
- not you - and reports it to my
brother who would have hanged this
thief if he hadn't been dying
himself - and what do you do - my
'precious' nephew, on the advice of
my 'precious' sister-in-law? - you
listen to his feeble, self-serving
lies and let him go.

RAMSES
All I asked you was is it true?
Not for a tirade.

BITHIA
To talk about it any longer would
dignify it, and I won't do that.

TUYA
Bithia, this is serious.

BITHIA
Was I talking to you? I don't even
know why you're in the room.

Silence. Then -

RAMSES
So that's it?

BITHIA
That's it.

Ramses glances from Bithia, to Tuya, to Moses, and finally to a palace guard.

RAMSES
Bring her in.

The guard steps out, and, in a moment, returns, escorting Bithia's maid, Miriam, into the room, very cordially, almost like she's his date to a gala.

RAMSES
Have a seat, Miriam.

He climbs off his throne, politely holds a chair for her, gently pushes it closer to its table as she sits.

RAMSES
I'm going to ask you some things
that may seem strange to you. Just
answer truthfully.

She nods, okay.

RAMSES
How is it you know Moses?

Miriam is so thrown by the question she looks to Bithia. Even to Tuya. (But not to Moses).

MIRIAM
You know how I know him and you.
I raised you both.

RAMSES
So you're not his sister then.

Again, her reaction is nonplussed. Eventually -

MIRIAM
Of course not.

RAMSES
And not a Hebrew.

At this she almost laughs. But Ramses doesn't.

MIRIAM
No.

Ramses nods. Moves a candelabra on the table a bit away from her and crosses to a desk on which rests the varnished wood case that contained the swords Seti presented to Ramses and Moses for the Battle of Kadesh.

He opens it. Both weapons are there - returned to ~~their~~ peacetime resting place until needed again. ~~Ramses~~ lifts his out and returns to Miriam with it.

RAMSES

Place your arm on the table.

BITHIA

Don't be an idiot, (Ramses) -

RAMSES

(exploding)

You weren't talking to her -

(his mother)

And I'm not talking to you -

(pointing to Miriam)

I'm talking to her.

Silence. Then -

RAMSES

~~Pardon~~ my shouting, Miriam.

Please do what I said.

Miriam ~~only~~ looks at him like, Are you really going to do this? ~~He~~ gently takes hold of her arm and rests it on the table.

RAMSES

Now let me ask you again. And if the answer is again no, I apologize in advance for what happens next. Are you his sister?

MIRIAM

No.

Ramses raises the sword to lop off her arm -

MOSES

Yes!

Ramses lowers the sword to his side and looks at Moses. It's hard to tell if this outcome pleases him or not. It clearly does his mother.

51

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

51

Moses - the man who should be king - sits alone in an isolation cell. He still doesn't believe Miriam is his sister, but couldn't allow the carnage Ramses would have wrought on the maid if he hadn't intervened.

*
*
*

52 INT. ROYAL PALACE - NIGHT

52 *

Ramses is just trying to get ready for bed, wishing perhaps he'd brought the sword down on his mother's head.

RAMSES

Do you think I think any decision I
make will ever please you? I don't
even try any more.

*
*

TUYA

This decision will be the worst
you've ever made.

RAMSES

You always say that.

TUYA

You don't need a reason to kill
him, but you ~~have~~ one. This was
treason.

RAMSES

How was it treason.

TUYA

He just admitted he knew.

RAMSES

That wasn't an admission. He
just didn't want her arm lopped
off. He doesn't believe this.
I don't believe it. You don't
believe it if we're being honest.
But he'll be gone now, which is
what you wanted.

TUYA

I said dead, not exiled.

*

RAMSES

(not pleased about it)

That, I'm sure, will follow where
he's going.

53 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF MEMPHIS - DAY

53

Moses rides with a unit of soldiers he used to lead,
including Commander Khyan.

*
*

But Moses isn't on his great black stallion; he's on a
commoner's horse - his hands cuffed in front with leather
straps.

*

And in the back of a horse-drawn cart ride Bithia and Miriam.

As the city of Memphis in its lush delta lap recedes -

54 EXT. MEMPHIS - DAY

54

Laborers chisel Moses' name off the base of a monument - the 200-foot-tall obelisk last seen passing Moses on a barge on his way up the Nile to deal with Hegep in Pithom. *

55 EXT. EGYPT - DAY

55

A seemingly endless desert.

The exiles and their escort - far in the distance - moving slowly across the horizon.

56 EXT. EGYPT - DAY

56

The hooves of the horses fall onto ever drier, caked ground.

COMMANDER KHYAN

Halt.

The commander, who used to serve under Moses - and hasn't forgotten that - addresses him like a human being - *

COMMANDER KHYAN

You're going this way. They're going that way. *

MOSES

To where. To what.

The commander doesn't say, but both directions look equally inhospitable. Nothingness as far as you can see.

MOSES

May I at least speak to my mother?

COMMANDER KHYAN

(pause)

Yes, sir. *

57 EXT. EGYPT - SAME PLACE - DAY

57

The commander and unit of soldiers waits as Bithia - taken down from the cart - talks to Moses away from it and everyone else in private.

MOSES

They won't tell me where you're going, but we both know it's not going to be anywhere comfortable.

BITHIA

What were you thinking?

MOSES

I don't know. I'm sorry.

BITHIA

No, I'm asking. What were you thinking at that moment when you said, 'yes.'

*

MOSES

I wasn't thinking anything beyond getting her out of that room in one piece instead of two. If I'd been thinking about this outcome -
(this desert exile)
-- I wouldn't have done it.

*

*

BITHIA

Actually, I think you would've.

She glances from him, to Miriam standing just outside the cart, and back to him.

*

*

BITHIA

It isn't every man who'd protect a servant who's nothing more to him than that. Certainly no one else in this family. Including me. He could've taken off both her arms, I wouldn't have said what he wanted to hear. And neither would've she. That's how much we love you.

*

Long pause.

MOSES

We?

Is she saying Miriam is his sister? That the ridiculous story is true? He still can't believe it.

MOSES

It's not true.

She hands him something -- a thin strip of what looks like sinew the circumference of an infant's wrist strung with a few tiny stones.

*

*

*

BITHIA

You were wearing this the first time I saw you. When she brought you to the river.

*

*

*

*

(Miriam)

I took it off your wrist for obvious reasons.

He sees that the stones are etched in characters he doesn't recognize as Egyptian.

*

Looks over at Miriam in the cart, and back to Bithia, who nods that everything he's been told is true.

BITHIA

Your sister saved your life. Now
you saved hers.

(pause)

Moshe.

*
*
*
*

Moses regards the umbilical bracelet again, etched with the letters of his Hebrew name. Then -

*
*

The soldiers watch as he slowly walks over to Miriam. They regard each other as they never have before - as brother and sister. He takes another step closer and embraces her.

*
*
*

58 EXT. EGYPT - DUSK

58

The exiles and their respective escorts move in opposite directions across the barren landscape.

59 EXT. EASTERN EGYPT - DAY

59

*

Moses and 'his' men have reached an oasis that is nothing more than a couple of palm trees and a puddle of water surrounded by otherwise endless arid earth.

The horses have refreshed as best they can, and the soldiers are mounting up again.

COMMANDER KHYAN

I've been instructed to say this:
Don't come back.

*

MOSES

This is punishment enough, I don't
need more.

Commander Khyan unsheathes a dagger and severs Moses' leather cuffs. Gets on his horse, leaving Moses next to his.

*

Moses watches him join his unit and start back the way they came. But then they stop, rein their horses to face him, and salute.

They turn again and ride off.

60 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

60

One man atop one horse moves across the vast desert.

61 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

61

He's stopped to give his horse a break. Sits on the ground, drinking from his waterskin.

At this low angle, he notices something he hadn't before on the belly of the horse.

He comes over and sees that it's a long thin package, wrapped in muslin, stowed under the saddle skirt.

He pulls it free and unwraps it.

It's his sword - the one Seti gave him.

He stares at it, having no idea who would - or could - have put it here.

Whoever it was would be put to death for the crime.

62 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DUSK

62

The flatness has given way to mountains of rock.

Moses has never been this far from civilization, but can do nothing more than keep going.

Atop his horse, as he navigates a pass through the mountains, we - and he perhaps - feel someone watching him. And we're right to feel it.

A DESERT TRIBESMAN - bearded, turbanned, his dark face cloaked - looks down from an outcropping of rock as Moses passes below.

63 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA- DAY

63

Traveling by night now, resting by day, Moses has made camp, so to speak, in the shade of a rock overhang. He lies there, apparently asleep.

The tribesman seems to float above a ledge of rock, until the ledge slopes enough to reveal the camel he's on.

A SECOND TRIBESMAN - wrapped up like the other - follows.

They dismount and approach almost silently the sleeping figure in the shade.

MOSES

I have nothing to steal.

The men stop. They thought he was asleep and that they were being quiet enough not to wake him.

TRIBESMAN

You have a horse.

MOSES

That horse isn't going to live much longer.

One of the men comes closer. Stands over him.

TRIBESMAN

We're not here to take your horse.
Moses.

The assassin unsheathes a *makhaira* - the ancient precursor of the scimitar - but Moses' sword thrusts straight up into his belly -

The thrust doesn't kill him, but does trap the blade -

As the second assassin swings his *makhaira* in a killing arc, Moses, pulling at the hilt of his embedded sword, shifts the first man like a piece of meat on a skewer into the path of the *makhaira* strike -

The blade slices into his partner's back

Moses grabs the second assailant's sword arm, pulls him down by it and, still using his own sword handle as a lever, hauls both himself and the skewed man on top of the second assassin - trapping him under the double weight -

He drives his long sword all the way through the first man's body to skewer the one beneath it, killing them both.

64

EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DUSK

64

For a man who had everything, only to have nothing, now at least has something -

He has his horse and now the two tethered camels trailing it. And he's armed -

He's got the sword, of course, but also both *makhairas* now, two bows, two quivers of arrows.

With that - and the wildness of his hair and beard after this long in the desert - he looks like someone you wouldn't want to mess with.

He and his animals move along an ever-narrowing mountain track - rock face to one side of it, thousand foot drop to the other.

It gets so narrow, the camels' hooves dislodge rocks, sending them tumbling down into the deep gorge.

Emerging from the mountains, he see he's reached the southernmost point of the peninsula. The Tiran Straits of the Gulf of Aqaba. The Red Sea, three miles long here, punctuated an archipelago of islands.

*
*

*

Wide stretches of coral protrude from the shallow low tide water -- expansive reefs around the islands.

*
*

Atop his horse, Moses leads it and the trailing camels across the strait, the animals' legs never more than knee-deep in the water.

*
*
*

Compared to the Sinai Desert, the landscape here -- though still arid -- is marginally more inviting.

At a well, several women -- in their teens and twenties -- laboriously draw up buckets of water, passing them in a chain to fill a line of stone troughs for their sheep and goats.

As Moses approaches from one direction -- looking like an outlaw atop one of the camels now -- a large herd tended by three male drovers armed with staves and daggers approach from another.

They cross through the bucket-line, commandeering the troughs -- and the water the women put there -- for their own animals.

This isn't the first time this has happened to them; the women stand there helplessly, but used to it, with their buckets, watching.

DROVER

What are you doing, don't stop.
Keep it coming.

As the women get back to work -- filling the troughs for the drovers now -- Moses ignores the little drama, riding past it to the well itself. He dismounts and pulls up the communal cup. Drinks from it.

DROVER

You. Wait your turn.

MOSES

Wait yours.

The drovers look at each other like, Which of us is going to deal with this rude interloper.

Then all three step away from their herd and approach him, their hands resting on the handles of their belted daggers.

As they come, Moses calmly walks to his lead camel, pulls his sword from its saddled sheath, and faces them.

Even though it's three to one, they stop. The wild-haired stranger is clearly insane. And that thing in his hand is a sword the likes of which they've never seen before.

*
*

MOSES

Move your animals away from the troughs.

The drovers do nothing of the kind. Not for a moment anyway. Then they think better of it and do as they're told.

Moses glances to the young woman closest to him.

MOSES

It's yours again.

ZIPPORAH stares at him, then passes her bucket to the woman next to her.

And steals a glance back at him.

68

INT. JETHRO'S HOUSE - DUSK

68

*

Moses sits cross-legged on a rug, Bedouin-style, eating with a middle-aged man. Now it's this man's turn to study the stranger:

He may look like a wildman - and he does - but he eats with the manners of a prince.

JETHRO

Where are you from?

MOSES

West of here.

JETHRO

Where are you going?

MOSES

I don't know. East.

JETHRO

What did you do?

MOSES

What do you mean?

JETHRO

You committed some crime?

MOSES

Why would you say that.

JETHRO

Just a guess.

Moses looks at him.

MOSES

No.

Jethro nods, okay, if you say so, but doesn't believe it.

JETHRO

What's your trade?

*

Moses sets his utensil, a piece of bread, down. And now we see they're not alone, that there are eight women in the room - the man's wife and his seven daughters, who were all at the well - but none sit with the man.

MOSES

Your daughters invited me to dinner. They didn't say it was going to be an interrogation.

JETHRO

I'm sorry. I'm just curious.

(pause)

Maybe you were a soldier?

*

*

He can be as curious as he wants, Moses isn't offering anything more. And Jethro finally accepts that. Stops his prying.

*

*

JETHRO

You're welcome to get cleaned up after dinner - if that appeals to you. And to sleep here if you want before continuing on - to wherever it is.

MOSES

Thank you.

Jethro nods you're welcome. A silence as everyone in the room studies the strange man.

JETHRO

I know one thing you weren't. A sheep herder. Not with those weapons.

It's true he's no shepherd, but Zipporah is - managing the flock with ease on the foothills of Mount Sinai.

Serving no assistance to the task, Moses - still bearded but cleaned up somewhat - walks with her.

ZIPPORAH

Describe Memphis - to someone who's never been there and never will.

MOSES

It's - I don't want to say civilized because I don't mean to offend, but - it's civilized - as in there's more there than sheep and goats.

ZIPPORAH

There's more here than that.

MOSES

(looking around them)

Where.

*

It's a playful shot, but a cheap one nonetheless, but she doesn't seem to take offense. She's too secure in herself for that.

*

*

*

MOSES

I'm sorry. That was rude.

ZIPPORAH

Unlike my father, I won't ask why you left 'civilization.'

(pause)

But you can tell me if you want.

MOSES

It's complicated.

*

ZIPPORAH

I'm not ignorant just because I live here.

*

MOSES

I can see that.

He can also see she's as self-assured as she is beautiful.

*

MOSES

I can tell you this: This is by far the nicest place between here and there.

ZIPPORAH

And so you're leaving it.

MOSES

Of course I am. There's nothing here for someone like me.

ZIPPORAH

When. Today?

He shrugs.

MOSES

Today or tomorrow.

HARD CUT TO:

70 EXT. MIDIAN VILLAGE - DAY

70

Veiled, bejeweled and dressed in her finest clothing, Zipporah is escorted by her parents and female relatives (also veiled) to the village square.

There, clad in a tunic, and cleaned up a bit more, Moses awaits their arrival.

71 EXT. MIDIAN VILLAGE - LATER - DAY

71

The ceremony takes place beneath a canopy like a modern Jewish wedding, and it's a fanciful blending of Hebrew and Bedouin Arab traditions.

The bride and groom look at each other as a scholar ties their wrists together with a sash -

CUT TO:

Moses' hands UNTYING a ribbon in her hair -

72 INT. JETHRO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

72

*

Still in their wedding clothes, standing face to face, the ribbon falls, letting her hair down, too.

He kisses her

CUT TO:

A 9-YEAR-OLD BOY tends a flock -

73 EXT. MIDIAN - DAY

73

- on the same foothills as before, beneath Mount Sinai.

There's something about the boy that reminds us of Moses - his eyes in particular and the way they look at the mountain peak shrouded in mist.

GERSHOM

Have you ever been to the top of it?

And now we see Moses - ten years older than the last time we saw him - with some sheep around him.

MOSES

No. No one has.

GERSHOM

Aren't you curious?

MOSES

No, I can see it from here.

The boy seems unsatisfied with the answer. As are we. The years have turned the second most decorated general in Pharaoh's Army into a common shepherd.

GERSHOM

I'd like to see it.

MOSES

You can't. It's forbidden.

GERSHOM

By who.

MOSES

Your mother.

Gershom glances at the mountain top again.

GERSHOM

You said no one's been there.
She can't forbid everyone.

MOSES

Her religion can.

GERSHOM

Climbing mountains.

MOSES

No. Just that one.

Moses looks at it now, the same way Gershom is, but then the curiosity fades.

MOSES

It's "god's" mountain.

Gershom isn't sure he believes that. Moses knows he doesn't. He shrugs.

74

INT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

74 *

Zipporah and her son are alone in the house, sitting together as she explains something to him -

ZIPPORAH

Just like you, god tends a flock. Us. And just like us, he gets tired. That's where he rests. On that mountain. And when he's resting, he doesn't want to be bothered. We respect that.

GERSHOM

Father doesn't.

ZIPPORAH

What are you talking about?

GERSHOM

He doesn't believe it.

ZIPPORAH

Did he say that?

GERSHOM

He said, Go ask you.

Zipporah sighs.

75

EXT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

75

*

Moses stands alone in the dark at the railing of a sheep pen. Zipporah comes out and joins him. She's not upset, just a little concerned.

ZIPPORAH

You're confusing him.

MOSES

I'm not trying to. He asked me a question. I didn't have a good answer for him.

ZIPPORAH

You didn't even try.

MOSES

Actually I did.

ZIPPORAH

(meaning him)

Is it good for a boy to grow up believing in nothing?

*

MOSES

(meaning her)

Is it bad to grow up believing in yourself?

*

*

*

*

She sighs; he's a tough debater.

*

ZIPPORAH

If you'd just said our religion
instead of mine, he would've been
satisfied.

MOSES

I'm not sure about that. He's a
lot like me already.

She nods. It's true.

ZIPPORAH

What are you doing out here?

MOSES

Counting sheep.
(pause)
We're four short.

76 EXT. MOUNT SINAI - NIGHT

76

Moses stands at the base of the mountain looking up at four
sheep that have somehow climbed halfway up. From here, they
look like dots.

MOSES

(to himself)

What are you doing up there?

He starts to climb.

77 EXT. MOUNT SINAI NIGHT

77

He's almost reached the sheep. To them -

MOSES

Come on down now. You're not
goats. Let's go.

The sheep trot away from him, climbing higher.

He stares at them. It's true they're not goats, but they're
behaving like goats.

78 EXT. MOUNT SINAI - NIGHT

78

The sheep are near the top now, just below the cloud base
that enshrouds it. Moses approaches them with his shepherd's
staff.

MOSES

Come. I'm tired now.

The sheep just look at him.

MOSES

Come!

A roaring clap of thunder yells back at him as lightning strikes the mountain top -

A ferocious thunderstorm erupts - rain suddenly pouring down in torrents -

Within moments, there's a flash flood, the water rushing down the mountain like a river to where Moses stands -

It reaches the sheep first and washes them past him - then undermines the ground beneath his own feet, sending him sliding after them -

He tries to grab hold of rocks to slow his cascading fall, but it's like trying to grasp wet boulders in rapids -

The water pulls a large rock free above him. It toboggans down toward him and bashes him in the head.

He blacks out.

79

EXT. MOUNT SINAI NIGHT

79

The brunt of the storm has passed, leaving behind a light drizzle falling through mist.

The sheep are nowhere in sight, but Moses is, lying on the wet ground with a large gash in his head, blood still flowing from it onto his face.

His eyes blink open to see a bush - burning even though the light rain is falling on it.

He tries to drag himself up and - the way you never can in a dream - can't.

He touches his head and looks at the blood on his hand.

Hears something - a clicking sound - and manages to turn his head enough to see:

A BOY, about 12 years old - nothing remarkable about him except how scruffy he is - like a beggar from the village you turn away from - sitting cross legged on the ground, gathering up some pebbles around him.

*
*
*

MOSES

Help me.

The boy only looks at him as if considering whether or not he's worth helping.

MOSES

Get somebody to help me.

The boy doesn't move except to glance back down at the little pebbles he's toying with.

Moses struggles to drag himself up again, but can only get so far as to prop himself on one arm.

MOSES
I think my arm is broken.

*

MALAK
More than that.

MOSES
What?

The boy doesn't repeat it. Wiping at the blood in his eyes, Moses watches him calmly arranging the pebbles on the ground in front of him.

MOSES
Who are you?

MALAK
Who are you?

MOSES
A shepherd.

MALAK
That's all?

Moses nods as the boy begins setting smaller pebbles onto the bed of slightly larger ones he's laid out.

MALAK
You're not a general?

Moses stares. And, eventually -

MOSES
I was.

MALAK
I need a general.

MOSES
Do you.

The boy nods. Moses smiles but finds even that hurts.

MOSES
Why.

MALAK
(shrugs)
To fight. Why else.

MOSES

Fight who. For what. *

MALAK

You know.

Moses doesn't know, or doesn't say. Either way, his unresponsiveness seems to disappoint Malak a bit.

MALAK

Then just go see what's happening
to your people now. You know you
won't be at peace until you do. *

Moses watches as the boy constructs a third tier of pebbles,
setting them on the lower two. *

MOSES

I don't have 'people'. I have my
family, and they're here. *

Malak looks up from his work, 'confused' by the statement.

MALAK

You're not Moses? Son of Amram
and Jochebed? Do I have the wrong
man? Or are they not people in
your opinion.

MOSES

Who are you.

MALAK

Who do you think?

The boy sets a final pebble atop the rest, and we see that
he's constructed -

A little pyramid - a rough miniature of the Great Pyramid of
Khufu.

As he knocks it over with a sweep of his hand -

HARD CUT TO:

80

FLASHES OF BLINDING SUNLIGHT

80

strobing through blinking eyes. Blurred figures moving
through it.

JETHRO O/S

He's alive. Wrap his head.
Gershom, wet his lips. Not too
much.

Moses is on the same spot on the mountain, in the same prone
position he was in before he talked to the boy.

Gershom moistens his father's dry lips as Jethro and some other men bind his bleeding head and struggle to lift him. *

81 INT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - DAY

81 *

Moses grimaces as a village physician sutures the large gash in his head.

82 INT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - DAY

82 *

Cleaned up, head bandaged, Moses sits in bed looking at his wife who sits at his bedside.

Neither of them looks happy. They've been talking and it has reached a kind of impasse, but Zipporah tries to break it one last time, speaking to him a bit too much like to a child

ZIPPORAH

You were hit in the head.
Anything you saw or think you
saw afterwards - was an effect of
that. Some people are never the
same after something like this
happens. And you're scaring me. *

MOSES

The storm happened before I was
hit in the head. And it wasn't a
normal storm. I won't even call it
a storm. Storms aren't that
powerful.

ZIPPORAH

Fine. The storm was something
else. But the boy was only in your
damaged head.

MOSES

How do you know? You weren't
there.

ZIPPORAH

Because God isn't a boy!

MOSES

No? What's he look like?
Describe him to someone like me
who's never seen him.

It's almost what she said to him about Memphis, and this
doesn't escape - or please - her.

ZIPPORAH

Do you know what you sound like?

MOSES

I do. Like some pitiful beggar
who talks to himself. But he isn't
aware of that. I am. Look at my
eyes.

*
*
*
*
*

She does. And they're clear. Alert. Intelligent. Sure.
Still, she's troubled.

*
*

ZIPPORAH

You just need more rest.
(gently touching his head
bandage)
Rest.

She leaves him to rest. Unfortunately, he's restless.

82A EXT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE -- NIGHT

82A

*

The house, enveloped in darkness and silence.

*

82B INT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE -- SAME TIME -- NIGHT

82B

*

Zipporah and Gershom are asleep. Moses appears to be, but
then gets up and quietly leaves the room with some articles
of clothing.

*
*
*

Zipporah, who wasn't in fact asleep, opens her eyes, rises,
crosses to a 'window,' and looks out at her husband walking
away from the house toward the mountain.

*
*
*

83 EXT. MOUNT SINAI -- LATER -- NIGHT

83

Moses climbs the mountain. He's got a limp now.

84 EXT. MOUNT SINAI -- NIGHT

84

He's returned to the scene of the accident. Is sitting -
and has been for a while - where he was struck by the rock.

He regards the scraggly bushes growing out of the rocks
around him. And the spot where Malak sat. There's no one
there now. Eventually -

MOSES

I can wait.

And wait he does, absently turning in his hands the infant's
bracelet Bithia gave him. But nothing happens. No storm; no
burning bushes; no insouciant 12-year-olds.

85

INT. JETHRO'S MIDIAN HOUSE - DAY

85 *

At the behest of his daughter, no doubt, Jethro has invited his son-in-law over to ask him to try to explain himself.

Moses isn't wearing the bandage on his head anymore, but apparently, from what Jethro understands, the damage has been done.

JETHRO

My daughter says you've been climbing the mountain.

(Moses nods)

Every night.

(Moses nods)

And?

MOSES

Nothing.

JETHRO

Nothing. Nothing out of the ordinary.

(Moses shakes his head no)

What does that tell you.

Moses knows what he means, but doesn't say.

JETHRO

She also says you've been talking about leaving. Going back.

(Moses nods)

To do what.

MOSES

I'm not sure.

JETHRO

That's what she said you said.

Silence. Jethro studies him.

JETHRO

So let me understand: for reasons you're not sure of, you're thinking about abandoning your son. Like you were abandoned.

Nothing from Moses. Jethro nods to himself the way disapproving fathers-in-law have, and will, for thousands of years.

JETHRO

I'm not happy about this.

MOSES

Neither am I.

JETHRO

Then can I ask you, before you do
anything so unreasoned - so hurtful
- you think about it again.

Moses nods. He will. Then gets up to leave. But before he
walks out the door -

MOSES

I wasn't abandoned. I was saved.

*

86 INT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

86

*

This time Zipporah actually is asleep as Moses, unable to
sleep, gets up and pads out to the main room.

*

*

He pours himself a drink of water from a pitcher. Notices a
small figure outside sitting cross-legged on the ground faced
away ...

*

*

87 EXT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

87

*

Moses comes out of the house. Approaches the figure with
slow trepidation. The boy turns his head to him, and Moses
is relieved to see it's not Malak; it's his son. He stops.

*

*

MOSES

What are you doing out here?

*

GERSHOM

Nothing. I can't sleep.

MOSES

You worried about me?

(Gershom nods)

Don't. I'll be fine.

He walks toward his son, and as he does, sees over the boy's
shoulder the pile of pebbles he's absently building into the
shape of a pyramid. He stares for a moment, taken aback.

MOSES

What's that.

Gershom looks at him in a way he never has before - like
he's looking through him - exactly like Malak did. And when
he speaks, it's in Malak's voice -

*

*

GERSHOM/MALAK

What's it look like.

His small hand sweeps across the 'pyramid,' reducing it to
rubble -

And Moses suddenly gathers him up in his arms and runs with
him back toward the house -

88 INT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

88 *

He bursts in holding Gershom tight to his body, and stands there, looking out past the doorway to the darkness, scared to death.

89 EXT. EGYPT - BUILD SITE - DAY

89 *

The Pyramids of Giza - like perfectly sculpted mountains - seem to rise from the sand they sit on in the far distance.

But they're not going anywhere; we're descending - and see here in foreground as we drop down - a new city on the other side of the Pithom ghetto - Pi-Ramesses - under construction.

We keep coming down past a romanticized version of Ramses built of stone - 400 feet tall - and finally arrive on the man himself - ten years older.

All around him, as far as he can see - if he were looking at them, which he isn't - are slaves building his city. What he is looking at is the ARCHITECT he's standing with in the middle of a construction area.

RAMSES

I said, *per se*. I don't want to discuss my tomb, *per se*. I want to discuss why you want to discuss it all the time.

ARCHITECT

Respectfully, it should've been your first construction order upon taking the throne. It'll be a big project, as you might imagine.

RAMSES

So is my house, apparently.

ARCHITECT

Is there a problem with the palace?

RAMSES

Is there a problem? It's not done.

ARCHITECT

It won't be long now.

RAMSES

That's what you said months ago. Meanwhile, we're living there like Bedouins.

ARCHITECT

I could talk to Hegep.

RAMSES

Hegep? You're talking to me.

ARCHITECT

Not for permission. To reassign more workers to it.

RAMSES

Thank you. That would be good.
I'm glad it's not asking too much.

Ramses turns away from the architect and strides off with a trio of advisors and scribe past surveyors, engineers, stone carvers, masons and carpenters. Story poles mark several as yet-unbuilt buildings. It's maddening, all this.

RAMSES

Do I have to kill somebody?

ADVISOR

I think you made your point.

RAMSES

I hope so. My mother's very unhappy about this.

(to a scribe)

Did you get all that?

SCRIBE

Yes, sir.

RAMSES

Good. That conversation's going to come back to haunt him.

ADVISOR

I thought you liked building.

RAMSES

What?

ADVISOR

I thought you liked to build.

RAMSES

I don't like to 'build.' I like having *built*.

90 INT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - DAY

90

*

As Zipporah watches in silence, Moses methodically gathers his long-unused weapons - bows, arrows, quivers and the two makhaira daggers.

*

*

*

ZIPPORAH

What are you going to do with all that?

*

*

*

MOSES

Make sure I see you again.

He pulls his bronze sword from its sheath to inspect its blade. It shows the years of disuse with the green patina it's taken on.

ZIPPORAH

Put it down and you can see me forever.

He looks at her fondly, but doesn't put the sword down. Just re-sheathes it.

91

EXT. MOSES' MIDIAN HOUSE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

91

He works at securing the many weapons and some supplies to his horse's saddle. Zipporah - close to him - and Gershom - further away - watch.

ZIPPORAH

(evenly, like a scholar)

What kind of God tells a man to leave his family.

Instead of attempting any kind of explanation, he cinches his sheathed sword to the saddle.

ZIPPORAH

If you understand it, I'll understand it.

MOSES

I don't. So I can't answer that.

What he can do is embrace her, but when he does she pulls slightly away to instead look him in the eye.

ZIPPORAH

If that's what faith means, I'd trade mine for nothing.

He nods. He knows that his leaving her and Gershom means that much to her. And this time when he tries, she returns his embrace.

Gershom watches them. Then watches his father cross to him. Moses kneels to put himself at his son's eye-level.

MOSES

This isn't forever. I'll be back.
Do you believe me?

The boy thinks about it - then shakes his head no.

MOSES

That's my boy. Don't ever just
say what people want to hear. But
I will be.

Moses embraces him. Then returns to his horse, pulls himself
atop it, and rides off. *
*

92 EXT. TIRAN STRAITS - THE RED SEA DAY 92 *

The tide is higher than the last time he crossed the Tiran
Straits, but he can still make it, his horse hip-deep in the
water. *
*
*

93 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY 93 *

He navigates the same treacherous passage through the
mountains, but moving west this time.

94 EXT. PITHOM - NIGHT 94

A lone, cloaked figure on horseback, back-dropped by the
quarry walls, rides slowly across the brickfields.

Unlike the last time Moses was here ten years ago, there's a
night shift, the stone work going on under the supervision of
more guards and soldiers than before, day and night now. *
*

It's a vast, torturous tableaux illuminated by torches and
pyres of burning bodies. *
*

Like Herri met de Bles's Inferno. *

And it sickens even Moses, who has seen all manner of carnage
on battlefields. *

95 EXT. GHETTO - NIGHT 95

The cloaked horseman moves along the same street he once
rode down with a unit of soldiers. Like then, figures dart
into alleyways as if sensing any man on a horse - especially
one this well-armed - is trouble.

Moses stops at a familiar hut. Dismounts. Tethers his
horse. Knocks. Waits.

The door opens revealing the scholar. He doesn't seem to
recognize the figure standing before him.

MOSES

Is it safe to leave my horse
unattended out here?

Now, hearing the voice, the scholar realizes who the man is.
He stares, stunned by the knowledge.

SCHOLAR

No. It isn't.

(calls off behind him)

Joshua!

The scholar's son, a young man in his early 20's - JOSHUA -
appears from within the house. *

SCHOLAR

Keep an eye on the gentleman's
horse. And don't touch anything.

96 EXT. THE SCHOLAR'S HUT - NIGHT

96

Joshua sits outside near the tethered horse, his eyes less
on the animal than the weapons slipping from it: sword, two
makhairas, a bow and quiver of arrows. They fascinate him.

97 INT. THE SCHOLAR'S HUT - NIGHT

97

Moses accepts some food the scholar's wife has laid out for
their guest.

SCHOLAR

Who knows you're back?

MOSES

You. And this time I'd like to
keep it that way. *

SCHOLAR

I didn't tell anyone anything about
you. *

MOSES

Someone did.

(pause)

Is that thief still around? *

SCHOLAR

Thief. *

MOSES

The Viceroy. *

SCHOLAR

He was replaced. *

MOSES

Good.

SCHOLAR

He was replaced because he was made
Minister of Commerce.

Moses' look says, That figures.

SCHOLAR

He resides in the capital now. The
new capital.

MOSES

New.

SCHOLAR

Pi-Ramses.

MOSES

(pause)

He named a city after himself?

SCHOLAR

That surprises you?

Actually, it doesn't.

SCHOLAR

Your parents are working there now.
Your brother.

MOSES

I have a brother? *

SCHOLAR

(nods) *

I didn't get that far in what I
was telling you before you abruptly
got up and left. Aaron. *

MOSES

What about my sister and mother.
My other mother. *

SCHOLAR

I don't know what happened to them.

Moses nods to himself; he didn't expect it would be good
news, whatever happened to them.

SCHOLAR

I'm glad to see you. I didn't
think I would. But I have to ask:
Why are you here?

MOSES

I came here to talk to you. Then
I'm going there - to - I can't say
it - to the new capital - to talk
to him.

SCHOLAR

Talk to him.

(Moses nods)

Ramses.

Moses nods again. And so does the scholar, but not because he thinks that's a good idea.

SCHOLAR

Just you? Alone? How? He's guarded all the time.

*
*

MOSES

Less in the middle of the night.

*
*

98-106 OMITTED

98-106

*

107 INT. PALACE - PI-RAMSES - NIGHT

107

*

Ramses lies asleep in a large unfinished bedroom.

His breathing, measured at first, begins to quicken as his eyes behind their closed lids dart in REM state.

A sudden gasp - his own - wakes him, freeing him, to his relief, from the nightmare.

He looks at his wife - his main wife - NEFERTARI - lying beside him. His gasp didn't wake her - and she lies there so silently that he fears she may be dead.

He pushes at her shoulder to make sure. Without opening her eyes.

NEFERTARI

(soft groan)

I'm fine.

He drags himself out of bed.

NEFERTARI

Everybody's fine. Don't get up again.

108 INT. PALACE NURSERY - NIGHT

108

He comes into his son's room. Looks at the infant boy sleeping soundlessly in its crib beneath a statue of Aset, and one of the protective Bes.

He nudges a shoulder and the baby pulls away from his touch and turns over.

*

109 INT. TUYA'S ROOM - NIGHT 109
He comes into his mother's room.
Regards her form in the bed, so still she could be dead.
Decides not to bother to check.

110 INT. PALACE - NIGHT 110
As he pads through the silent palace, we see how absurdly huge it is.
And that it's not done - may never be done in his lifetime - scaffolding still up around massive columns - frescos only half-painted. *

111 INT. PALACE - NIGHT 111
He's in the royal kitchen(s) - a place he never visits in normal waking hours - where he pours himself a cup of water.

112 EXT. PALACE - NIGHT 112
He steps out onto the palace's enormous central courtyard, also unfinished. Unhappily regards the scaffolding and piles of brick all around, then the stars above ...
He starts to go back in when he hears what sounds like one brick falling onto another.
He squints at the darkness. Ventures across the courtyard in the direction from which the sound seemed to come.
He stops. Looks down at some drops of blood on the stone pavers. Follows a trail of the drops to a palace guard lying dead on the bloodstained rubble. *
Before he can react, there's a dagger at his throat as someone grabs him from behind. *

RAMSES
I won't make a sound.

113 EXT. PALACE STABLES - LATER - NIGHT 113
Moses has brought Ramses to his stables, where 200 horses stand tethered - and another palace guard lies dead. *
Seated on a bench, looking like what he is - a hostage in his own home - Ramses stares at Moses, still astonished he's here. *

MOSES

I'm told I should address you
Ramses the Great now.

RAMSES

You don't have to.

MOSES

That's good because I'm sure I
couldn't.

*
*

Ramses regards his 'cousin' -- not without affection.

RAMSES

I can't say I'm glad to see you,
but I'm glad you're alive.

MOSES

I'm sure you are.

RAMSES

I am. I did everything I could to
ensure it.

MOSES

Like sending only two assassins
instead of more?

RAMSES

Assassins?

Ramses looks genuinely confused. Then, realizing --

RAMSES

That must have been my mother.

*

MOSES

Blame her.

RAMSES

I do blame her. She wanted you
hanged. I said no.

(Moses isn't buying)

Who do you think hid your sword
where you'd find it? Her?

*
*

If Ramses knows about the sword, there's only one way he
could know. But Moses doesn't thank him.

Ramses regards his cousin. It's not lost on him that if
Moses wanted him dead, he'd be dead already. So it must be
something else.

*

RAMSES

So ...

*
*

MOSES

I didn't come back to take the throne. I don't want it. I never wanted it. This isn't the prophesy that worries you so much coming true. This is something else.

Ramses waits to hear it, but Moses, knowing how the truth will sound, comes at it sideways - *

MOSES

I've been told things have gotten much worse here. *

RAMSES

Who said that. *

MOSES

It doesn't matter.

RAMSES

It does matter because it's not true. Things aren't worse; they're better than they've ever been, no disrespect to my father.

MOSES

Better for you.

RAMSES

Better for everyone. Every Egyptian from the poorest venter to - to me.

MOSES

And the slaves whose bodies are being burned night and day now? *

RAMSES

Slaves told you things are bad? They're slaves, what else would they say. *

MOSES

They didn't say it.

RAMSES

Then who's been spreading these lies.

Long pause. And when Moses finally says it - perhaps because he's never said the word out loud before - at least not in this context - it's almost too quiet for Ramses to hear -

MOSES

God.

Long pause ...

RAMSES

What?

Moses can't bring himself to repeat it.

113A EXT. PALACE -- NIGHT

113A *

Unaware that the security of the palace has been breached, guards make the rounds with the energy and enthusiasm of any bored modern-day night watchman. *

114 EXT. STABLES -- LATER -- NIGHT

114

As Moses cinches a saddle to a fine Arabian horse, Ramses contemplates whatever it is his cousin's just told him. And in responding finally, he chooses his words as delicately as a hostage negotiator dealing with someone who has clearly gone mad. *

RAMSES

Ten years is a long time. Ten years in the desert is a very long time. And that's my fault. I apologize. But what you're saying is - forgive me - is - is -

MOSES

Insane.

RAMSES

No. No, I didn't say that. It's - it's - not entirely rational. *

Nothing from Moses; probably because he knows it is.

RAMSES

From an economic standpoint alone, what you're asking is - problematic to say the least. Surely, you can see that.

MOSES

They're Egyptians, they should be treated as Egyptians.

RAMSES

They're not *Egyptians*. They're slaves. They've always been slaves.

MOSES

No, they haven't.

RAMSES

You're right. That's true. But for hundreds of years. For twenty generations. They wouldn't begin to know what to do if they suddenly had to fend for themselves. It would be chaos.

Moses nods to himself in a silence. Then -

MOSES

I didn't expect a simple yes. I haven't been in the desert that long. But I don't want to hear a simple no either. Is that what you're saying? No?

Ramses glances at the deadly makharas on Moses' belt. *

RAMSES *

No, I'm not saying no. And I'm not saying yes. It's something I have to analyze. Discuss with the cabinet. Obviously. *

If Moses believes that, he is crazy. But to Ramses' surprise, he seems to. He climbs onto the saddled Arabian. *

MOSES

Ramses the Great.

RAMSES

I said you didn't have to call me that.

MOSES

I'm not. You haven't earned it. But now's your chance. Do something great. Thank you for the sword. *

Moses reins the horse, kicks its flank, and gallops out of the stables. Ramses stares off after him. *

115 EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - PI-RAMESSES - DAY 115 *

Slaves on scaffolding work on the imposing building.

116 INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - PI-RAMESSES - DAY 116

There's scaffolding in here, too, but no slaves.

Ramses sits with his ministers, advisors and generals.

No one is speaking. All are watching Ramses, who seems deep in thought. Finally -

HEGEP

You're not seriously considering
this - proposal.

Ramses looks at Hegep like he's an idiot.

RAMSES

Is it a proposal when a man is
holding a dagger to your throat,
Minister?

HEGEP

I stand corrected. This demand.

RAMSES

Of course I'm not considering
giving slaves the same rights as
Egyptian citizens. He's lost his
mind. For which he should be
pitied.

The generals look to Ramses mother the way they used to
look to Moses. She looks to no one; her non-look saying more
clearly than words would to Ramses, *I told you so.*

RAMSES

I want him and his family dead.

As measured as his tone was, it's still the proclamation of a *
pharaoh, but no one jumps to make it happen.

RAMSES

(to all)

Did you hear me?

ADVISOR

Yes.

RAMSES

(to all)

Then go.

No one goes.

RAMSES

What.

ADVISOR

We don't keep records of where
specific Hebrews live. And even if
we did ... who's his family?

117

EXT. GHETTO - NIGHT

117

Like a military manhunt outside the Green Zone of Baghdad,
soldiers scour the ghetto, entering every hovel, dragging out
its occupants.

SOLDIER
Moses. His family. Where are
they?

HEBREW
Who - ?

The soldier strikes the man in the head with the hilt of his
sword and beats him to the ground.

*
*

118 INT. GHETTO TUNNELS - NIGHT

118

The scholar and Moses and his real mother, father and brother
- people he hardly knows - descend a ladder underground.

*
*

They move along a tunnel, shored up with planks, their way
lit by torches in their hands.

They reach a chamber, stocked with some provisions and
settle into it, looking up at the rock ceiling above beyond
which they can hear the sounds of the soldiers and horses and
the cries of the Hebrews they're beating in the streets.

*
*
*

Aaron, who has only just met his younger brother-the-general,
regards him somewhat warily as he approaches with a sword.

MOSES
Ever used one of these?

AARON
No.

Moses hands it to him, and glances up again at the ceiling
and the sounds of the soldiers in the streets above.

*
*

MOSES
Hopefully, you're safe here and
won't have to.

*
*
*

119 INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

119

Ramses' advisors work to keep up with him as he strides down
a colonnade -

ADVISOR
Someone else should do this.
One of us.

RAMSES
I'm doing it.

ADVISOR
Then we recommend a different
venue.

RAMSES

Why.

ADVISOR

The juxtaposition won't favor you.

RAMSES

I don't even know what that means.

120 EXT. PI-RAMSES - DAY

120

It means that he is dwarfed by the 400-foot statue of himself that towers over him as he addresses an assembly of several thousand slaves, at least half of which probably can't hear him -

*

*

RAMSES

This isn't Moses. This isn't his family. This is a man, his wife and his children who, when asked a simple question - *Where is he?* - answered, *We don't know.*

*

*

Next to Ramses hang five people from a public gallows, three of the figures quite small.

*

RAMSES

Carry this image home with you tonight. Discuss it over dinner, knowing that tomorrow at this time there will be another family where this one is. And another the day after. And the day after that. Dare I say yours?

120A EXT. BRICKFIELDS/GHETTO - LATE AFTERNOON

120A

*

The workday done, an exodus of slaves returns to the ghetto. As one of them, the scholar's son, Joshua, comes past -

*

120E EXT. GHETTO ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

120B

Joshua pulls back an arrow on a bow string, closing one eye to better aim.

MOSES

Aim with both eyes open.

Joshua opens the closed eye and releases the shot. The arrow slices through the air and finds its target, a stump of wood.

120C EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY 120C *

Nooses snap taut on the necks of another ghetto family. *

120D INT. UNDERGROUND WORKSHOP - GHETTO - DAY 120D *

Moses, having carved a second bow, strings it -

120E EXT. BRICKFIELDS/GHETTO - LATE AFTERNOON 120E

Another workday done. As Joshua passes the same place as before, a second youth falls in step with him -

120F EXT. GHETTO ALLEYWAY - NIGHT 120F

Joshua and his friend - both with both eyes open - release their bow strings - the two arrows slamming into the stump side by side.

120G EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY 120G *

Another Hebrew family swings from the gallows. *

120H INT. UNDERGROUND WORKSHOP - GHETTO - NIGHT 120H *

Moses, the scholar and some other men are carving and stringing bows

120I EXT. BRICKFIELDS/GHETTO - LATE AFTERNOON 120I

As Joshua and his friend pass, a third youth falls in step with them. Then a fourth.

By the time they come down the scholar's street, they've grown to over a dozen and look like a mob of ruffians up to no good -

120J EXT. GHETTO ALLEYWAY - NIGHT 120J

As Moses moves along the line of young archers, each releases a shot as he passes behind them -

120K INT. WORKSHOP - GHETTO - NIGHT 120K

The workshop looks like a small arsenal now - bows, arrows, and now crude swords and daggers, the blades of which Moses and the craftsmen are honing.

SCHOLAR
They're all very young.

MOSES

They have to be. If they weren't, they'd recognize the danger and wouldn't do it. As with any army.

The scholar nods as Moses watches him continue to sharpen a blade.

MOSES

It's not too late if you don't want Joshua involved.

SCHOLAR

He hasn't listened to me in years; he's not going to start now.

He smiles, but it's a bit pained. He's worried about his son. And the mission itself.

SCHOLAR

Some of these boys, you know, are nothing more than hoodlums.

MOSES

Again, as with any army.

1201 EXT. PALACE - NIGHT

1201

*

Unable to sleep, as he so often is, Ramses emerges from his bedroom onto a balcony that affords him a panoramic view of his palace grounds and, beyond, his incomplete city.

*

*

*

He looks off over his dark domain. Then, tiring of it, he turns to go back in, when he hears a sound, and sees -

*

*

Thirty of his Arabians - ridden by what appear to be Bedouins, their faces wrapped in scarves - galloping from the royal stables into the night.

*

*

*

121 EXT. MOUNTAINS - EGYPT - DAY

121

*

A remote, rocky, mountainous complex of caves not unlike Tora Bora, where Moses' initial unit of fifteen young men has grown to forty, and includes his brother Aaron now.

*

*

They're both hiding out and training here. At the moment, he's teaching them how to effectively use their swords at a full gallop atop Ramses' stolen horses.

122 INT. MOUNTAINS - EGYPT - NIGHT

122

*

As the horses rest, the 'army' sits around bonfires listening to its commander -

*

MOSES

There are two kinds of warfare.
Each is dictated by numbers. With
greater numbers, you attack head
on. You stab the enemy in the
heart. With fewer, you come at it
from the side. You hack at the
veins that feed the heart.

AARON

The army's supply lines.

MOSES

No. The peoples' supply lines.
Their food, their property, their
comfort.

Some of the young men nod they understand, but Joshua raises
his hand. Moses' look to him asks, 'what.'

JOSHUA

Why not just put an arrow through
his throat.

MOSES

And then what.

JOSHUA

Then -

But Joshua doesn't know what would happen then.

MOSES

He's the only person who can say
yes. And the Egyptian people are
the only ones who can force him to.
We have to force them to force him
to say yes.

123 EXT. THE NILE - DAY

123

Wooden barges, like the ones that passed Moses on his trip
to Pithom, sail down the Nile from the Mediterranean, laden
with all manner of imported goods, livestock, building
materials.

Suddenly, from the trees along the banks, a volley of
incendiary arrows arcs over the water, striking some of the
barges.

Sails catch fire. Then bales of cotton and other goods on
the decks. In seconds, the vessels themselves are burning,
their crews diving into the river.

124 EXT. PALACE - NIGHT

124

From his balcony, Ramses looks off at several dots of fire: *

Grain warehouses, textile warehouses, moored barges on the river - aflame. *

The arsons don't seem to concern him as much as they do his wife, who cradles their infant son in her arms.

To him, the futility of the 'guerrilla warfare' is almost amusing - nothing more than a pinprick. *

RAMSES

At this rate, I'll need to be concerned in about ... 300 years. *

NEFERTARI

You're not going to do anything?

RAMSES

I didn't say that.

125 EXT. GHETTO - NIGHT

125

Egyptian soldiers gallop through the ghetto, torching the wood-and-reed roofs of hovels - not all them, of course, but enough to make a point.

Some of the people escaping from their burning huts do so only to be trampled by the soldiers' horses or cut down by their swords. *

126 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

126

Silence. Windless. The surface of the Nile shining like a sheet of glass. *

A unit of palace guards idles as the pharaoh and a couple of 'hunter's aides' move away from them along the palm- and reed-lined river bank. *

Ramses is the only one of them shirtless and empty-handed; the other two men wear protective clothing and carry a forked-stick, basket, precautionary dagger and first aid kit. *

As they slowly walk along the river's edge - Ramses leading the way - looking alternately down at the reeds and up at the trees since their prey could lurk in either place - something very near the pharaoh disturbs the reeds along the bank. *

RAMSES

Shhh. *

The aides stop. Listen. Don't hear anything. Ramses points to something they - nor he now - can see that has just slithered into in the water.

AIDE
We'll get it.

RAMSES
I think I'm perfectly capable.
Don't you?

AIDE
Yes, sir. It's just -

RAMSES
It's just -

AIDE
Dangerous.

RAMSES
It is dangerous. For you. I've been doing this all my life. Gave me.

One of the aides hands him a basket; the other offers him a dagger which he refuses. He proceeds unarmed into the river, wading **very slowly** through the tall reeds.

As he tracks some unseen creature beneath the surface, and the water reaches his waist, a dark form - a huge crocodile - silently **glides** toward him. To the aides who are sloshing some distance behind him, Ramses hisses -

RAMSES
Stop. Go back. You're making too much noise.

As the aides - gladly - retreat back to the shore, the crocodile glides past Ramses, brushing a submerged leg.

It doesn't frighten him. Nor does the next, even bigger one, that glides past him from behind.

He continues on alone - becomes hidden from the hunting aides on the other side of the reeds - the ominous reptiles silently gliding past him.

He stops. Sees what he's been searching for in the water. He waits for the right moment - plunges a hand beneath the surface - and comes up grasping a thick venomous aquatic king cobra.

RAMSES
You're a big one.

It is indeed. The thing, if standing, would be taller than him. Ramses looks it in the eyes -

RAMSES

Thought you could swim away from
me?

The snake responds by whipping its tail around his arm,
opening its mouth wide and actually growling at the king.
He smiles at it.

RAMSES

I love you, too.

MOSES O/S

Shhhhh ...

Ramses looks past the serpent wrapped around his arm to what
sounded like a second snake and sees that it's Moses standing
twenty paces ahead, half-hidden in the tall reeds, an arrow
lodged in a bow that's pointed at him.

The pharaoh glances back to his aides, who can't see the
danger he's in from where they are on shore, then back to
Moses.

Moses

So your answer to my appeal is no?

Still clutching the snake - and it him - Ramses sighs.

RAMSES

How could it be yes? *How*.
What you're asking is impossible.
You must see that.

MOSES

First it was irrational. Now it's
impossible.

Ramses regards Moses with true sympathy.

RAMSES

I say this as a friend, as a
brother - and because someone has
to be honest with you: It's both.

MOSES

It's neither. You're coming with
us.

Us? Who's he talking about? Ramses thought they were
alone. But now he sees other figures hidden behind trees --
those masked 'Bedouins' who stole his horses.

AIDE O/S

Are you all right?

Moses, his arrow still aimed at Ramses, tells him the answer
he should give them with just a nod.

RAMSES

Yes!

He turns back to Moses, who jerks his head just enough to say, *come to me.*

RAMSES

With or without this?

(the snake)

Without I would think, you never liked them.

As Moses keeps the bowed-arrow aimed at Ramses, he starts toward him through the water - as if resigned to his fate - unwinding the cobra from his arm as he comes

Suddenly then, he hurls the six-foot hissing cobra -

As it arcs toward Moses' head, he shifts his aim to fire at it, but just as the arrow is leaving the bow, a hawk swoops down and grabs the snake in its talons.

Both Moses and Ramses stare at great bird soaring off with its prey. Was that opportunity, or divine intervention?

At this moment it doesn't matter. The pharaoh runs, back the way he came, sloshing through the water, which draws the attention of the crocodiles.

The reptiles circle back toward him as he thrashes through the reeds, yelling to his aides and the palace guards -

RAMSES

He's here!

And it's quickly chaos -

The palace guards riding to confront the kidnapper -

Arrows from the guerrillas on the banks and a barge moored in the river, striking some of Ramses' unit -

The guards hurling javelins in retaliation at the barge and the trees -

Ramses trying to run in the waist-high water to the bank as the crocodiles swim toward him from behind -

Moses, Joshua and others firing on the guards, trapping them in a killing zone -

Ramses dragging himself out of the river just ahead of the jaws of a crocodile -

Moses climbing onto the bank and atop his horse -

Ramses jumping onto a fallen guard's horse and throwing a stunned look up at hawk in the sky with the cobra clutched in its talons - *

Moses, too, looking at the hawk as he and the guerrillas gallop off -- *

127 INT. TEMPLE - NIGHT

127

Ramses not only didn't retire the High Priestess of Sekhmet, he brought her along to his new city and installed her in a new, bigger (yet unfinished, scaffolding clad) temple. *

A pause before -- *

HIGH PRIESTESS
Was the serpent venomous? *

RAMSES
Very. *

HIGH PRIESTESS
So it would have killed him, if not for the hawk. *

RAMSES
Oh, yes. *

The priestess thinks about that, then nods unhappily. *

RAMSES
What. *

HIGH PRIESTESS
It was the god Heru, this hawk.
Protector of the Pharaoh. Only it protected him, not you. *

The meaning of this doesn't escape Ramses. Like her other prophesy it questions - and threatens - his sovereignty - and pleases neither of them. *

128 OMITTED

128

129 EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

129

The guerrillas are asleep on their craggy mountain. *

All but Moses, who gets up and heads off, moving quietly so as not to wake anyone. *

But Joshua is awake, and watches Moses leave. *

130

EXT. MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

130

Some distance away from the camp, Moses comes around an outcropping of rocks to where the scruffy boy - Malak - sits.

The sight of him doesn't startle Moses. It's as if he came out here because he knew the boy would be waiting.

He sits near him, cross-legged on the ground. And the way he behaves around him now suggests they've met together many times.

MOSES

What happened on the river.

MALAK

With the hawk? You're asking me?

MOSES

Of course I'm asking you.

The boy seems to think about it as he toys with a small rock. Unlike every other rock here, and for miles around here, this one is smooth. A small, polished river stone.

MALAK

Have you ever seen anything like that before?

MOSES

No.

MALAK

You don't think it was just hungry?

MOSES

No.

MALAK

Then I have to ask you again: Why are you asking me?

They consider each other in a silence before -

MOSES

If you can do that, then what do you need me for?

MALAK

I'm not sure I do anymore. I thought you'd be more effective.

MOSES

Wars of attrition take time.

MALAK

I know, but I get impatient.

MOSES

Now you're impatient. After 400
years of slavery.

From behind the outcropping of rocks Moses passed, Joshua's
face appears, secretly looking down to where Moses sits. He
can't make out what the rebel leader is saying, only that he
is alone - and seems, from here - to be talking to himself.

MOSES

So I do what - nothing?

Malak thinks about it. Then ..

MALAK

(with a hint of swagger)
For now? You can watch.

130A EXT. THE NILE - DAY

130A

The crystalline blue waters of the Nile.

Fisherman hauling a net of silver fish onto a barge.

A large shadowy creature glides beneath the water toward
the vessel, then rams it so hard the fishermen are knocked
from their feet.

As the huge crocodile circles back to ram the boat again,
one of the fishermen grabs a javelin and hurls it -

It embeds into the back of the reptile, drawing blood that
oozes into the water as it rams the boat again -

And suddenly, there are more crocodiles coming toward the
boat, but instead of ramming it like the first one did, they
attack the bleeding one -

A wild thrashing of tails and jaws as the crocodiles start
feeding not just on the injured one, but on each other - an
attack so violent it upends the boat, hurling the fishermen
into the bloody roiling water as the crocodiles rip into
each other in a mad frenzy -

130B EXT. THE NILE - DAY

130B

The battle of the prehistoric creatures has ended.

Moses, without his men, stands alone, concealed by reeds,
staring at the Nile.

The color of the water is changing as he watches it, blood
eerily flowing in the current, turning the Nile red.

130C INT. TEMPLE - DAY 130C *

Ramses with the High Priestess again. And, like before, a
pause before - *

HIGH PRIESTESS *

Crocodiles. *

(Ramses nods) *

Feeding on each other. *

(Ramses nods) *

You're sure. *

RAMSES *

(sighs) *

That's what I'm told. *

HIGH PRIESTESS *

(pause) *

I think I need to see this with my
own eyes. *

130D EXT. THE NILE - TWILIGHT 130D *

A carpet of dead fish floats atop the surface of the red
river. *

The High Priestess stares at it, as does Ramses, his face
masked against the stench with cloth. *

She kneels down, pushes some dead fish out of the way and
dips a clay ewer in the water, half-filling it. She speaks
to the figure painted on the ewer - a woman's body topped
with a snake's head - *

HIGH PRIESTESS *

Divine Goddess Kebechet, I humbly
call upon you to purify the waters
of our life-giving river. *

She waits. Ramses waits. Then - *

RAMSES *

How long will it take? *

HIGH PRIESTESS *

Not long. *

They wait some more. She jostles the ewer. Then finally
upends the ewer, pouring the water back out. Unhappily, it's
still red. *

HIGH PRIESTESS *

But longer than that. *

131 EXT. THE NILE - NIGHT 131

Nothing has improved here; in fact, it's gotten worse:
Even more dead fish floating on the water and rotting along
the banks.

Under a bright full moon, we approach the river's edge to
take a closer look and stare down at the surface of the red
water longer than is interesting ... *

Suddenly, a frog leaps out at us and someone screams - *

132 INT. PALACE - NIGHT 132

Nefextari's scream echoes through the palace as she
scrambles from her bed, horrified by the sight of a frog on
her pillow. Ramses, still in bed, stares at her like she's
crazy.

RAMSES

It's just a frog.

But then another one leaps up onto him. *

He climbs out of bed, lights a lamp and holds it out to
reveal a carpet of frogs moving across the floor - *

133 INT/EXT. PALACE - NIGHT 133 *

There are frogs everywhere -

In the corridors - in the courtyard - and, judging from the
sounds of neighing horses, in the stables - *

Ramses wades through the frogs on the nursery floor, pulls
his son from his crib, and carries him out of the room - *

134 INT/EXT PI RAMSES - NIGHT 134

And it's not just the palace. There are frogs all over the
city -

Inside and outside Egyptian houses - government buildings -
the temple - on the gallows where a different family hangs -
a plague of frogs creeping and hopping - *

135 EXT. PI-RAMSES - DAY 135

Bright sunlight. Heat. Dead and dying frogs. *

Already, flies are beginning to swarm from their rotting,
maggot-filled bodies - *

Egyptian city workers are gathering them up and burning them on pyres. *

136 EXT. PI-RAMSES - THE NEXT DAY

136

The same streets we were just on are now nearly invisible through black curtains of flies. *

Shopkeepers and venders are closing shutters and doors and stalls, hopelessly trying to protect their produce and fruit.

The city workers, wearing muslin headgear like beekeepers now, swing smoking jars of burning incense in the streets, hoping that'll do something.

Ramses and a unit of palace guards have dared to come out to survey the situation - their heads and those of their horses bagged in muslin.

They pass one of the many figures in the streets in beekeeper garb, who watches after the pharaoh and his men as they ride toward the central government building -

His eyes are hidden behind the netting, but we can still tell it's Moses - staring at it all - trying to understand what he's seeing. * *

Ramses looks up at his 400-foot statue. Around its head - its un-netted sightless eyes - eerily swirls a blizzard of flies.

137 INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING DAY

137

The flies are in here, too. Not quite as many, but still a nuisance to the gathering: Ramses, his advisors and cabinet - including Hegep - most of their heads bagged in muslin like his - as they listen to a biology expert -

EXPERT

The Nile, as you know, carries a certain amount of clay in its currents.

Ramses sighs, perhaps sensing already this is going to be a too-long lecture, like those when he was in school. * *

EXPERT *

Normally, it's not enough to register any significant color change to the water, but it's always there. This year, there's much more of it than usual - drifting in on the currents - settling on the river bed - then kicked up by the wild thrashing of those crocodiles.

The expert seems to enjoy the image. Ramses isn't sure he believes it. Bats at a fly.

EXPERT

This thrashing of clay sediment not only dramatically changed the color of the water, but fouled it to the point of killing the fish. And it would have killed the frogs as well, but frogs, as you know, can get out of the water when they have to, unlike fish. Which they did.

Ramses' bagged head nods, Okay, and -

EXPERT

But frogs still need water and when they can't find it in the streets of our city, they - what.

This man has placed Ramses back in school, but at least he knows the answer -

RAMSES

They die.

EXPERT

They die. And when they die, they decompose. And then the maggots come. Then the gnats and flies come. And then - ?

This time Ramses doesn't know the answer -

RAMSES

(fearing the worst)
And then what.

EXPERT

The flies die. And they don't live long, do they. Ten, fifteen days.

(pause)
Do you think you can bear the inconvenience of these flies for another week or so, Majesty?

Ramses feels the great burden of the unknown lifting off his shoulders.

RAMSES

Yes, I think I can.

EXPERT

Good.

ADVISOR

Thank you, professor.

*

138

INT. PALACE DINING ROOM - EVENING

138

*

Ramses dines with Tuya and Nefertari at a too-long table attended by too many servants. Though some flies still flit about their food, the clouds of incense help. The pharaoh is in a relaxed mood.

*

*

TUYA

(skeptical)

Clay.

RAMSES

Mmm.

TUYA

In the currents.

RAMSES

Mmm.

TUYA

Enough to do that.

*

*

RAMSES

Mmm.

*

*

TUYA

Nonsense.

*

RAMSES

No. Simple mineralogy. Perhaps you were absent from school that day.

*

She isn't pleased to have her lack of formal education mocked.

TUYA

(contemptuously)

I was, because at fifteen I was already devoting my life to you.

*

*

*

Ramses waves off the comment - and a fly - in a single absent gesture.

TUYA

What's that on your face.

Ramses wipes at where he imagines crumbs might be around his mouth.

TUYA

Not there. Here.

She touches her own cheek to show him where there's a spot on his, weeping a little pus. *

139 INT. PALACE BEDROOM -- EVENING 139

Ramses looks at his face in one of his wife's polished-brass hand-mirrors. There are a couple of lesions on his face now. *

140 EXT. RICE PADDY -- DAY 140 *

A driver leads an ox-cart to market along a muddy path that bisects rice paddies. Like Ramses, he too has some spots on his face, but other than that things seem to have returned to normal. No more flies or frogs. *

Suddenly, one of the oxen stumbles to its knees, tipping the cart, the produce rolling onto the mud. *

141 EXT. ROYAL STABLES -- DAY 141 *

Dismounting after a ride, Ramses scratches at his head and face. It's not too alarming - yet - but the few blisters on it have become more pronounced.

He pats his horse's neck. Notices a thin line of blood trickling from its nostrils.

Suddenly the beast keels over, and Ramses barely has time to leap out of the way.

142 EXT. FI-RAMSES -- DAY 142

In the fields outside the city, livestock is dying in the thousands. Cattle, sheep, goats, oxen - their eyes rolling, mouths foaming, knees buckling, toppling to the ground.

Dropping back, a "Bedouin" stares out at the carcass-ridden landscape. *

It's Moses. And he doesn't seem pleased by what he's seeing. *

143 EXT. MOUNTAINS -- NIGHT 143 *

As his men eat dinner - none of them displaying the boils and blisters the Egyptians are afflicted with - Moses, sits alone beyond the rock outcropping.

And he really is alone this time. No Malak whether we're with him - or with Joshua, spying on him. From both points of view, Moses is talking to nobody - and Joshua can hear every word of it -

MOSES

You did this to me before. Made me sit and wait. I didn't like it then and I don't like it now.

(pause)

Are you done? Is that it? Are you finished with the sorcery?

(pause)

I don't care if you are or not. I am. It's time to return to the table and talk.

(pause)

You really are a child. Only a child would hide like this.

But Moses keeps waiting.

144 INT. PALACE - DAY

144

The mineralogy expert has been brought before the pharaoh. Like everyone else in the room, his face spotted with sores.

But Ramses, sitting on his throne, looks worse: Not just his face, but his neck and hands are now covered in sores and eruptions.

A sore-covered physician's assistant applies ointments to Ramses' sores as the sore-covered expert explains -

EXPERT

We've made great strides in medicine, but there are still a few Hidden Diseases we don't completely understand. Your great father died of one of these Hidden Diseases.

RAMSES

My father was strong as an ox, but wasn't an ox; it's animals that are dying.

EXPERT

Animals are not exempt. And there's some conjecture that these maladies can migrate from one kind of animal to another. From the smallest creature to the largest.

RAMSES

The smallest. Like - ?

Ramses has put the expert back in school now and wants him to finish the sentence -

EXPERT

Like a -

The man seems unable to say it.

RAMSES
Like a fly?

The man - very unhappily - nods.

RAMSES
Thank you, professor. *

145 EXT. PI-RAMSES - DAY 145

The expert hangs from the gallows.

146 INT. PALACE - DAY 146

The High Priestess - her face afflicted like Ramses' - stands before the pharaoh - a subservient arrangement she's not accustomed to.

RAMSES
Have you been out to the river lately?

HIGH PRIESTESS
I was just there.

RAMSES
So you saw there's still no change.

HIGH PRIESTESS
I did.

RAMSES
What are you doing about it?

HIGH PRIESTESS
I appealed to Kebechet again, and six more gods. *

Ramses considers that, and her ... *

147 EXT. PI-RAMSES - DUSK 147

The gallows noose snaps taut around the High Priestess's neck. *

148 EXT. PALACE GARDENS - MORNING 148 *

Ramses' vast, lush palace gardens. *

One of the many groundskeepers sweeping outside it. *

Finishing, he heads for the servants entrance, but before reaching it, is bumped into by a cloaked figure who keeps walking.

The sore-afflicted gardener stares after the dark figure disappearing behind the palms, then looks down at the piece of papyrus that was placed in his hand.

149

INT. PALACE - DAY

149

A scribe stands before Ramses, the papyrus now in his trembling sore-covered hand.

RAMSES

Who gave it to you.

SCRIBE

A palace guard.

RAMSES

Who gave it to him?

SCRIBE

A garden custodian.

RAMSES

Who gave it to him?

SCRIBE

A man in a cloak.

RAMSES

A man in a cloak.

SCRIBE

Yes, (Majesty) -

RAMSES

Just read it.

SCRIBE

(reading, atremble)
*I know you don't believe it but
 these catastrophes are the work of
 God. And I don't think they've
 ended. We need to reach a
 settlement, for both our sakes.*

Ramses stares, but not out of concern so much as how illogical it sounds.

RAMSES

Did he sign it?

SCRIBE

Who.

RAMSES

Who do you think I mean? God?
My imbalanced cousin.

SCRIBE

It's unsigned.

*

The scribe - well aware the people currently swinging from the gallows were far more important than him - fully expects he'll be next.

RAMSES

You may go.

Stunned, the scribe beats a hasty retreat, the message still in his hand.

*

RAMSES

Leave that.

The scribe sets it on a scriber desk and leaves the room.

*

Ramses just sits there, apparently deep in thought. Then -

RAMSES

(to himself, mockingly)
The work of god.

*

150 EXT. THE NILE - NIGHT

150

The surface of the river is now a muddy brown color, no discernible current.

*

A raindrop falls on it, pushing out concentric circles. Then a second drop, creating Venn diagrams. Then a third. Then more.

The surface of the water, soon a carpet of rain pricks, is suddenly struck by a hailstone as heavy as an earthen stone.

151 INT. PALACE - NIGHT

151

Ramses - and Nefertari, her once-lovely face now marred with sores - look up from their bed at the ceiling. Hail or something - is pounding the roof so hard it sounds like they're under attack.

152 EXT. PI-RAMSES - NIGHT

152

Hailstones crash through the thatched roofs of closed stores - destroying merchandise - and through the roofs of houses - striking people.

153 INT. PALACE - DAY

153

We don't see Ramses this time - only another hapless, blistered scientist - trying to speak over the racket of the hailstorm echoing through the throne room -

SCIENTIST

When there's volcanic activity in the (mountains) -

154 EXT. PI-RAMSES - DAY

154

The scientist hangs, his corpse pelted with hailstones in the torrential downpour.

155 EXT. PI-RAMSES ENVIRONS - DAY

155

The hail is destroying orchards of olive trees. Flattening fields of wheat.

*
*

156 OMITTED

156

*

157 EXT. PI-RAMSES ENVIRONS - DAY

157

*

The rain ~~has~~ stopped, but the overflowing waters have breached the Nile and surged into the fields, creating massive shallow lakes.

*

Egyptian farmers, up to their shins in it, stare at their damaged wheat.

FARMER

I think we can salvage some of it.

The other farmers nod, but then turn to a strange, distant sound as the sky begins to darken again -

Suddenly, a cloud of red locusts is upon them and their battered crops, stripping what remains of the wheat.

*
*

158 EXT. PI-RAMSES - DAY

158

The voracious locusts have reached the city, enveloping everything edible in their path.

A hungry citizen seizes the opportunity to steal a handful of figs from a stall its vender is trying to close up.

*
*

The vender catches and stabs him.

*

159 EXT. GRAIN WAREHOUSES - DAY

159

Here it's a complete riot - sore-covered looters throwing rocks at armed troops and their scythe-wheeled chariots - the kind of street battle that will become commonplace over the next three-plus millennia in North Africa and the Mideast.

The order is given and the troops advance on their own citizens as they would an enemy.

*

Moses, from a vantage point some distance away, watches as the Egyptian army - the army he used to command - drops the citizens with swords, the chariot scythes slicing others in half.

*

*

*

*

Suddenly, inexplicably, the carnage is enveloped in darkness - a blackout eclipse of the sky as total as a torchless tomb.

*

Moses looks to the black sky as puzzled by the phenomenon as the rioters and soldiers, whose battle it has interrupted at least temporarily.

*

*

*

160 INT/EXT. PALACE - DAY/NIGHT

160

*

Ramses comes through his palace, lighting his way with a torch in hand. The blisters and boils on his face seem to be healing. He steps into the open-air courtyard, looks up at the black sky. No stars, no sun. What's going on here?

He hears something, the same something he heard that night Moses put a dagger to his throat: the sound of a brick on a pile of bricks falling onto the brick below it.

He stares at the darkness shrouding the pile of rubble and speaks to it -

*

*

RAMSES

Is that you?

Ramses hears nothing from within the darkness, but is fairly certain Moses is there.

RAMSES

Are you here to negotiate?

No response from the darkness.

*

RAMSES

I'm ready to. Here's my offer:
One more thing happens, I bring my
own plague: Every Hebrew child not
yet walking never will because I'll
be drowning him in the Nile.

*

*

(pause)

How does that sound?

(pause)

(MORE)

RAMSES (CONT'D)

It's not your fault? You didn't
cause all this? Your god did?

(pause)

I don't care anymore. Let's
just see who's more effective at
killing. Him. Or me.

Ramses listens for a response that doesn't come. But
satisfied he's made his point, he goes back inside with his
torch.

As the firelight from the torch fades, Moses is revealed in
the shadows.

161

EXT. MOUNTAIN CAMP - NIGHT

161

Moses, apart from his men, sitting where he always sits with
Malak, when the boy deigns to show up.

MOSES

Nice of you to come.

Malak just regards impassively a moment. Then

MALAK

I don't care for sarcasm.

MOSES

I've never cared for yours.

Once partners, they're more like rivals now.

MALAK

I admit I can sometimes be
irascible, even implacable, but I'm
seldom rude. Can we be civil?

MOSES

Can we be civilized, or do you
enjoy killing too much.

Malak almost sighs, like a professor whose student is ill-
advisedly daring to debate him.

MALAK

He's given you what you asked?

MOSES

He will. It's only a matter of
time now.

MALAK

You think a season of bad crops,
sick livestock and some deaths is
enough to do that.

MOSES

Yes. His own people are turning
against him.

*

MALAK

And his army?

MOSES

It will, too.

*

MALAK

I disagree. Something worse has to
happen.

MOSES

I disagree. Anything more would be --
(pause)

MALAK

Would be what? What were you about
to say? Cruel? Inhuman?

*

Malak almost laughs as he toys with a pebble.

MOSES

It isn't easy to watch the people
I grew up with suffering this much.

MALAK

What about the people you didn't
grow up with. What about their
suffering?

*

*

Nothing from Moses. And Malak reads into that

MALAK

You still don't think of them as
yours, do you. That's what's going
on here.

MOSES

No.

MALAK

No, you don't? Or no, you do?

Moses can't or won't answer. In truth, he isn't sure who
'his people' are.

MALAK

As long as he has an army backing
him, nothing will change. You're a
general, you know that.

*

*

MOSES

I am a general, and I said it's
enough.

MALAK

Oh.

(pause)

So, is that an order? You're
ordering me to stop?

Malak's expression says he's disappointed in his appointee.

MALAK

Sorry, General. I outrank you.

Joshua, who is again secretly observing Moses from behind the outcropping of rock, can hear none this, and, of course, can only see one of them.

He watches as Moses 'listens' to whatever Malak is telling him now. Then, when Moses abruptly gets up, tucks himself further back behind rocks so as not to be seen when Moses returns to the camp.

But as Moses comes past the hiding place - without looking at it or Joshua -

MOSES

Saddle up. We're going.

162

INT. PALACE STATE ROOM - DAY

162

Light has returned to the daytime sky, and it streams through the 'windows' of the throne room where the same scribe as before stands nervously before the pharaoh again, though with nothing in his hand this time.

RAMSES

The man in the cloak again?

SCRIBE

Yes.

RAMSES

Read it.

SCRIBE

There's no message. He's here.

RAMSES

Here? Where.

As the scribe turns to point off to the entry archway - a pair of palace guards appear there escorting 'the man in the cloak' - uncuffed - between them.

As disillusioned with Ramses as every other Egyptian is now, the guards deliver Moses like he's a visiting dignitary rather than the outlaw he is.

Ramses just stares. At Moses. At the unthreatening body
language of the guards. At the trembling scribe. Then waves
a hand to say, everybody out. *

Once alone with Moses, Ramses is tempted to step down from
his throne, but then makes a point of staying on it. *

RAMSES
(quiet but grave)
I could have you killed. *

MOSES
I don't think so. Unless you do
it yourself. I was welcomed by your
guards, who I'm sure will escort me
safely out. You've lost their
respect, if you ever had it. *

Ramses knows it's true but holds his anger over this fact
behind a civil facade. *

RAMSES
I told you I'm not negotiating any
more. *

MOSES
You never have, but that's not
why I'm here. I came to tell you
~~something's~~ something's coming I have no
control over that will affect tens
of thousands of citizens - and you
personally - unless you accept what
I've asked and announce so publicly
before the sun goes down. *

Ramses seems to take the warning to heart, but then the
slightest of smiles tugs at his mouth. *

RAMSES
Before the sun goes down. That's
dramatic.
(nothing from Moses)
Is that it? That's the message? *

MOSES
I'm serious. *

RAMSES
I know. I can see you are. *

And it's what makes him feel sorry for Moses. *

MOSES
Ramses? *

RAMSES
What. *

MOSES

When the splendor of peoples'
lives dulls, they always blame
their leader. Then they get rid
of him. I'm telling you this as a
friend and a brother.

Ramses nods, but not because he believes a word of what he's
been told.

RAMSES

Sundown.

MOSES

After that it'll be too late.

Ramses nods again and fights to keep another smile off his
face.

RAMSES

Thank you for this information.
I will consider it.

Moses nods. Leaves. By the time he's out the door, Ramses
has already forgotten the warning.

163

INT. GHETTO HOUSE LATER - SAME DAY

163

Joshua, Aaron and other 'senior' officers of the guerrilla
army are here, along with Moses' parents, some scholars, and
some others.

MOSES

There's going to be more death.
And it's going to strike those
least equipped to defend
themselves.

SCHOLAR

We'll fight with our hands.

MOSES

Not you. Your children. Your
firstborn children are going to be
killed.

Stunned silence. The scholar looks to his son Joshua, who is
his firstborn. Eventually -

SCHOLAR

Ramses told you this?

MOSES

No.

Then they're not sure they understand.

MOSES

Egyptian children will be killed,
too.

Another silence. Then -

MOSES

Tell everyone you know to tell
everyone they know to slaughter a
lamb or goat and mark their doors
and door posts tonight with its
blood.

*
*
*

Long pause.

SCHOLAR

Why.

*

Moses is only repeating what he was told by Malak, and even
he doesn't seem to believe it'll do any good.

*

MOSES

(pause)

Because I said so.

164

EXT. PI-RAMSES - LATE AFTERNOON

164

Shrouded again, Moses stands in the main square, unrecognized
by all but us in his cloak.

*
*

He's waiting for the 400-foot statue's real-life counterpart
to appear to make the public announcement.

*

No one else is waiting. They're all at work - some trying
to repair their hail-damaged stores and stalls - some closing
them up at the end of the day. All the tables and shelves
are noticeably bereft of goods.

Moses regards them, not without empathy - these citizens
of an empire he was a citizen of for three-quarters of his
life -

Many of them are still covered with sores - looking like
lepers - moving like ghosts around dead animals that still
litter the streets - unaware that anything worse can befall
them than already has.

He looks back to the statue of Ramses and -

*

MOSES

(under his breath)

Don't bring this down on them.
Yield and be 'Ramses the Great.'

*
*
*
*

What he can't see from here is that Ramses actually is nearby, standing unseen behind a column in 'the wings' like an actor awaiting his cue, trying to decide if he will or won't make the proclamation giving the Hebrews the freedoms Moses has implored.

He won't. He turns and disappears back into the building.

Moses glances from the silent monolithic statue to the setting sun, and unhappily watches its last sliver disappear over the horizon ...

165 EXT. PI-RAMSES FIELDS & GHETTO - NIGHT

165

A shadow, like that of a giant alien aircraft, moves across a moonlit sky over flooded fields and approaches the ghetto.

Reaching the hovels, the shadow of the cloud of volcanic ash moves across a splash of blood on the post of a ghetto door before continuing on, toward the city proper.

166 INT. PALACE - NIGHT

166

Ramses - the family-worrying insomniac - gets out of bed like we saw him do before.

NEFERTARI

(soft sleepy groan)

Everybody's fine. Don't get up again.

As she goes back to sleep, he pads out of the room

166A INT. NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

166A

- and enters the nursery to check, as he often does in the middle of the night, that his infant son is breathing. He leans down and listens to his beating heart. Then, to the sleeping boy -

RAMSES

(whispers)

You know why you sleep so well?
Because you know you're loved.

(pause)

I've never slept well.

The moonlit nursery darkens as if a cloud is passing over. Ramses glances off at what looks like snow falling outside, then wanders onto the nursery balcony and looks out over his darkened city, hearing faint wails of grief from every corner of it -

He touches the fallen 'snow' which covers the balcony walls and drifts into the nursery. It's ash.

As he hurries back inside, crossing to the crib -

*

166B INT. PALACE MASTER BEDROOM & NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

166B

*

-- we settle back on Nefertari sleeping peacefully again, until --

*

'Snow drifts' of ash floating in from her balcony doorway fall onto her face, waking her. She hears soft wailing - not just the same ones Ramses heard outside - but his.

*

*

She follows the sobs out of the room, down the hall, and into the nursery where Ramses is wailing loudly now, their infant son in his arms, both of them dusted with ash, the infant's eyes eerily open in death.

*

*

*

167 INT. MUMMIFICATION CHAMBER - DAY

167

*

In the underground chamber rests a set of embalmer's tools including a bloodied brain hook.

*

*

Gratefully, we've been spared that part of the procedure, and only watch the embalmer turn with some small intestines in his hand and put them in a falcon-headed canopic jar.

*

*

*

168 EXT. GHETTO - DAY

168

*

Moses and his 'army' - less than 200 men - lined up on horseback at the entrance to the ghetto.

*

A cloud is approaching - not in the sky, on the ground - a dust cloud kicked up by an Egyptian squadron of chariot troops a thousand strong.

It's charging, and the men in Moses' much smaller battalion can't hide their anxiety as they stand their ground, weapons at the ready, watching the looming dust cloud.

*

*

But as Ramses' battalion charges forward, intent, it seems, on crashing through - it then slows - and stops - in a face-off.

*

Moses's men see that the horses Ramses and his soldiers are on are not the awesome steeds they used to be. They look ill or haggard from the plagues. Still, the saddles on them are equipped with weapons far more numerous and deadly than their own.

*

*

Ramses regards Moses as the dust begins to clear, and finally speaks to him -

RAMSES

You think I don't know that every time I gave an order, my soldiers would look to you for confirmation? They're not looking to you now. They're looking at you. Their children died last night. Mine died last night.

And Ramses seems to relive the moment of that awful discovery. But then his face hardens again.

RAMSES

(contemptuously)

This is your "god?" A killer of children?

He holds up the dead, swaddled, mummified body of his son. Moses isn't happy to see it, but has to say - *

MOSES

No Hebrew child died last night.

This news throws Ramses off his rhythm - but only for a moment before his anger returns - *

RAMSES

Every child can die before I pay a slave one grain of wheat for his work. I'll give it to him - and I do - but I will not be forced to. *

MOSES

Then every Egyptian child will die. *

RAMSES

Get out. Every one of you. Go - anywhere - back to Canaan if that's what you want - back to the 'homeland' of your pathetic dreams - where you'll be received with a hatred far beyond mine. *

MOSES

(to be clear)

You want us out of Egypt.

RAMSES

I'm ordering you out of Egypt.

MOSES

400,000 people.

RAMSES

Not one 'less.

Moses seems to consider it, then finally nods, all right, if that's what you want - which, of course, is what he, his guerrillas, and every other Hebrew in Egypt wants and has been praying and fighting for.

*
*
*
*

MOSES

As you command.

*

Moses salutes him. Ramses doesn't return it.

*

Instead, Ramses turns his ragged horse around, kicks its flank and gallops off the way he came, followed by his army.

*

Moses glances to his men. They can't believe what just happened. Though he doesn't show it, neither can he.

*
*

MOSES

Tell everyone.

*
*

169 EXT/INT. GHETTO DAY

169

The Israelites are packing their possessions, gathering their animals.

170 INT. GHETTO HOUSE DAY

170

From his ~~extensive~~ military service - and his exile - Moses is able to do something neither Joshua, Aaron nor anyone else in the ghetto can: Draw a map of the Middle East from experience.

MOSES

This is the route.

He traces a finger from the Nile Delta - to the Sinai Peninsula - southeast across it to the Straits of Tiran - then north to what is now Israel.

AARON

This way is much shorter.

Aaron traces the more direct coastal route to the north.

MOSES

It is. And it's through Philistia - where I've also been, with a real army; we were lucky just to make it back. Believe me, we don't want to cross the Philistines.

*
*
*
*
*

Pointing to the bottom of the Sinai Peninsula - to the Tiran Strait's archipelagoes.

*
*

MOSES

We're going this way.

The Israelites are departing the city - not showing -- nor feeling - any glee. They know this is just the beginning of a long rough journey many of them may not survive.

*
*
*

Egyptian citizens watch them go with a mixture of hatred, and fear for the future without them.

The armed members of the Israelites trotting alongside the unarmed ones on horseback, look the Egyptian citizens in the eyes as they pass.

In contrast to the way we first saw it, ~~Ram~~ses - descending -- we now rise up the huge statue of the city's namesake - to its face, 400 feet above the ground, its pupil-less eyes watching:

A line so extended - 400,000 people and their sheep, goats, carts, some camels, horses - that it will take several hours for them to pass beneath the great stone pharaoh.

The exodus is in the desert now, moving east, the city somewhere unseen far behind them.

As Egyptian shopkeepers and venders close up their stores and stalls, construction workers, still toiling at this late hour on Pi-Ramses' never-finished building projects, manage as best they can without the work of slaves.

*
*
*
*

Ramses, perhaps to show leadership or to smell the new Hebrew-less air - rides with some palace guards to the rear of the main government building, where some aides meet him.

*
*
*

RAMSES

I want to say something.

*
*

AIDE

What.

*
*

RAMSES

Not to you. To the people.

*
*

He heads for the front of the building along its colonnade. The aides follow exchanging anxious looks for what's about to happen.

*
*
*

Ramses strides toward the spot where he always makes his proclamations, but something is wrong. There's stone debris impeding his path, and it takes him a moment to realize what it is -

*
*
*
*

It's "him" - the stone "him" - his massive statue - torn down, lying on the ground before him, its head, which is no longer connected to its neck, defaced by chisels.

*

Did the departing Israelites dare to do this on their way out of town? Or was it his own disloyal citizens here in the city's square - many of whom are looking at him askance.

*

*

174 EXT. EGYPT - TWILIGHT

174

*

The exodus is still moving. Night is the best time to move in the desert. On horseback, Moses and Joshua ride side by side at the front.

JOSHUA

How long will take to reach Canaan?

MOSES

Woefully armed as we are, whenever will be too soon.

(then,

Send someone to scout behind us.

JOSHUA

For what?

MOSES

Ramses.

*

JOSHUA

He told us to leave. He ordered us. Why would he come (after us) -

MOSES

Because he's not the man of his word his father was.

*

*

175 INT. PALACE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

175

*

Ramses, his complexion finally cleared, sits at his long dining table, eating in silence. That is until his mother - at the other end of the table - finally breaks it -

*

TUYA

(quietly matter-of-fact)

You're an idiot.

*

*

Ramses glances up at her for a brief moment, then goes back to eating, offering back -

*

*

RAMSES

(just as quietly matter-of-fact)

No, I'm not.

*

*

*

176 EXT. PI-RAMSES - MORNING

176

An army nearly the size of the one that attacked Kadesh waits for its commander to give it his order to move out.

As Hegep walks with Ramses toward the lead two-man chariot -

HEGEP

With respect, if we're going to recapture 400,000 slaves, we may need more than three divisions.

RAMSES

We're not recapturing anyone.

A moment as his meaning sinks into Hegep's brain.

HEGEP

Oh.

Ramses climbs onto his chariot, takes the reins from his shield-bearer, gives the signal, and the troops move out.

176A EXT. EGYPT - DAY

176A *

From a rise of an outcropping of rocks, a lone Hebrew scout - one of Moses' guerrillas - can see the dust of the Pharaoh's Army in the far distance coming this way.

*
*
*

177 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

177 *

The lone scout gallops across what looks like an endless expanse of desert.

*
*

178 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

178

The exodus, stretched out in a ragged line two miles long, slowly moving southeast.

MOSES

Until we cross the sea, we won't be safe. Even after that we won't be, but at least it won't be Egyptians attacking.

Joshua and Aaron, riding with him, exchange a glance. Which of them is going to say what they're both thinking?

JOSHUA

Did you say, 'cross the sea?'

Moses nods as though that should end the conversation. But it doesn't.

AARON

How are we supposed to do that?

MOSES

At low tide, we can cross it where
I said. I've done it.

The other men nod, not completely convinced. But before
they can question Moses any further - the scout - the lone
rider we saw before - gallops along the line of people and
flocks to the vanguard. Out of breath, he reports -

SCOUT

Ramses.

MOSES

And?

SCOUT

I'm going to say 10,000 men,
2,000 thousand chariots.

Joshua and Aaron look sick. Moses tries not to look sick.

MOSES

How far behind us.

SCOUT

A day. Less if they don't rest
the horses.

Moses does nothing more than he's already doing except look
ahead.

179

EXT. EGYPT - DAY

179

The pharaoh isn't resting his chariot horse; he's whipping
the reins as he leads his army's charge across the desert at
a dangerously impractical pace.

*
*

Commander Khyan catches up to him in his own chariot and
yells across to him -

*
*

COMMANDER KHYAN

We need to rest the horses! And
the men!

*
*
*

Ramses ignores him. Slaps the reins harder across his
horse's back.

*
*

180

EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

180

On the northwest side of the huge Peninsula, the Israelites
have reached a kind of crossroads:

To the south, the low-lying coast route -

To the east, the great mountain range Moses crossed in his exile.

Hunched over the map he drew, Moses points out to Joshua and Aaron where they are and to where they want to get -

MOSES

The Straits are southeast.
Here. We could take the longer,
easier route down the western
coast, or we can cross the
mountains.

AARON

Can we cross the mountains?

MOSES

I have ... but not with the
handicap of children and old
people.

AARON

They won't be able to make it?

MOSES

Not with their carts. The passes
are too narrow for carts. But also
too narrow for chariots - Ramses
will have to go around, and that'll
take him time.

*
*
*

JOSHUA

What does God tell you?

There's no irony in his question. And none in how Moses
looks at him. But unfortunately, God -- on this subject at
least -- hasn't told him anything.

MOSES

(lying)
The mountains.

181 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

181

The Israelites -- all of them on foot -- cross through the
mountains single-file along a narrow track, the edge of which
offers a precipitous drop to their deaths if they slip.

Even their leaders are on foot, leading their horses, the
animals' hooves dislodging rocks that tumble down into the
gorge a thousand feet below.

182

EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

182

The Egyptian army has reached the north-western foothills of the range where Ramses regards the sight of thousands of abandoned carts. He points to the mountains.

*
*
*

RAMSES

This way.

His commanders, without the luxury of being able to check with General Moses, have to actually ask the question -

COMMANDER KHYAN

Are you sure?

*

RAMSES

Obviously I'm sure.

His look to the commander asks, Are you a fool? The abandoned carts are an arrow pointing the way the Israelites went.

*

COMMANDER KHYAN

I mean are you sure we can make it across with our machines.

(the chariots)

They didn't think they could with ... theirs.

*

RAMSES

How would they know; they've never been here.

COMMANDER KHYAN

Moses may have.

*

Ramses is forced to consider that, but only does for a moment before waving off the thought and giving the signal to move out ahead - to the mountains.

183

EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

183

Having cleared the most dangerous part of the pass, Moses stares off at what lies ahead -

More mountains - as far as he can see - and a myriad of new choices of routes.

JOSHUA

Which way from here?

The truth is, none of it looks familiar to Moses. He must have entered the mountains at a different place than he did on his exile journey. He doesn't admit it, but he's lost.

*
*
*

184 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - TWILIGHT

184

As 400,000 people wait around to be told what to do - *

Moses has gone off alone to confer with Malak, no doubt, who
neither we nor Joshua - who's watching Moses from a distance
- can see. *

MOSES
I need your help. *

He waits for a response, but there isn't one because Malak
hasn't appeared this time even to Moses. *

MOSES
I'm not sure where I am. *

Again, nothing. *

MOSES
You're not going to help me?
You're not going to help them? *

The 400,000. Again Moses waits for a response, and as he
waits, grows anxious. But Malak neither appears, nor speaks. *

MOSES
Fine. *

He abruptly, angrily gets up. Joshua stumbles back and
scampers off so as not to be caught spying on Moses again -
hurrying back to his post. *

Moses joins him. Joshua pretends not to be waiting to hear
what Moses has been told. *

But, pointing off toward one of the many possible routes
ahead - perhaps at random - Moses tells him - *

MOSES
This way.

185 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - TWILIGHT

185

The Egyptians traverse the same treacherous precipice the
Israelites navigated on foot.

The track narrows so much, the inside wheel of Ramses'
chariot scrapes at the rock face while the outside wheel
pushes rocks off the edge.

He just makes it past this particularly dangerous spot and
looks back:

His single-file army is lagging behind partly because his sensible chariot drivers aren't in their chariots like him - they're walking cautiously ahead of the machines, leading the horses.

RAMSES

Get in! Come! It's safe! I did it!

The chariot drivers, including Hegep, reluctantly climb back aboard and continue forward, but too slowly for the pharaoh's liking.

RAMSES

Quicker! Show some courage!

Hegep and the other drivers, *hating to do it, frightened to do it*, snap their reins -

And Ramses watches as - like in some apocalyptic painting that won't be painted for two thousand years:

Hegep's chariot's outside wheel dislodges loose rocks, weakening the rest of the narrow path as his - and a hundred chariots, horses and two hundred men behind him - cascade down the cliffs to their deaths.

Ramses **stares** in awe at the horrifying spectacle accompanied by the **echoing screams**.

186

EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

186

The Israelites have reached the eastern edge of the mountain range, from where Moses can see ahead -

The Red Sea.

But it isn't the Tiran Straits. Moses has unintentionally led the exodus 50 miles north of that to Nuweiba, where the sea here - from land to land - is five miles wide and completely *unbroken* by archipelagoes.

He looks north: It's no narrower that way. He looks south: It's even wider that way.

And it's clear on his face to us - if not his men - he's not sure where they are.

187

EXT. NUWEIBA - DUSK

187

The Israelites' camp stretches from the beach to the foothills behind it.

Army or no army in pursuit, they're too exhausted to keep trudging without a respite.

And even if they weren't, where would they trudge to?

Standing on the sand, closer to the water now, the Midian shore looks even further away to Moses.

And to Joshua and Aaron and everybody else.

AARON
Is this high tide or low tide?

MOSES
It doesn't matter.

AARON
(pause)
This isn't the Straits.

MOSES
No.

AARON
(pause)
Do you know where we are?

MOSES
Yes. We're at a point on the
earth where there's a sea ahead
and an army behind.
(pause)
A cadet's error.

JOSHUA
You're calling God a cadet?

He regards Joshua, who he knows watched him conferring
or attempting to confer with God on the mountain pass,
and admits -

MOSES
I chose the route through those
mountains, not him. I'm the cadet.

Joshua can't believe it. Long silence. Then -

JOSHUA
So now what?

Moses doesn't say - because he isn't sure.

188 EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DUSK

188

The Egyptian army - a hundred or so chariots lighter - has
reached the same place where Moses last 'conferred with god.'

Ramses, standing next to his chariot, looks off at the same
dizzying choice of possible routes Moses had to consider.

The best one is certainly no clearer to the pharaoh.
Eventually

RAMSES

That way.

He points off to one of the mountain passes.

COMMANDER KHYAN O/S

No.

Ramses, unfamiliar with the word, turns to see his four
division commanders looking at him with mutiny in their eyes.

RAMSES

What did you say?

COMMANDER KHYAN

We're not going that way.

Ramses stares, already picturing the ways he might kill them.

COMMANDER KHYAN

If anything, we're going that way.

The commander points off to a different route.

Looking at the trio of generals, Ramses' hand absently,
instinctively, settles on the hilt of his sword - but then
doesn't pull it from its sheathe.

Realizing he's lost the confidence and respect of his
commanders - and the common soldiers around them - he points
to the same passage Khyan indicated and, acquiescing, nods.

RAMSES

(in quiet agreement)

That way.

189

EXT. NUWEIBA - NIGHT

189

As most of the Israelites sleep, Moses, who has tried to
but can't, gets up and - like all of us would - goes to the
'kitchen' - his saddlebags lying on the sand - to get a drink
of water.

As he drinks from his waterskin, he regards the stars -
critically - as if someone up there let him down.

He watches a shooting star streak across the sky a moment,
then burn itself out, and turns to walk back to 'bed.'

But a second shooting star draws his attention skyward again.
He watches this one streak like the other in a downward arc -
but it doesn't burn out until it reaches the southern horizon
- where it silently disappears.

It's odd, but not that odd. He sets his waterskin next to his blanket, lies down and closes his eyes.

190 EXT. NUWEIBA - LATER NIGHT 190

As Moses sleeps, we watch the surface of the water a quarter mile off shore where it's perfectly flat and smooth and seemingly still. But then some tips of coral begin poking through ...

*
*
*
*

191 EXT. NUWEIBA DAWN 191

The Israelites break camp, packing up to begin to trudge on north or south, whichever way Moses says.

JOSHUA

South?

Moses, standing at the water's edge, looking somewhat achingly off across the five miles of sea to the Midian shores, nods.

*

JOSHUA

Think we'll make the Straits ahead of them?

MOSES

(quietly)

No.

*

That's not what Joshua was hoping to hear, but in truth, he, too, is a realist.

JOSHUA

What are you looking at?

MOSES

Nothing. The current.

Joshua regards the sea, but of course knows nothing of seas and currents, having never actually seen one before now. Not knowing what else to say -

JOSHUA

It's strong.

Moses nods, but not really in agreement. The current, to him, and he does know something about them, seems unnaturally strong, moving in a smooth but discernible surge.

*

He looks down at the dry sand beneath his feet. Then off at the same reef we saw last night off-shore where more coral is being revealed. A sea bird swoops down at the reef and plucks from it a small crab.

*
*
*
*

MOSES

We've been here about twelve hours. This is first time that reef has been exposed.

Joshua, knowing no more about reefs or tides than currents, asks with a shrug, So?

MOSES

If it's a low tide, it would've been just as low, or only a little higher when we got here. It wasn't.

And when Moses looks back out to sea, he realizes that in just the time they've been standing here talking, the level of the sea has dropped even more, revealing more submerged reefs -

He steps into the water. Feels it tug at his ankles before it draws away from where he stands, leaving his feet on water less sand again.

What he doesn't realize and doesn't need to - is what he's looking at is the prelude of a tsunami on its way ...

MOSES

We need to go now.

192 EXT. NUWEIBA - DAY

192

It's suddenly chaotic as Moses' officers try to organize the hundreds of thousands of Israelites, as ordered by their commander -

JOSHUA

Form in lines! Forty abreast!

The people have no idea why, but few of them like it - it's the kind of thing someone might have you do to march you to your death. Some are objecting, many more are questioning why, many more are just confused.

Galloping through them -

MOSES

Do as you're told! Line up!

ISRAELITE

Why.

MOSES

Because it's an order! Now!

Most stop complaining but it's still outright confusion. What there's no denying, though, is that something bizarre is going on with the sea -

Mist is rolling in across the water as it recedes at an astonishing rate, sucked to the south like a massive riptide by the still-unseen tsunami building somewhere in the Arabian Sea.

Moses gallops past the groups of people as they're finally lining up like some lamentably unprofessional, unruly army.

He, on the other hand, looks like the general he used to be when he rode alongside Ramses in battle, barking at his commanders.

MOSES

(to Aaron)

Lieutenant, your company to the front!

(to Joshua)

Yours, flanking rearguard with me!

JOSHUA

We're heading south?

MOSES

No! East!

To the east, of course, is the sea - receding, yes, but still a tempest of currents. Has he completely lost his mind?

MOSES

Now!

As Moses and his lieutenants do their best to herd the people and their animals into the water -

Many resist and have to be threatened to move forward, and when they do finally go in, the water at the best of spots is up to their waists - elsewhere, the uneven sea bed drops them completely underwater -

The tall camels fair the best, but even they have to brave the powerful rushing 'riptide' that grabs some of the people and drags them under.

193

EXT. SINAI PENINSULA - DAY

193

Ramses' commanders have led the pharaoh's army to the same vista point in the mountains Moses reached yesterday.

They were right to oppose Ramses; they've arrived at the right place.

Still, the sight of the sea and the forces upon it are as startlingly bizarre to them, and Ramses, here, as it is down below where -

The Gulf of Aqaba - from Egypt's border to Midian's - becoming shrouded in fog now - is less water than coral and tide pools -

It's an unearthly landscape. And in the middle of it they see - trudging across - the raggedly concentrated columns of Israelites. *

194 EXT. RED SEA - DAY

194

Aaron's division and the thousands of Israelites it's shepherding begin reaching the Midian shore, while

The rearmost people - under Moses' and Joshua's commands still struggle to reach it, knee deep, tripping on submerged rocks and exposed coral -

Moses looks back and sees -

The pharaoh's army descending from the mountains.

195 EXT. NUWEIBA - DAY

195

The hooves of the Egyptian army's galloping horses kick up sand as they race across the beach

The chariots' wheels aren't fairing as well, slowed by the sand. In the lead chariot -

RAMSES

Halt!

The soldiers on horseback stop short of the shoreline while Ramses and the other chariot drivers work to unharness their horses from the machines.

196 EXT. RED SEA - SAME TIME

196

Given this momentary delay, Moses and Joshua use it to spur their columns of people closer to the Midian shore, as -

A sound - a low rumbling - draws Moses' attention southward, but all he can see there is a wall of fog -

197 EXT. NUWEIBA - MOMENTS LATER

197

Ramses climbs onto his now-untethered bare-backed horse, and with his sword gives the order to charge - *

Abandoning the chariots on the beach, the army follows him down the sloping beach on horseback onto the exposed sea bed to pursue its fleeing prey -

198

EXT. RED SEA - SAME TIME

198

As the last of the Israelites are scrambling across the last quarter mile to the sloping eastern shore, shepherded by the rear guard, the rest of Moses' soldiers reassemble and, at his order, return onto the sea bed -

*
*
*

About a mile from the Midian shore, they stop in defense formation, facing west -

And it's as poignant as it is hopeless:

*

Moses, Joshua, Aaron and the 300 other young men on horseback awaiting the onslaught of 10,000.

*

With all the noise of the charging 10,000, neither Ramses, nor his men, can hear what's coming: -

But Moses and his men can - and look to the south as it advances on all of them -

A tidal wave of 'biblical' proportions ...

The Hebrew soldiers don't need to be ordered what to do. They yank at their reins spinning their horses around, and kick them to a mad gallop back toward the Midian shore -

As the Egyptian soldiers, at a full gallop, glimpse the approaching wave, they have a horrible realization -

*
*

They're almost halfway across the gulf - so the odds of escaping this edifice of water, no matter which way they go, are equally bad.

*
*
*

But Ramses - charging at the vanguard - so intent on his destination - doesn't see the wave - nor his army behind him chaotically splintering as the soldiers choose contrasting directions of escape -

*
*
*
*

Moses - realizing that Ramses hasn't seen what's coming - points to it.

*
*

And now Ramses sees it - halts his horse - and stares at:

*

The looming wave - studded with trees it has devoured on its way here - gulls riding the thermals of its crest -

*
*

His retreating army, most galloping back toward the western shore -

*
*

The much closer Midian shore - toward which Moses' men are racing before the wave can consume them -

*
*

And Moses, alone on his horse, gesturing to him -

*

MOSES

*

This way!

*

(nothing from Ramses)

*

(MORE)

MOSES (CONT'D)

I promise you won't be killed!

(nothing from Ramses)

Come! Now!

The fact that he has again found himself in a position where only Moses can save his life, doesn't escape Ramses.

And the slow rueful shake of his head that he gives his 'savior' is almost philosophical.

RAMSES

(more to himself)

Not again. I'll die first.

He reigns his horse around to make the impossible ride back to western shore -

Moses starts after him, to save Ramses from himself by force if he has to, but Ramses only rides harder to prevent it

With no choice but to let his cousin go or be killed himself, Moses reels his horse east again and kicks it back to a gallop to try to make it to the Midian shore before the wall of water crashes

As he and the rest of his men are nearing it, Ramses and his men, further out, race for the opposite shore -

And the giant wave hits - sweeping Moses' and some of his men from their horses while -

It catches Ramses further out on the sea bed - a direct hit - hurling him from his horse as it buries the rest of his army

199 UNDERWATER

199

Tree limbs, rocks and other detritus in the wave strike the Egyptian soldiers, knocking some unconscious, impaling others - some stabbed by their own spears and swords - as the rest, held down by the tons of rushing water, simply drown -

200 FROM THE MIDIAN SHORE

200

Moses climbs from the water and watches the crushing spectacle as the still-surgings wake tugs at his legs.

From here, he can see the backside of the swell continuing on its violent journey north, leaving in its foamy wake thousands of drowned Egyptian soldiers and horses -

What he can't make out clearly, five miles across the misty sea, are -

201	FROM THE NUWEIBA SHORE	201	
	- the few hundred surviving Egyptian soldiers - and Ramses - washing up on the western shore.		
	Ramses pulls himself to his feet and looks off across the same misty sea from his side		* *
	Like Moses, he can't exactly see details on the other shore - or his adversary - but stares in that direction a long time as if he could see him		* * *
201A	FROM THE MIDIAN SHORE	201A	*
	-- just as Moses is looking 'at Ramses' from here		*
201B	FROM THE NUWEIBA SHORE	201B	*
	-- and the look on Ramses' face is one of salvaged pride		*
201C	FROM THE MIDIAN SHORE	201C	*
	and the look on Moses' face is a kind of respect - a look Ramses has wanted to see his entire life		* *
201D	FROM THE NUWEIBA SHORE	201D	*
	Beaten, disheveled, yet satisfied, Ramses turns away.		*
202	EXT. NUWEIBA SHORE TWILIGHT	202	*
	The Red Sea is calm. It's as if nothing happened.		
	Water laps at the restored shoreline, now dotted with Egyptian weapons that have washed up.		*
	Ramses is gone. All the surviving Egyptian soldiers are gone.		*
	The beach is deserted, except for the weapons, the debris, the half-submerged bodies and equine carcasses lolling at the water's edge, and a junk yard of crushed chariots.		
203-204	EXT. MIDIAN SHORE - TWILIGHT	203-204	*
	Here, too, are washed up Egyptian bodies and debris.		
	And a thousand weapons, which Moses' men, with the help of Israelite civilians, work to gather up while the rest of the 400,000 make camp.		*

There's no celebration. No singing or dancing or drinking to their deliverance. Miraculous as what happened was, they know - or at least sense - they're nowhere near where they're going, and that not all of them will make it.

From some distance away, Moses regards his parents and another family stoking one of many bonfires. He's pleased they're alive, no doubt, but the truth is, he feels no real kinship to them. He barely knows them. *

He turns to regard the activity on the shore, where Aaron and the other soldiers are postponing the task of salvaging the remainder of the Egyptian weapons until morning. *

But as they walk up the beach to camp, some of the civilians stay behind and continue to sift through the treasure - among them Dathan and his brother Abiram - the two Hebrew spies who reported Moses' secret to Viceroy Negep. *

If Moses were closer he'd be able to hear their casual conversation, like they're talking about the weather, only they're talking about him. *

DATHAN

I have a question. Who chose him?

ABIRAM

What? Who.

Gesturing with a slight tip of his head to the distant figure of Moses watching them - *

DATHAN

The Bastard Prince of Memphis.

Abiram shrugs, picks up an unimpressive sword, doesn't like it, discards it. Continues walking along the shore with his brother, looking for something better. *

DATHAN

No one else gets a voice except the man who hears them? If I said I talked to god you wouldn't listen to me, you'd take me to a doctor. *

ABIRAM

No, I'd have you arrested. *

Dathan grins at that as he picks from the sand a more remarkable sword. *

DATHAN

And you'd be right to. Because I'd be dangerous.

ABIRAM
(re: the sword)
That's a nice one.

Dathan nods. It is nice. Well-balanced. *

It's Ramses' sword, the one given to him by his father. *

As the spy gives it a couple thrusts and slices through the air, Moses starts walking toward him across the beach. *

Not seeing him, Dathan gets down on his knees as if atop a fallen foe and - clasping the hilt in two hands - brings the deadly bronze blade down hard into the sand. *

He notices his brother taking a step back and looks up to see Moses standing over him, regarding him, displeased with the mindlessly aggressive demonstration. *

Without a word, Moses takes Ramses' sword from the spy's hands and walks away with it. *

205 EXT. MIDIAN SHORE - NIGHT

205 *

Moses is off by himself now, sitting on the ground with his and Ramses' swords. *

Though he can't see Joshua, he knows the young man must be hidden somewhere near, observing him in secret as he has many times before. *

MOSES
Lieutenant.

Joshua doesn't answer or reveal himself.

MOSES
It's all right, you can come over.

Joshua emerges from his hiding place, comes over and stands by the general.

MOSES
So?

JOSHUA
So what's he say?

MOSES
Who.

Joshua doesn't say, but, of course, Moses doesn't need him to say. He knows 'who' he means.

MOSES
It's just me here. I just needed some privacy.

JOSHUA
Sorry to disturb it.

MOSES
Sit.

Joshua sits, but neither of them says anything for a moment.
Then, looking off at a distant mountain range to the east - *

MOSES
My family's not far from here.

JOSHUA
Your family? They're right over
there.

MOSES
My other family. My wife and son
and in-laws. *

Joshua didn't know he had them; he's never said so before. *

MOSES
Maybe I can convince them to come
with us. Though maybe I shouldn't
try.

JOSHUA
Of course they should come.

MOSES
We have a long way to go. A lot
can happen when you have a long way
to go. Not to mention once you get
there. If you get there.

JOSHUA
You don't think they'll let us
settle in Canaan without a fight. *

MOSES
Settle isn't the word they'll use.
To them we'll be invaders. *

Joshua doesn't feel like an invader, and, in truth, doesn't
even know who Canaanites are. *

MOSES
(explaining it to him in
other terms) *
You have a house. It's not big,
but you manage. Just barely. One
day forty strangers move in. You'd
allow that?

JOSHUA
They won't have a choice. We're as
big as any tribe.

MOSES
How would you know that.

JOSHUA
We're not?

MOSES
No, we are. We're as big as a
nation of tribes and that concerns
me even more.

JOSHUA
Why.

MOSES
This many people? You have to ask?

JOSHUA
Every one of us has the same goal.

MOSES
We do now.

Moses glances off at the weapon scavengers on the moonlit
beach. They're ominous silhouettes now, dark figures armed
with swords, spears and battle axes. He watches them,
perhaps concerned with what it bodes.

MOSES
But what happens when we stop
running?

205A EXT. MOUNT SINAI - DAY

205A *

At the base of the mountain, Malak - his back to us -
watches a lone horseman crest a distant rise and gallop
across the barren landscape

As the rider gets closer, he emerges from the heat waves of
the mirage, revealing himself to be Moses -

Malak breaks into a run toward him and we see --

It's actually Gershom - not Malak - running past his herd
of sheep to meet his father --

205B INT/EXT. MOSES' HOUSE - DAY

205B *

Hearing the sound of a horse's hooves outside, Zipporah
opens the front door to find -

Her husband - with her son in the saddle with him - reining
his horse to a stop outside the house.

He climbs down. Helps Gershom down. Goes to his wife and
holds her in a long embrace.

Then she pulls away from it, but only enough to consider and touch his weather-beaten face.

He looks as wild and weary as when she first met him.

Eventually -

MOSES

Did you do what you said?

ZIPPORAH

What did I say?

MOSES

You'd trade your faith for nothing to have me.

ZIPPORAH

(pause; and admits:)

No.

MOSES

Good. You're going to need it more than ever now.

Some movement far behind him draws her attention to -

A mirage of figures cresting the same distant rise he appeared over -

Wave after wave of them - a mass of humanity coming this way - carpeting the desert -

She looks back to him for an explanation for what she's seeing, but he doesn't readily have an easy one.

ZIPPORAH

Who are they?

Moses isn't sure what to call such a huge nomadic tribe. Finally, for lack of a better term -

MOSES

My people.

206 EXT. MOUNT SINAI - NIGHT

206

We're at the same spot where Moses was struck in the head and first spoke to Malak, looking down on -

50,000 bonfires of the exodus encampment far below - 50,000 glowing dots like a mirror image of the thousands of stars in the night sky.

It's silent here, but down there - for the first time - are distant sounds of revelry.

We can't really make out many details visually from here, and
can't hear any music because there isn't any, but we can hear

*
*
*

A kind of choir of drunkenness punctuated by sporadic duets
of arguing voices - heated spiking exchanges - harbingers of
fracturing within the tribe that will only grow worse with
time ...

*
*
*
*

And now Malak is here on the mountain, looking down as a
low wind begins, like measured breathing, like the mountain
is alive -- like it's human -- awaiting the reveling, offending
Israelites' eventual arrival.

*
*
*
*

It's not a welcoming sound -

*

Nor is the muffled clap of thunder following the flash of
fingers of lightning behind Malak -

*
*

Nor is the expression on his face -- his eyes no longer
looking at all childlike.

*
*

As it begins to rain, he turns away and slowly heads for the
top of the mountain ...

*
*