

**E
X
O
D
U
S**

COOPER/COLLAGE
OCTOBER 30, 2010

ON WATER --

rippling in sunlight, it distorts MULTIPLE REFLECTIONS of a MAN staring at himself -- some reflections radiate, some appear in shadow, still others seem savagely misshapen.

Before we can make out a clear image, a blood-caked HAND -- with THE EYE OF HORUS branded on back -- dips into the water and cups some. Brings it to the chapped lips of

MOSES (28)

The original hero with a thousand faces. This first glimpse is like nothing we've ever seen: shaved bald head...henna tattooed eyes...his muscular body laced with battle scars.

EXT. WAR TENT - DESERT - DAY

Perched on the banks of the Blue Nile. Moses glances skyward to see a SPARROW HAWK circling above. Sun rimming its wings, Moses considers this bit of grace flying on high, when...

VOICE (O.S.)

It is good to see you, brother.

Moses knows that voice, turns to see RAMESSES (26) emerging from the tent -- every bit the warrior Moses is, albeit less tested. He takes more pride in his appearance.

MOSES

Rameses. I came as soon as I received word of your request.

They embrace, unafraid to show the depth of their bond.

RAMESSES

Did you bring it?

Moses nods to a CLOTH BAG on the ground. Rameses picks it up, feels its weight, then spills out THREE SEVERED HEADS.

MOSES

East, West and North are secure.

RAMESSES

Father will be pleased. The South awaits your sword.

EXT. WAR TOWER - DAY

Moses and Rameses walk up the stairs of a siege tower.

MOSES

You outnumber their forces 3-to-1.
Why've you not breached the gates?

RAMESSES

The King of Kush uses a magic
unlike anything our sorcerers have
ever conjured. An evil magic.

They reach the OBSERVATION DECK at the tower top. Moses steps to the rail, struck by what lays before him.

MOSES

His walls move...

Moses stares out at the FORTRESS OF KUSH, where endless wisps of hair-like strands seem to dance over the battlements.

CLOSER ON THE WALLS: thousands of sinewy ASPES cover them, slithering and HISSING like some grotesque snake wig.

RAMESSES

Asps. I've tried force as well as
fire, but nothing bests their venom.

Moses furrows his brow, amazed by the challenge before him.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Swarms of VULTURES feast on acres of DEAD EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS. Attack platforms stand in broken tangles amidst DEAD HORSES and UPENDED CHARIOTS. Things have not gone well here.

RAMESSES (O.S.)

Forty days my men have watched the
vultures pick apart the fallen.

EXT. HILLTOP ENCAMPMENT - SAME

Moses and Ramesses walk among the ranks of Egyptian SOLDIERS lazing about. Some nurse wounds. Others just sit listlessly, plagued by the kinds of wounds you can't see.

MOSES

Their morale is low.

RAMESSES

I wish I could say the same for
their rate of desertion. More
flee their units every day.

Nearby, a dozen SOLDIERS stand in a circle around a DESERTER, ruthlessly beating the man with sticks.

MOSES

The asps scare them more than the threat of discipline. Given your numbers, you might think to return them to their ranks alive.

RAMESSES

That will only make me look weak in their eyes. Besides, any man who deserts his brother does not deserve to stand beside him again. The trust has been broken.

Moses nods. Can't deny the logic of that wisdom. Bends down. Picks up some of the dirt. Rubs it between his fingers.

MOSES

This ground is fertile. It holds water and binds better than sand.

Moses regards hundreds of sweating HEBREW SLAVES digging a massive grave in the dirt nearby. Contemplating something...

MOSES (Cont'd)

What if you double the Hebrews' rations?

RAMESSES

We've barely enough to feed our men. The slaves are dogs.

MOSES

Perhaps. But throw a dog a bone, and he digs a deeper hole.

CUT TO:

A DIORAMA --

of the battlefield and walled fortress, it sits on a table.

RAMESSES (O.S)

We tunnel here, here and here.

INT. WAR TENT - DAY

Three Egyptian ARMY CAPTAINS furrow their brow at this tactic. Captain of Calvary HATEP can't resist...

HATEP

You have us burrow like swamp rats?
(to Moses)
First Son of Egypt, please...?

MOSES

Do as he says. My brother's plan is sound.

Hatep bows and the captains leave. Ramesses acknowledges Moses's graceful gesture with a nod.

EXT. DIG SITE - DAY

Caked in dirt, SLAVES dig ceaselessly. Bodies near breaking point. Moses stalks through their ranks. Sees an exhausted SLAVE (NUN) digging incorrectly.

MOSES

You! Like this.

(takes shovel, digs)

Move the sand *towards* the fortress.

So it shields us from their arrows.

See?

Nun doesn't answer, he and the other slaves surprised by the sight of an Egyptian Prince digging alongside them.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Do you understand?

Nun raises his eyes to look at Moses. Uneasily nods.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Then explain it to the others.

Moses starts off, but sees Nun staring at his WATER SKIN. Moses removes it. Offers it to him. But Nun hesitates.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Take it. You're no good to me dead.

Nun's surprised by that scrap of compassion. Takes the water skin and drinks hungrily before Moses changes his mind.

NEARBY. Ramesses watches the exchange. Intrigued.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

HEBREWS scurry amongst the sea of decaying Egyptian bodies, pouring ox fat oil onto them. Others toss TORCHES on the dead. IGNITE THEM IN FLAMES, sending up a wall of fire.

EXT. FORTRESS OF KUSH - SAME

The wall-bound asps HISS at the flames. Their BLACK BODIES, YELLOW EYES and DRIPPING FANGS aglow in the firelight.

EXT. RAMPARTS - FORTRESS OF KUSH - SAME

Black-skinned KUSHITES with white-painted faces flank SORCERER-KING YUNY -- wearing a GIANT SNAKE HEAD over his skull like a helmet. He holds a SEER STONE.

KING YUNY

For a week they burn their dead...

CLOSER: the CLOUDY VISION inside the seer stone shows the Hebrews burning the Egyptian dead.

KING YUNY (Cont'd)

Soon they will surrender.

INT. WAR TENT - NIGHT

The sound of thundering DRUMBEATS from outside. A pot of HENNA is removed from a fire. Poured in a jar by a beautiful CONCUBINE (21). She dips a tattoo brush in the henna.

She brings it to Moses's face. Begins to PAINT it. His eyes fixed as if in a trance, they reflect the FIRE in his tent: *this is not the face of a man who surrenders.*

EXT. MOUTH OF TUNNEL - BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

HEBREW INFANTRY ready weapons before a tunnel dug in the earth, Nun among them. Moses marches their ranks, his face henna-tattooed with a SKULL...he is a vision of death itself.

MOSES

Once inside, we will fight our way
to the gates and open them for my
brother and his men.

Moses nods to Ramesses in his CHARIOT before the Egyptian calvary -- regal compared to Moses's savage spectre-like form.

MOSES (Cont'd)

We will take the life from their
eyes -- every single one of them.

The Hebrews trade uncertain looks -- they have never seen anything like this man Moses.

EXT. FORTRESS OF KUSH - NIGHT

Kushite SENTRIES look out tiny PORTALS in the walls, snakes writhing before the still-blazing field of burning bodies.

INT. YARD - FORTRESS OF KUSH - SAME

Some drunk SOLDIERS around a fire swill off a beer bucket, LAUGHING. One of them rises, staggers away to urinate. Lets out a GROAN as he waters the dirt, when he furrows his brow.

Squints to see the dirt he's peeing on *shift*. Wonders if his eyes are playing tricks on him, when the dirt starts to recede like a sinkhole. He bends for a closer look, just as

A SPEAR FLARES UP THROUGH THE GROUND

SKEWERS him through the torso. He SCREAMS in pain as **Moses emerges from below** -- covered in mud, his eyes burn behind the skull tattoo as he charges out ahead of

THE HEBREW INFANTRY --

like water from a pipe, they burst out of the tunnel into the fortress with swords and spears raised. The drunk Kush soldiers go for their weapons, but they're quickly cut down.

Moses slices his way towards THE GATE, killing man after man. He fights with unmatched ferocity. Leader of the slaughter.

INT. KING YUNY'S CHAMBERS - FORTRESS OF KUSH - SAME

Sorcerer-King Yuny awakens to the SCREAMS. Rises in concern.

EXT. YARD - FORTRESS OF KUSH - RESUME

Moses arrives at the main gate. Grabs hold. Pushes the wooden bolt, his muscles going taut.

NEARBY. King Yuny emerges into the yard, sees the battle raging. He raises his arms -- eyelids fluttering as if he's possessed, dust whips into a whirl before him, forming

A GIANT ASP --

towering ten feet tall, it HISSES at some Hebrews. Sends them fleeing in a panic.

MOSES

Stand your ground!

But the Hebrew retreat make them easy kills for the Kushites. Chagrined, Moses pushes at the gate's bolt. Nun joins him. Helps push, clearing the lock so the gates may open for

THE EGYPTIAN CALVARY --

they burst into the fortress with Ramesses in the lead -- the most powerful fighting force on Earth, it's instant carnage on impact. Chariot AXLE SWORDS slice a path of destruction.

Ramesses swings his sword at the ASP from his chariot, beheading it. Sorcerer-King Yuny stares in shock, when he's roughly seized by LYKKIS, an Egyptian Captain with one-eye.

ON MOSES. Killing with wild abandon. The battle has turned in favor of the Egyptian/Hebrew forces.

Just then, a KUSHITE hurls his spear and hits Ramesses's warhorse. Sends his chariot TOPPLING.

Moses breaks from battle to grab the side of his brother's heavy cart. Puts all his strength into it. Screams. Muscles rippling under the strain. Pulls it off Ramesses.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Take my hand!

But Ramesses hurls a dagger through the air instead, the blade narrowly missing Moses and impaling

A KUSHITE SOLDIER --

sword raised to strike Moses, the man crumples to the ground.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Thank you, brother.

Moses helps him up. Both turning to see the Egyptian/Hebrew army crushing the last of the Kushites. They walk toward Yuny being strapped to a POST by Lykkis.

LYKKIS

The King of Kush, First Son.

Ramesses unsheathes his sword and tosses it to Moses, who catches it in stride and swiftly

BEHEADS KING YUNY

His lifeless body falls limp. Moses picks up the head. Turns and raises it before his army. They emit a bloodthirsty ROAR.

ON RAMESESSES. Watching Moses. The power and command he holds.

Nun and the Hebrews stare in wonder at this cold-blooded warrior -- perhaps envious they don't have someone like this to lead them. Nonetheless inspired by his electricity.

EXT. CITY OF AVARIS - DAY

The ancient Egyptian version of a ticker-tape. Thousands CHEER the EGYPTIAN ARMY as it makes its triumphant return to the most glorious and majestic city of antiquity.

AT THE HEAD OF THE ARMY --

Moses rides atop a WHITE HORSE. Soaks in the intoxicating feel of the crowd's ROAR. They worship him as a hero. A *symbol* of Egypt's power. And Moses loves the praise.

Ramesses rides behind Moses. Aware of the peoples' reverence for him. A look of brotherly pride cut with envy on his face

ON AN OBSERVATION BALCONY. Aging PHARAOH SETI sits on a throne, stoically looking down on Moses in all his glory. He is the most powerful leader in the world. Acts as such.

Seti nods to Moses: it might as well be a torch passing.

INT/EXT. COURTYARD - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - NIGHT

A lavish homecoming party. Hundreds of NOBLES and DIGNITARIES crowd a space filled with the spoils of Egypt: overflowing trays of food; MUSICIANS playing; half-nude WOMEN dancing.

Ramesses stands with Lykkis and Hatep, watching a MAGICIAN.

MAGICIAN

Your cup, Second Son of Egypt...

Ramesses hands him the cup. The Magician tosses its contents into the air -- transforming it into a FALCON that lands on Ramesses's shoulder to the crowd's delight.

IN THE CORNER. The familiar Concubine from Kush lounges with CONCUBINE #2 -- adorned in sheer linen and polished beads, they are quite simply the most beautiful women in the world.

CONCUBINE #2

Word among the nobles is that Ramesses's siege of Kush will be studied for generations.

CONCUBINE

I doubt that.

(off her look, slyly)

History has a way of favoring those who actually make it.

Concubine #2 follows her friend's gaze to see Moses entering the party alone. The gathered guests erupt in APPLAUSE. Moses accepts it. Owns the praise. An unspoken coronation.

CONCUBINE #2

You aim too high.

CONCUBINE

Someone has to be the next queen.

She rises, leaving her friend behind.

ON MOSES. Joining Seti and some NOBLES. The noble men light up in his presence. Simply star struck by Moses.

SETI

A dramatic entrance to say the least. I'd begun to think you weren't coming to the very party I threw in your honor.

MOSES

The honor is in serving you alone, Great Egypt.

SETI

The honor is in seeing the man you have become, my son. I dare say that when the Gods of Egypt call me to their station, you may indeed extend beyond my shadow.

MOSES

I would never presume to outshine your greatness, father.

SETI

That humility in the face of power is exactly why you will.

(holds his face)

I am the luckiest father on Earth.

Seti kisses his son. Loves him with all his heart.

ON RAMESSES. Clocking his father's favor of Moses.

ON MOSES. Basking in Seti's approval. His father's love still life's warmest blanket. An ELDER NOBLE speaks up...

ELDER NOBLE

Tell me, Moses, what did you miss the most about our great city of Avaris while you were away? Our food? Our wine?

Moses sees the Concubine crossing the room, conspicuously in his line of vision.

MOSES

My bed.

The Nobles eat that up. The Concubine casts Moses a discrete glance, before disappearing through an archway.

INT. SERVICE KITCHEN - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - MOMENTS LATER

The Concubine accepts a cup of wine from a POUR GIRL. Turns to find Moses approaching her.

MOSES

It's good to see you again.

He takes the cup from her, hungrily drinks.

CONCUBINE

I poisoned that.

She holds his look a beat before she smiles. A wife that Moses likes immediately.

MOSES

What's your name?

CONCUBINE

I've not been given one. You can name me as you wish.

Moses considers her a moment, then...

MOSES

I will call you Nefertiri...
"beautiful companion."

Companion. Nefertiri likes that.

INT. MOSES'S BEDCHAMBER - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - NIGHT

Moses and Nefertiri have sex -- far from lovemaking, there's a greedy rapacity to his conduct. As though he is entitled to this...and she is his to have however he pleases.

EXT. GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DAWN

The sprawling palace of Pharaoh, painted roofs and obelisks with electrum tower over pools sparkling in the rising sun.

INT. MOSES'S BEDCHAMBER - SAME

Nefertiri lies spent in bed after a night in service of Moses's sexual appetite. Her eyes flutter open as sunlight streams in. She rolls over to reach for Moses...

...but he's gone.

EXT. BANKS OF THE NILE - DAY

Moses and Ramesses engage in a practice session using the ancient martial art known as *tahtib*. Each holding 4' bladed sticks, they're well-suited sparring partners.

ATTENDANTS and CONCUBINES stand on the banks watching. The brothers trade attacks and parries, the exchange tumbling out onto a jetty of rocks extending into the river.

Moses gains the upper-hand, but Ramesses feels the eyes of those watching upon him. Sees this as a chance to show off.

Ramesses slashes furiously at Moses. Drives Moses back. Knocks him down.

ON THE SPECTATORS. They APPLAUD. Gives Ramesses a bit of the praise he so desperately desires.

MOSES

You've been practicing.

RAMESESSES

I can't let you have all the glory.

MOSES

You still grip your weapon too tightly. You forget it is an extension of your body.

RAMESESSES

Yet I knocked you on your ass just as well.

MOSES

Yes. Though sometimes that's the better place to be.

Ramesses furrows his brow, as Moses quickly grabs Ramesses's stick. Yanks him into the water with an embarrassing splash. Moses and the Attendants laugh at Ramesses's expense.

EXT. BANKS OF NILE - LATER

Ramesses and Moses eat almonds and drink beer by the fire.

RAMESESSES

Do you remember the first time father brought us here?

MOSES

I was seven, you were five.

RAMESSES

And afraid of the dark. You held me all night so father wouldn't hear me cry.

MOSES

Someday we'll bring our sons here.

Rameses drinks to that.

RAMESSES

Our father is old, Moses. He speaks of joining the Gods soon.

MOSES

He's spoken of his death since we were children. I can scarcely recall a birthday where he didn't give his own benediction over salutations to his sons.

Rameses laughs at that. It's true.

RAMESSES

Still. In those years, he had borders to secure and lands to annex. He has little left to stir his heart now that you've accomplished that for him.

MOSES

We did it together, Rameses.

RAMESSES

You needn't stroke my ego, brother. I have never been the one who comes bearing the heads of enemies.

MOSES

The Gods shine on us equally.

RAMESSES

You've had too much beer. The Gods of Egypt don't even talk to you.

MOSES

And I don't talk to them!

They both share a LAUGH at that. A beat, then seriously...

RAMESSES

Tell me how do you do it, Moses. How do you always manage to win?

Moses thinks long and hard. As if the answer troubles him.

MOSES

Perhaps I win because I do what the other man will not.

Ramesses regards the EYE OF HORUS on the back of Moses's hand.

RAMESSES

That is why father brands you with Horus's Eye? The One Who Does.

MOSES

We live in an age of images. Our men need one to follow.

RAMESSES

You think yourself an image? They follow your *example*. You inspire them to do things they never thought possible. Even the Hebrew slaves.

Moses cracks a smile, charmed by his brother. Soldier Lykkis rides up on a horse.

LYKKIS

Sons of Egypt, I apologize...

MOSES

Do you bring news of my mother?

LYKKIS

The Royal Barge returns from Thebes by the time the moon rises.

Moses and Ramesses eagerly rise.

MOSES

Then we ride at once.

EXT. ROYAL BARGE (MOVING) - MAGIC HOUR

Painted green and majestic. It drifts the calm, blue Nile like a floating emerald. Moses and Ramesses await on a quay.

INT. CANOPIED CABIN - ROYAL BARGE - MAGIC HOUR

Vizier BALAAM murmurs prayers over a bed. Moses and Ramesses enter. Balaam sees them, deferentially bows.

BALAAM

Sons of Egypt.

MOSES

Tell me good news, Vizier.

BALAAM

I fear I have none to offer.

RAMESSES

You'd be wise to mind your tongue --

Moses holds up his hand.

MOSES

It's okay, brother.

(to Balaam)

Spare me no truth. How is she?

Balaam looks uneasily at Ramesses, then proceeds.

BALAAM

Your mother is worse than when she left, First Son. I fear her soul is in the grips of something terrible.

MOSES

What of the tonics?

Balaam just shakes his head. Ramesses can see Moses's pain.

RAMESSES

Send the nurses away.

Balaam signals to two NURSES, who draw a curtain around the bed. Bow. Exit with Balaam. Moses hesitates.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)

Go to her, brother. Ease her pain.

Ramesses waits by the door. Moses steps forward, pulls back the curtain to reveal BITHIAH -- his once beautiful mother, she's now frail and dying. Her eyes blinded by cataracts.

BITHIAH

Is that you, Moses?

Her sad state gives him pause. He kneels and takes her hand.

MOSES

I am here.

BITHIAH

I prayed I might see you one last time...but my sight has been taken. You have been a great prince.

(MORE)

BITHIAH (Cont'd)

It saddens me that you will not
rise to be anything more.

Moses furrows his brow, when she starts to cough. Fitfully.

MOSES

Drink, mother. Drink some water.

He helps her drink water.

BITHIAH

Moses: child of the water. Rescued
from its currents by royal hands.

MOSES

You need to rest --

BITHIAH

I'll rest soon enough. But know
this now: you will not be Pharaoh.

ON RAMESSES. Listening attentively. Interest piqued.

MOSES

Do not worry. Father has assured me
the throne.

Bithiah shakes her head, looks stricken. Pained.

BITHIAH

He doesn't know the truth. He does
not know what I know.

MOSES

What do you know? Tell me.

Rameses watches her grab Moses's royal garb. Trembling.

BITHIAH

This is not you.

(beat)

This...is you.

She forces a STRIP OF LEVITE CLOTH into his hands.

BITHIAH (Cont'd)

Take it. So my spirit may be saved.
So I may unburden my soul of its
secrets.

MOSES

I don't understand --

BITHIAH

My road to the afterlife is now
clear. You are not mine.

(beat)

You are not my son.

Moses stares stunned as she drifts off to sleep. He considers the Levite cloth in his hand -- not knowing what to make of it -- then pockets it and rejoins Ramesses outside the door.

MOSES

Her mind is troubled...

RAMESESSES

Soon she will be at peace.

Moses nods, appreciates Ramesses's comfort.

MOSES

Thank you, brother.

The men watch the nurses return to attend to Moses's dying mother. Moses's brow darkened with confusion.

CUT TO:

THE LEVITE CLOTH --

held in Moses's hand -- like a crude invitation to something he doesn't understand yet -- he regards it, then looks out on

EXT. BRICKWORKS OF GOSHEN - DAY

Moses sits atop his horse. Overlooks the seemingly endless ACRES OF SLAVES. Laboring like animals in the hot sun below. Subhuman conditions that he has never witnessed first hand --

They chop straw; drop it in the mud pits; work the mud with their feet; scoop the mud into die-casts; bake the casts in the sun; shake the dry bricks from the casts; stack them up.

Moses regards them as if truly seeing their condition for the first time: all beasts of burden, MEN are whipped; WOMEN are shoved; CHILDREN are smacked. Blood mixes with mud and tears.

Moses looks to the splendor of the pyramids and palaces that lie in the distance. Paid for with Hebrew blood. Somewhere, the sound of a BABY's blood-curdling CRY.

CUT TO:

A BRANDING IRON --

red hot from a FIRE PIT, a MEDJAY guard presses it to the skin of a crying INFANT. Flesh sizzling, he pulls it away to reveal the ROYAL CARTOUCHE OF SETI has been burned in.

EXT. BRANDING PIT - BRICKWORKS OF GOSHEN - DAY

Other Medjay pass the screaming child to its sobbing MOTHER -- standing at the head of a line of terrified WOMEN holding NEWBORNS who await a similar fate. Pleading cries of sorrow.

Removed from the action, Moses watches this cruel act.

EXT. BRICKWORKS OF GOSHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Moses walks among the mud pits. Regards the dirt-caked SLAVES. Bone thin. Bodies crossed with scars. Ravaged by rot and skin cancer. Making bricks from mud and straw.

He notices a SLAVE burdened with a back-full of bricks. It's Nun (from Kush). Staggering under their weight, he drops them. An OVERSEER clocks his stumble, marches towards him.

Nun starts to pick up the bricks, but the Overseer begins to mercilessly flagellate him with his bull whip. As if he enjoys beating him...the feeling of power he has over him.

He goes to strike him once more, but his hand is grabbed from behind. The Overseer turns in a rage. Expects to see another slave. Quickly cowers when he realizes it's Moses.

OVERSEER

My apologies, First Son. I didn't realize it was you.

Moses looks at Nun...recognizes him. Considers the bricks strewn on the ground.

MOSES

Pick up those bricks.

Nun quickly complies. Moses narrows his gaze on the Overseer.

MOSES (Cont'd)

I see you beat a man laboring in good faith again, you'll wish you hadn't.

He throws the whip down. Looks to Nun, who instinctively lowers his gaze.

MOSES (Cont'd)

What do you know of this cloth?

He extends the Levite cloth that Bithiah gave him.

NUN
It's the cloth of the Levites.

MOSES
Where do they live?

CUT TO:

A DIAGRAM IN THE SAND --

showcasing the housing arrangements of the 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL relative to the Mud Pits where they work.

DATHAN (O.S.)
Any reasonable man would agree that the Simeons unfairly benefit from their proximity to the work pits.

EXT. MARKET - SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - DAY

A bazaar where HEBREWS of the 12 TRIBES barter their goods. Find arrogant Reubenite DATHAN and brutal Simeon NEPPACH sitting with AARON (32), a sharp-eyed and well-spoken Levite.

DATHAN
My tribe must walk nearly three times as far. The people are depleted before work even begins.

NEPPACH
Did you not choose the location of your dwellings because they receive the most shade during hot season?

DATHAN
This was before Pharaoh relocated the work pits.

AARON
Stop it, both of you. You must each make amends, as walking distance and relief from the sun are both vital to our well-being.

DATHAN
Easy for you, Aaron. Your Levites sit in the middle of Goshen.

AARON
I'll take the matter before the Council and find compromise. Who but I can build a consensus?

Dathan and Neppach consider that a beat, then...

DATHAN
What's in it for you?

Our instincts expect him to exact a price, but...

AARON
The hope that some day I'll see us
as one people, instead of 12 tribes.

EXT. JOCHABED'S MUD HUT - DAY

A hovel of mud, Aaron rounds the corner. Stops dead at the sight of Prince Moses standing in front of his house. He immediately bows his head.

AARON
Praised be the First Son of Egypt.

Moses walks towards Aaron, who keeps his head bowed.

MOSES
Look up. You may look at me.

Aaron lifts his head.

AARON
To what do I owe this pleasure,
First Son?

MOSES
Do you know the woman who lives
in this house? Jochabed? She was
my nurse.

AARON
She is my mother, First Son.
I am Aaron, her middle child.

Moses stares at Aaron, the man's features oddly familiar. Aaron takes note of the scrutiny.

AARON (Cont'd)
You and I played together on rare
occasion as children.

Moses isn't ready to process this.

MOSES
Take me to her.

NEARBY. Two MEDJAY GUARDS stand on a corner, watching with furrowed brows as Aaron leads Moses into the small mud hut. A Prince of Egypt entering a slave hut...they're confused.

INT. JOCHABED'S MUD HUT - CONTINUOUS

Moses enters, taken with its oppressively small size -- three thatch beds; rough-hewn shelves; a table of re-claimed wood. A WOMAN tends a small fire with an iron pot, her back to us.

AARON

Mother, we have a guest...

Jochabed turns. She and Moses share similar features.

JOCHABED

Hello, Moses.

Her familiarity catches him off guard. Two SMALL CHILDREN rush into the room...chased by their mother MIRIAM (34).

MIRIAM

Children, stop running --

She pauses at the sight of Moses.

JOCHABED

You must excuse them, they are --

MOSES

You're Miriam.

She lowers her gaze.

MIRIAM

It's been a long time, First Son.

Moses lifts her chin to see her face.

MOSES

I remember you. You played with dolls while your mother watched me.

MIRIAM

Puppets.

Miriam picks up a crude WOOD PUPPET from a rickety table. Moses takes the toy. Considers this touchstone to his past.

JOCHABED

My sympathies on the Queen's death. We've heard news of her passing.

Moses puts down the puppet.

MOSES

Before she died, she gave me this...

He extends the Levite cloth.

JOCHABED

It's part of the blanket used to wrap our infants. It was used to wrap you, Moses.

MOSES

Pharaoh allowed his son to be wrapped in Hebrew cloth?

JOCHABED

It was before you were his son.

AARON

Mother --

JOCHABED

Bithiah entrusted me with your care when you were just a few weeks old. But it was no coincidence.

The sum of Bithiah and Jochabed's information confirms it...

MOSES

You are my mother.

Jochabed nods. Moses's mind races, but he can only manage...

MOSES (Cont'd)

I don't understand.

JOCHABED

You were born of my womb. Six days after your birth, Pharaoh Seti ordered all newborns killed to keep the Hebrew numbers from swelling...

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The Night of Horrors. MEDJAY sweep the narrow shanty town streets by torch. Busting doors and barging into homes.

JOCHABED (O.S.)

He sent his guards. They stormed our homes.

They seize BABIES from mothers. Roughly stuff them SCREAMING into wool sacks like animals. Knifing protesting PARENTS.

JOCHABED (Cont'd, O.S.)
 Stole the babies from our arms.
 And took them to the river.

EXT. THE NILE RIVER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Medjay ruthlessly throw babies in the flowing waters.
 Systematically killing off an entire generation.

JOCHABED (O.S.)
 Where they drowned them all.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. JOCHABED'S MUD HUT - RESUME

JOCHABED
 All but one.

Moses listens in disbelief. Soul swelling with a potent mix
 of anger and confusion.

FLASH CUT TO:

BABY MOSES --

wrapped in Levite cloth, he's placed in a basket by a younger
 Jochabed. She covers the basket and floats it down river.

JOCHABED (O.S.)
 I took you to the river and put you
 in the hands of the Almighty God.

The basket drifts along, a FIGURE trailing it in the reeds.

JOCHABED (Cont'd, O.S.)
 And Miriam watched Him deliver you
 to Egypt's shores.

EXT. THE NILE RIVER - THE NEXT DAY (FLASHBACK)

MIRIAM (8) watches from the reeds as the basket is retrieved
 by MEMNET -- handmaiden to YOUNG BITHIAH (20s) -- riding on a
 ROYAL BARGE. Bithiah lifts the baby out, immediately bonding.

BITHIAH
 The Gods answer my prayers...

MEMNET
 This is a Levite child. Pharaoh
 ordered them all killed.

BITHIAH

Say nothing of his origins. I will
raise him as my own. As Pharaoh's
First Son.

Bithiah spots Miriam looking on, trembling among the reeds.

BITHIAH (Cont'd)

You there. Do you know this child?
(off Miriam's scared nod)
Fetch his birth mother to be my
nurse. Say nothing to anyone else
and I will let you live.

Miriam scrambles off, Bithiah returning her gaze to the baby.

BITHIAH (Cont'd)

I will call him Moses...child of
the water.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. JOCHABED'S MUD HUT - RESUME

The door is KICKED OPEN, sunlight bursting in as the two
Medjay from the corner urgently enter. Startling all.

MEDJAY

Begging your pardon, First Son, we
thought you were --

Moses realizes they thought he was in trouble.

MOSES

I'm fine. Return to your post.

They get a brief glimpse of the Levite cloth in his hand,
before they bow and exit. Moses looks back to Jochabed...

MOSES (Cont'd)

I...

...but doesn't know what he wants or needs. He abruptly
exits. Aaron shares a concerned look with his mother and
sister -- wondering what this all means for them.

INT. THE SHRINE OF SOKAR - NIGHT

Moses looks up at the IDOLS of the Egyptian Gods -- ominous
golden statues standing as a testament to AMUN, RA, HORUS and
OSIRIS. Cold and lifeless faces staring blankly down at him.

But he hears nothing from them...feels no sense of solace.

RAMESSES (O.S.)

Now you know why they do not speak to you.

Moses startles, turns to see Ramesses.

MOSES

You scared me.

RAMESSES

That's not an easy thing to do.

He sits beside his brother.

RAMESSES

The Medjay told me of your visit to Goshen. I assume what Bithiah told you has been confirmed.

MOSES

It means nothing.

Sensitive territory. Ramesses treads carefully.

RAMESSES

Moses, for 2000 years, Egypt has flourished because its citizens know their Pharaoh to be of the Gods. If the people were to find out your true ancestry while you sat on the throne...it would destroy the Empire.

MOSES

What are you suggesting?

RAMESSES

The same thing you'd suggest to me were I victim of this circumstance.
(compassionately)
When the time comes...you can not be Pharaoh. If the truth comes out, the people will call for your head.

Moses knows it's true. Anger beginning to replace denial.

MOSES

The people mean *nothing*. They do not need to know.

A long beat. Ramesses lets the anger dissipate so cooler heads may prevail.

RAMESSES

Your life need not change. You'll live your days at my side with the pleasures of my kingdom for your taking.

MOSES

Your kingdom.

RAMESSES

Moses: this is good for Egypt -- and good for you.

MOSES

And good for you too...brother.

Moses leaves, his anger momentarily finding a target in Ramesses...however misplaced.

EXT. SHRINE OF SOKAR - NIGHT

Moses walks down the street in a rush. Passes the occasional CITIZEN out on an evening stroll. They bow to him, but he's preoccupied. Ignores them. Quickly rounds a corner.

Stops in the shadows to catch his breath. His eyes haunted by a new world order he's struggling to accept.

INT. BREAD OVENS - STRAW YARD AT GOSHEN - THE NEXT DAY

Hundreds of SLAVES dusted in flour stoke the fires beneath big clay tandoors. OTHER SLAVES load pools of dough onto the clay-tops to rise in the intense heat. Their skin blistered.

Moses wanders down the rows. Seems lost. He scans the filthy faces of slaves...wonders how he could possibly come from this filthy lot. A feeling of self-loathing washing over him.

He goes to take a pull off his WINE BOTA. Suddenly lowers it at the sight of something outside.

IN THE STRAW YARD --

Slave Nun fills a sack from the STRAW PIT. The familiar Overseer CRACKS HIS WHIP on his back for no reason. Buckles Nun to the ground. Just as he'd done in the brickyard.

ON MOSES. His blood boils -- *he warned this man* -- has him crossing out of the ovens into the yard towards the Overseer.

ON THE OVERSEER. Whipping Nun as he tries to gather straw. It's an intolerably cruel sight. One that's hard to watch.

OVERSEER

You move too slow! Faster!

He raises his whip to strike again, when...

MOSES (V.O.)

YOU!

The Overseer turns as Moses PUNCHES him in the throat. Cracks his windpipe. Has him gasping for air. Then bashes him in the face, blood BURSTING from his nose like a blown gasket.

Drops the Overseer dead.

Moses stares expressionless at the body. Looks up at the Hebrews staring at him. At Nun. At a YOUNG SLAVE BOY (JOSHUA) staring terrified at the blood pooling on the ground.

Moses breathes hard, casts another look at the dead body -- *what has he done?* Then unceremoniously turns and walks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROYAL DINING HALL - NIGHT

Seti sits with haunted eyes, eating in foreboding silence at the end of a massive table. Three CONCUBINES wait on him. Unsettled by his bottled rage.

Rameses appears in the doorway. Considers his father.

RAMESSES

Father...

SETI

Have you found him?

Rameses's silence is answer enough. Seti stews a beat.

SETI (Cont'd)

How long have you known?

(off his silence)

How long?

RAMESSES

Only a short while.

SETI

And you thought you'd just keep it a secret? Let the truth of his Hebrew origins drift away as I do?

RAMESSES

I'd hoped to spare you the pain.

From the look on Seti's face, he's hardly been spared. And Ramesses can see it. Hardens his heart.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)
But I will find him. I promise.
Your legacy will not be shamed.

EXT. STREETS OF AVARIS - THE NEXT MORNING

SERIES OF SHOTS: MEDJAY on horseback trumpet the Pharaoh's decree to CITIZENS moving through the chaos of the streets.

MEDJAY
Let it be known that any man
harboring the prince Moses will
pay with their life!

Find Moses hiding in shadows. He looks across the way to see Ramesses entering the ARMORY with two Medjay BODYGUARDS.

INT. ARMORY - AVARIS - MORNING

The two Medjay stand by the door. Ramesses puts on his battle armor. Regards himself in a mirror. Goes to reach for his sword, but it's not there.

RAMESSES
Where is my sword?

No response. He looks to the Medjay. Both lie dead in pools of blood. Throats slit. He nervously scans the space. Suddenly sees Moses's reflection in the mirror. Standing behind him.

MOSES
What did you tell father?

Ramesses turn to meet Moses's gaze directly. Considers *his* blood-streaked sword in Moses's hand.

RAMESSES
I told him the truth.

MOSES
He didn't deserve the truth.

RAMESSES
Neither did you, Moses.

Moses tightens his grip -- knuckles white against the sword's hilt as if set to strike -- then abruptly spikes it into the ground before Ramesses.

MOSES
Dread my return.

Ramesses watches him exit, a relieved sigh escaping his lips.

EXT. WETLANDS - DAY

Rabid DOGS with frothing fangs tug chain leashes held by Medjay. BARKING as they follow a scent.

IN THE REEDS. Moses slithers on his elbows, hidden by the tall grass. The BARKING draws nearer. He peers through the grass, spots a small FISHING CANOE moored just down river.

EXT. BANKS OF THE NILE - MOMENTS LATER

A MEDJAY rides his horse down the banks, a DOG alongside. He scans the river for signs of life...just that canoe. Turns to leave, when the dog starts BARKING. Darts towards the canoe.

The Medjay dismounts, follows the dog.

CLOSER: Moses's royal garb pokes out from the boat cover.

The Medjay pulls his sword and flips back the cover. The boat is EMPTY. He furrows his brow, when suddenly his mouth fills with BLOOD. He slides down dead to reveal

MOSES --

shirtless and covered in mud, he has mercilessly taken the man's life with a dagger. He grabs the horse, when...

HE'S GRAZED BY AN ARROW --

zipping in from behind, it rips his shoulder. He REELS in pain. Sees THREE MEDJAY emerging from a bend in the ravine on horses, riding hard.

Moses staggers, pulls himself onto the dead man's horse. ARROWS just missing as he kicks the horse and CHARGES off.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - MOMENTS LATER

Moses gallops along a narrow rising path. Snaps the arrow in his shoulder off. Glances behind him at two Medjay gaining ground on their horses -- wonders what happened to the third.

He turns around, when suddenly an arrow STREAKS past his nose. Moses looks up to see the third Medjay riding on the HIGH GROUND -- their paths set to CONVERGE in a single lane.

Moses finds himself in a race for pole position, but the high-road Medjay is moving faster, his horse pulling

IN FRONT OF MOSES --

now putting Moses between the rider in front and two behind, the path snakes up...

EXT. NARROW RIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Rock wall on one side and sheer drop on the other, the horses charge perilously along. The lead Medjay THROWS A JAVELIN at Moses. Our hero DUCKS as it slices the air and

HITS A MEDJAY BEHIND HIM --

rider and horse FALLING OFF THE CLIFF into oblivion, the remaining Medjay behind Moses fires an ARROW. Moses veers out of the way in the other direction and it

SKEWERS THE MEDJAY IN FRONT --

impact KNOCKING him from the horse, he FALLS OFF the sheer drop with a SCREAM. But the Medjay charging behind Moses is undeterred, almost upon him...when Moses sees the path

ENDS UP AHEAD --

a jutting cliff edge, the rider behind can't see what awaits. Moses spots a small DOOM PALM jutting over the ridge above.

When his horse gallops under, Moses leaps out of his saddle. Grabs hold of the fibrous palm and clings to the wall. The trailing Medjay passes right beneath him.

Caught by surprise, the Medjay sees the EDGE too late. Pulls up on his reins, the horse DIGGING IN its hooves to a sliding stop...but inertia sends the rider flying off the cliff.

Moses watches the man fall to his death. Then starts to climb his way up the sheer wall of rock.

CUT TO:

THE BODIES OF THE FOUR DEAD MEDJAY --

laid out on the ground, they're naked and awaiting burial.

SETI (O.S.)

The body I want to see isn't here.

EXT. PALACE GROUNDS - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DAY

Seti considers the bodies in a rage, Ramesses at his side.

RAMESSES

It was claimed by the river. It only stands to logic, father --

SETI

DON'T TALK TO ME OF LOGIC! Logic dictated that Moses was my son!

(beat)

Find his concubine. Torture her until she tells us where he is.

RAMESSES

I already have. She knows nothing.

Seti studies Ramesses's face, but it doesn't betray him. He gestures to some SERVANTS standing nearby.

SETI

Leave us.

The SERVANTS leave. Seti starts to peel an orange -- somehow making the act menacing -- as if trying to peel back time.

SETI

Before you were born, I ordered the slaughter of all newborn Hebrew boys. I gather you know that.

RAMESSES

Of course. Accounts of the decree are depicted on the walls of Karnak.

SETI

What do you think it was like to make that decision?

Seti eats a piece of the orange. Waits for his answer.

RAMESSES

Difficult, I imagine.

SETI

I actually didn't think twice about it. And neither would have Moses.

He's intimating that Ramesses is weak by comparison. Ramesses knows it...and doesn't like it.

SETI (Cont'd)

But it seems Moses will not be the one to sit in my place. It will be you. So tell me: how do you expect this will be kept from the people?

RAMESSES

One of these bodies will be put in Moses's sarcophagus and buried in his place.

(MORE)

RAMESSES (Cont'd)

I'll proclaim to the people that
even a prince is not above Egypt's
laws. Life as we know it will go on.
No one will know Moses was Hebrew.

Seti considers that. Finishes chewing his orange.

SETI

So let it be done...*First* Son.

He turns and walks into the palace. With each step away,
Ramesse's pulse races quicker. At the entrance, Seti pauses
and gives Ramesse a last look, then shuts the door.

BLACK OUT.

RE-OPEN ON:

A SANDSTORM --

swirling in a blinding fury, it cloaks the horizon. Out of
it, a SHADOW emerges -- trudging CLOSER...it's Moses.

EXT. SAND DUNE - DESERT OF SINAI - ONE MONTH LATER

Sand coats his body. Hair growing in. A stubbled beard. His
sun-scorched skin appears stretched tight over a body pinched
thin from hunger. His Egyptian clothes worn to mere rags.

He stops. Wrings the last water from his water skin. Looks
at the gaunt battlements of rock rising up in the distance.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - MAGIC HOUR

Moses climbs amid the broken faces of stone -- lips chapped
and feet blistered. Sinks down in exhaustion against a rock.
Feels like he can't go on, when he hears a RINGING TINKLE.

Looks up to see a LAMB on a high rock, metal discs around its
neck RINGING together. It spots Moses, then heads off...like
a guide sent to retrieve him.

EXT. HIGH ROCK - MAGIC HOUR

Moses climbs a rock. Stops at the top. The TINKLING
continues, but oddly...there's no sign of the lamb anywhere.
As if the sound's coming from *above*, Moses looks towards

MOUNT SINAI --

forbidding peaks disappearing into the clouds, there's a
mysterious power in its shadowed crevasses and steep naked
slopes. Moses curiously regards it. Somehow compelled.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF ROCK - DUSK

Moses wanders on. Descends the slope. Bloodshot eyes alight at the sight of A WELL set in the cleft in the cliffs.

SEVEN SISTERS -- ages ranging from 7 to 23 -- water their FLOCK OF SHEEP. Suddenly, the angry SHOUTS of approaching VOICES echo off the rock walls. They look around in fear.

Moses cranes his neck, sees four Amalekite SHEPHERDS -- desert aborigines leading a herd of FERAL GOATS, they carry 8-foot staffs. Advance on the sisters with flared tempers.

SHEPHERD

This is our well! You are not welcome here.

ELDEST SISTER (ZIPPORAH) has guts that betrays her beauty.

ZIPPORAH

It is our well, too. My father is the Priest of Midian and he will thank you with his blessings.

SHEPHERD

The Priest of Midian is nothing more than a cheap magician!

She SMACKS him in the face.

SHEPHERD (Cont'd)

...though it seems his charms did not rub off on you.

He tears her clothes to rape her...

OTHER SISTERS

STOP! LEAVE HER ALONE! HELP!

MOSES (O.S.)

Let her go.

The Shepherds look up to see Moses standing behind them -- sun-parched and bone-thin, he doesn't look like much threat.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Let her go.

The lead Shepherd looks to his cohorts. Shoves Zipporah to the dirt then thrusts his staff at Moses -- who snares it and jams it in the man's FACE, shattering his brow.

Moses expertly spins the staff and whirls on the three other Shepherds -- drops one with an UPSWING, the second with a driven BUTT SMASH. The wrath of a gifted warrior on display.

The third Shepherd meekly raises his hands in surrender.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Go tell every man in the land that
these women may drink of this well.

The man runs off. Moses turns back to Zipporah, who stares astonished -- he's unlike any man she's ever seen.

EXT. VILLAGE OF MIDIAN - EVENING

A loose tangle of tents and huts home to Bedouin HERDSMEN and their FAMILIES. All stop what they're doing to curiously eye Moses being led through the village by the sisters.

He looks far out-of-place among these slump shouldered nomads. Up ahead, Zipporah emerges from a TENT.

ZIPPORAH

My father welcomes you.

INT. JETHRO'S TENT - EVENING

Moses enters. His eyes adjust to the darkness, SMOKE wafting from a HOOKAH in the corner. Obscuring a MAN in silhouette.

MAN

I owe you a great debt. As do the
people of our village.

Moses squints into the darkness.

MOSES

Who are you?

MAN

I am Jethro.

A FLAME sparks the hookah, alights the face of JETHRO as he inhales -- an aging Bedouin, his leathery skin is off-set by blue eyes. Makes him appear ominous.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - MIDIAN - NIGHT

A heathen prayer ritual. WOMEN dance to music played by men on DRUMS and ZITHER. Others SPEAK IN TONGUES. Jethro sits with Moses, who looks lost and uncomfortable in this setting.

JETHRO

Its not every day we get an
Egyptian this far from the kingdom.
Did you wander from your patrol?

MOSES

I'm not an Egyptian.

JETHRO

Yet you wear the clothes of one.

Moses knows it doesn't make sense.

JETHRO (Cont'd)

If you don't tell me who you are,
how am I to offer proper thanks?

MOSES

I don't know who I am. Only who I
was.

JETHRO

So you are a stranger even to
yourself. That can have its worth.

MOSES

To who?

JETHRO

To others, of course.

(off his look)

The only value to one's identity
is the purpose that comes with it.
Were it not for you, my daughter
might have been killed.

Moses sees Zipporah cleaning up the dinner plates of some
village ELDERS. She glances at him, then looks away.

MOSES

I did what any man would.

Jethro's not so sure of that.

JETHRO

We could use a man like you here.
The Amalekites regularly steal
from our flocks.

MOSES

I'm not a shepherd.

JETHRO

I thought you said you did not know who you were.

MOSES

Well I know who I'm not.

JETHRO

I see. Where will you go then?

MOSES

I don't know that either.

JETHRO

The Wilderness of Sin stretches for hundreds of miles. There is nothing.

Jethro clocks Moses watching Zipporah.

JETHRO (Cont'd)

A man should trust his instincts. Mine tell me that you should stay.

EXT. SHEEP PEN - MIDIAN - DAWN

Sheep mill about, braying loudly. Moses sleeps on the ground in their midst. Stirs awake. Stares at the miserable animals with contempt. One nudges him and he roughly pushes it.

He sits up. Looks to the sleeping village. The desolate location. It's all foreign. Wonders: *why am I here?* But he can't ponder that in peace, as the sheep keep on BRAYING.

He figures if he feeds them, maybe they'll shut up. Grabs a handful of what appears to be hay from the other side of the pen. Tosses it at the sheep. They don't budge.

MOSES

Eat. Shut up and eat.

ZIPPORAH (O.S.)

They eat hay.

He turns to see Zipporah watching him from the nearby.

MOSES

What is this?

ZIPPORAH

Stinkweed.

Moses sniffs the rancid straw...disgusting. Zipporah smiles.

EXT. FOOTHILLS OF SINAI - DUSK

Moses walks among the flock as reluctant shepherd, struggling to keep the herd together. The sheep stray in all directions, forcing Moses to chase after them.

He doesn't see Zipporah round the corner carrying a basket of figs. She shrinks back, watches amused as Moses tries to wrangle the animals.

EXT. COMMUNAL KITCHEN - MIDIAN - DAY

Moses waits in line for food amid the VILLAGERS, the meal served by some ELDER WOMEN. He's never waited for anything in his life...but he tries to be patient.

INT. IRON FORGE - MIDIAN - DAY

A shirtless Moses works alongside some MEN of the village, SPARKS flying up as he hammers a horse shoe. He dunks it in a bucket of water. Looks up to see Zipporah outside.

She hangs wet laundry on a drying line, meets Moses's gaze.

EXT. OASIS - MIDIAN - DAY

Moses waters the flock at the well, when Zipporah approaches.

ZIPPORAH

They follow you as if they always had.

MOSES

Only because I stopped feeding them stinkweed.

ZIPPORAH

They trust you now. They follow you because you respect their needs.

Just then, some AMALEKITE SHEPHERDS approach with their goats. They see Moses, turn and walk away.

ZIPPORAH (Cont'd)

How did you learn to fight? Were you a soldier?

MOSES

I was a general. For Pharaoh.

ZIPPORAH

You are a son of Seti?

MOSES

I was once.
 (off her look, beat)
 But I was born a Hebrew.

EXT. BASE OF SINAI - MAGIC HOUR

Moses and Zipporah sit on a boulder in silence for a long moment, the lambs grazing in the surrounding scrub-grass. He has just recounted her his story.

ZIPPORAH

If I did not sense your heart to be true, I would not believe all that you've told me.

MOSES

I hardly believe it myself.

ZIPPORAH

Think of the fate you avoided. The life of labor you might have led.

MOSES

Perhaps that is the life I should have led. At least it would not have been a lie.

ZIPPORAH

It seems that is not the life The Almighty had planned for you.

Moses furrows his brow at that, recalling something.

MOSES

My birth mother made mention of Him. He is the Hebrew God?

ZIPPORAH

He is the God for all people.
 (off Moses's look)
 Come. I'll show you.

INT. TURQUOISE MINE - MIDIAN - MAGIC HOUR

Moses follows Zipporah down a dark cavern, crystals of turquoise shimmering in the torchlight.

ZIPPORAH

I used to come here as a child when I needed to be alone.

MOSES

What is this place?

ZIPPORAH

A prayer refuge to the Almighty.

She raises her torch over CAVE DRAWINGS carved in the wall -- an IMAGE OF SLAVES with their hands raised in worship to the sky, praying prostrate before some unseen force.

ZIPPORAH (Cont'd)

Generations of Hebrews worked these mines until drought forced them to flee to Egypt. If they only knew what awaited.

MOSES

After 400 years of bondage, perhaps they might have better luck with another God.

ZIPPORAH

There is no other God.

MOSES

Yet He has no likeness. They pray to something that can't be seen.

Moses gestures to the faithful BELIEVERS in the etchings -- their is no symbol, idol or representation of God.

ZIPPORAH

Just because one cannot see something, it does not mean it doesn't exist.

Moses meets her gaze.

EXT. BASE OF SINAI - NIGHT

Moses and Zipporah make love at the base of the mountain. She treats him tenderly, and he responds in kind.

WIDER: two souls entwined beneath the celestial canopy, the mountaintop seems to glow. As if noting their act of love.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHAMBER OF PURIFICATION - EGYPTIAN TEMPLE - NIGHT

Seti's DEAD BODY lies on an embalming table. Vizier Balaam looms over the body wearing the creepy MASK OF ANUBIS, God of Death. He CUTS into the torso with a knife.

SERIES OF SHOTS: ORGANS are removed and placed in jars; the body doused in NATRON POWDER; GLASS EYES fitted into sockets; linen strips mummify the body, AMULETS placed between layers.

Seti's lips being the only part uncovered, Balaam inserts a HOOKED ADZE into Seti's mouth and TWISTS it -- CRACKS the jawbone, leaving the mouth open for eternity. Steps back.

BALAAM

It is finished...Pharaoh.

Ramesses stares at his father's embalmed body -- sadness cut by the thrill of the throne he now holds.

EXT. BORDER POST - BANKS OF THE NILE - DAWN

An abandoned sentry post beside a crumbling wooden bridge, the thatch hut CREAKS in the wind. Pharaoh Ramesses rides up on horseback with a few MEDJAY bodyguards. Dismounts.

INT. BORDER POST - BANKS OF THE NILE - SAME

Nefertiri sits in hiding. Ramesses enters.

RAMESSES

It is over.

She sees he wears the Pharaoh's garments. Bows nervously.

NEFERTIRI

Praise to you, Great Egypt.

Ramesses reaches out. Lifts her face to meet his eyes.

RAMESSES

You will return to Egypt as Queen.

NEFERTIRI

As you wish, Great Egypt.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOSES'S TENT - MIDIAN - MORNING

Five years have passed. A long-haired and scruffy-bearded Moses holds his sleeping infant son ELIEZER. He watches his son GERSHOM (4) playing with the flocks nearby.

Moses cracks a smile, looks complacent -- the warrior has been tamed. Domesticated. Just then, a HORSE FLY bites the back of his hand. He abruptly smacks it dead.

He looks at the dead insect on the back of his hand, but that's not what has his attention -- it's the Eye of Horus brand framing the bug that holds his gaze.

A reminder of the man he was. The fighter. Its memory faded by time. His gaze lingers on it. The life it represents a far cry from the humble life he leads now.

ZIPPORAH (O.S.)

I'll trade you.

He turns to see Zipporah walk up from the adjacent stream. Hands him a water skin in exchange Eliezer.

MOSES

He sleeps peacefully.

ZIPPORAH

We're fortunate given his father's fitful spirit.

Moses cracks a smile at that. That's true.

MOSES

Seti used to say men of war are born restless. That one could tell the children who would grow to be great warriors by the manner in which they slept. So the soldiers of his armies were chosen while still in their infancy.

Beat.

ZIPPORAH

You miss it, don't you? Leading men in battle.

MOSES

It was all I ever knew.

ZIPPORAH

Well, you're a lucky man then.
(off his look)
Now you know something else.

She's referring to their life. Their children. Kisses him.

ZIPPORAH (Cont'd)

Come back to us soon.

MOSES

I'll only be a few days.

He prompts the sheep off towards the mountain. Zipporah watches him go -- perhaps sensing that something is at hand.

EXT. HILLS OF MOUNT HOREB - DAY

Moses leads his flock of sheep up past the mountain, the air growing colder. He notices a STORM SYSTEM gathering.

EXT. BASE OF MOUNT HOREB - DAY

A MEDJAY on horseback reads from a scroll to some BEDOUINS.

MEDJAY

...any settlements within the
Empire must be visited by a soldier
of Egypt, named and recorded.

Nearby, Moses walks closer. Listens to the Medjay.

MEDJAY (Cont'd)

Failure to register said settlement
will result in the immediate
seizure of its assets. So written
by Pharaoh Ramesses II.

The Bedouins grouse as the Medjay rolls up the scroll.

Moses just stares. Frozen. *Pharaoh Ramesses II.*

EXT. RIDGE - MOUNT HOREB - LATER

SNOW falls in hypnotic silence. Moses sits on a ridge above his flock. He rubs at the Eye of Horus on his hand, as if trying to rub it away. But it's still there. Staring at him.

Moses angrily looks away. Sees the awesome physical power of nearby Mount Sinai before him. Storm clouds rolling in the sky above it. Something this way comes.

It's a sight of incredible beauty...but he can't appreciate it. He's too busy seething. A rage flaring in his soul.

Just then, he hears something: THE CRACKLING OF A FIRE. Lowly at first. It builds into a soothing white noise. Moses scans the ridge for the strange sound's origin, eyes spotting...

A CLUSTER OF FLAMING BRAMBLE --

The Burning Bush. Mellow fire stems from a golden core in a corona of spectrum rays. Mantling the bush in a miraculous aura that burns the brambles without consuming it.

Its CRACKLING tender as a flowing brook, Moses stares in awe. As if transported beyond any reality he's ever known, his eyes taking in what no man has ever seen before.

Suddenly, he looks around as though he just heard a VOICE call his name. But sees no one. Looks back to the bush -- **clearly hearing something we can not.**

His brow furrowed in confusion...some realization dawns on him. He stares transfixed at the bush. And then...

MOSES

I am here.

...CAMERA SLOWLY RETREATS from Moses standing silhouetted before this supernatural wonder. Watching from behind as he slowly removes his shoes, then gently drops to his knees.

EXT. JETHRO'S TENT - MIDIAN - NIGHT

Zipporah and Gershom make play of watching baby Eliezer. Look up to see Moses approaching. As if he's seen a ghost.

ZIPPORAH

Moses...what is it?

Moses stares stunned, hardly able to speak.

MOSES

I've been called back to Egypt.

ZIPPORAH

By who?

That question gives him pause -- uneasy with the answer.

INT. JETHRO'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER

A glassy-eyed Jethro smokes his hookah.

JETHRO

The Almighty God.

Moses sits across from him, clearly confused.

MOSES

He spoke to me.

(off his look)

Believe me, I know how it sounds.

Jethro glances to Zipporah seated nearby.

ZIPPORAH

Moses, what did He ask you to do back in Egypt?

MOSES

He didn't *ask* anything. He...He told me. He demanded it.

ZIPPORAH

Demanded what?

MOSES

He told me to free the Hebrews.

Jethro and Zipporah trade looks -- that sounds even crazier.

JETHRO

Look...I was a carpenter before I felt God call me to the priesthood, so I understand --

MOSES

You're not listening to what I'm saying. This wasn't a feeling. It's what I heard. He *spoke* to me.

CUT TO:

EXT. SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - EGYPT - PRE-DAWN

The tangle of mud huts glows in the last of the moonlight.

INT. AARON'S MUD HUT - GOSHEN - EGYPT - DAWN

Aaron sleeps, a fire burnt to embers glowing in the hearth. Somewhere, a SQUAWK, Aaron opens his eyes to see a familiar

SPARROW HAWK --

the bird from the opening, it stands outside the door. Aaron leans for a closer look, but the bird flies off. He watches it soar over Goshen, just as the SUN breaks the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE OF MIDIAN - DAYBREAK

Moses readies a horse for travel. Rigs it with saddle bags and filled water bodas. Zipporah approaches. Tentative.

MOSES

Are the children ready?

ZIPPORAH

Moses --

MOSES

If we leave now, we'll have a
full day's sun --

ZIPPORAH

Moses, we need to talk.

He stops saddling the horse, looks at her.

ZIPPORAH (Cont'd)

I don't doubt you had an experience
on the mountain. You say you heard
God, I believe you as my husband.
But I can't help but wonder: why
would God choose you? You're not a
priest. You never believed in God.

MOSES

Apparently, He believes in me.

ZIPPORAH

But the Hebrews need to believe
in you. How will they accept you?
You yourself have told me that
despite your birth, you feel no
part or connection to them --

MOSES

I know what I've said.

ZIPPORAH

Then help me understand. You know
the danger that awaits there.

MOSES

Listen to me: the man I was raised
to be may have led me here. But I
think the man I am meant to be is
the one who goes back.

ZIPPORAH

It's not just you who goes back.

Zipporah looks at the children.

MOSES

My brother and sister have children,
too. How can we stand by and lean on
our own freedom, when others will
grow up with no hope for it?

She holds his gaze. Knows he's right despite the difficulty
that lies ahead.

EXT. DESERT OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE - MORNING

Moses walks with a shepherd's staff, leading Zipporah and the children atop the horse. Zipporah looks back to see Jethro at the edge of the village. He waves goodbye to her. Troubled.

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

A.) Moses and his family crest a MOUNTAIN PASS;

B.) They trod through a LUSH VALLEY;

C.) ON THE NILE. A FISHERMAN pushes his flatboat through the Delta shallows with a long pole. Zipporah and the children sleep, but Moses cannot -- kept awake with what's to come.

D.) AVARIS FROM AFAR. Bigger than when Moses left, it rises like a paradise in the desert. Gold-painted porticos reflect light over orchards, temples, villas, grain silos and ports.

E.) AT A PORT. Egyptian NAVAL SHIPS and TRADING VESSELS crowd the harbor. Moses and his family walk through the swarm of activity whirling around them.

F.) AT THE BAZAAR. TRADERS hawk MONKEYS, GIRAFFE SKINS, TUSKS, JEWELRY and SILKS. Moses leads his family down the street. Zipporah awed by the abundance of FRUITS and SPICES.

ZIPPORAH

They want for nothing.

Moses's doesn't answer. His gaze settling on a STATUE OF RAMESSES being built by Hebrew Slaves. 40 feet tall. Grand. Moses's face tightens in defiance at the sight of it.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. ROAD TO GOSHEN - MORNING

The glory of Avaris looming behind, Moses and his travel-weary family walk the canal road toward THE GATES OF GOSHEN -- barriers to freedom, they hinge on massive fortified walls.

ARCHERS roam turrets above MEDJAY patrolling the perimeter.

EXT. SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - MORNING

A slum of open fires and adjoining roofs. Mobs of rail-thin SLAVES cram the squalor. They eyeball Moses and his family as they take in the miserably oppressive conditions --

WOMEN wash clothes in dirty water; vacant-eyed KIDS mutely grind flour; half-dead MEN return from tortuous work details.

EXT. JOCHABED'S MUD HUT - GOSHEN - MORNING

Moses KNOCKS. The door opens to reveal Miriam -- six years older, she looks worse for wear. Stares incredulously...

MIRIAM

Moses...

She pulls him into a hug, lifts her eyes to see Zipporah.

MOSES

We need shelter.

MIRIAM

Come in, quickly.

He gestures to Zipporah and the kids.

MOSES

This is my family.

Miriam gives Zipporah a protective once over -- *who is this Bedouin girl?* -- as she lets them all inside. Shuts the door.

INT. JOCHABED'S MUD HUT - MORNING

Miriam breaks bread, warily eyeing Zipporah as she breast-feeds Eliezer. Moses changes behind a thatch screen.

MIRIAM

The Egyptians said you were dead.

MOSES (O.S.)

I'm sure they had to save face.

MIRIAM

They even scrubbed your name from the walls at Karnak...as though you never existed.

Moses steps out from behind the screen in a Levite robe.

MOSES

They're going to prefer I didn't.

EXT. JOCHABED'S MUD HUT - MOMENTS LATER

Moses walks out with Miriam. Looks at the roads stretching away from Goshen.

MIRIAM

What are you going to do?

MOSES

I need to speak with Aaron. Which road leads to the pits?

MIRIAM

He doesn't work the brickyard. He's now an emissary to Pharaoh's court.

Moses contemplates the worth of that news.

MOSES

That is good.

MIRIAM

You'd think, but it's as hard to build consensus among our tribes as it is to curry the favor of the Egyptians.

MOSES

And what of our Mother?

MIRIAM

She died shortly after you left. I think...I think your departure was too much for her to bare.

That gives Moses pause. Pains him. More than he'd expect.

MOSES

I'm sorry. I wish I could have known her as you did.

MIRIAM

That was never an option.

MOSES

When we leave, we'll give her a proper burial.

Moses walks off down the road, leaves a confused Miriam.

MIRIAM

Leave where?

EXT. GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DAY

The architectural centerpiece of the ancient world. It towers over the city. Statues of Ramesses line the facade.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I beg of you. Look into your heart and have mercy.

INT. ROYAL THRONE ROOM - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - SAME

The pillared court of Pharaoh. Mosaics of Ramesses in battle dot the floor. A line of CRIMINAL PETITIONERS snake through the crowd of NOBLES and MEDJAY.

ON AARON. Now diplomat of the Twelve Tribes, he speaks on behalf of a shackled SLAVE.

AARON

This man is a skilled stonecutter,
Great Egypt. Your colossus will
require his etching. There are few
with his artistry.

PHARAOH RAMESSES sits atop his throne in a gold pectoral and the two crowns of Egypt. The power of his station on full display. He slouches with cool detachment.

RAMESSES

Yet he applies it as a vandal to
my temples. Does he think I will
not punish him?

AARON

Please. May I suggest his rations
be reduced and --

RAMESSES

Remove his fingernails.

As OVERSEERS roughly force the Slave out, Ramesses rises...

RAMESSES (Cont'd)

That is all for today.

...walks over to Nefertiri seated on the Queen's throne. Takes her hand to leave, when Balaam steps up. Whispers.

BALAAM

There is one other you should hear.

RAMESSES

Hear it on my behalf.

BALAAM

He says his name is Moses.

Ramesses glares at Balaam, who says nothing more out of fear. Then turns and scans the crowd. Walks down a few steps.

RAMESSES

Who among you calls himself Moses?

The NOBLES titter at the name's mention. Lykkis and Aaron among them. Nefertiri subtly cranes her neck.

ON SOME PETITIONERS. Moses steps out from among them.

MOSES

The one who is Moses.

RAMESSES

Come closer so I may see.

Moses steps closer. Ramesses takes in his long hair and beard. His sun-parched skin and ratty robe.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)

The Moses I know is dead.

Moses looks up to meet his eyes.

MOSES

You were misled, Ramesses.

The sight of Moses's face strikes Ramesses like a lightning bolt. A MEDJAY approaches Moses with a stick.

MEDJAY

You will address him as Great Egypt!

He swings the stick at Moses, who catches it in hand before it strikes. Yanks it from the Medjay's grip. Ramesses covers.

RAMESSES

Why brother...it is you.

ON AARON. Shocked to see Moses. He shifts uneasily.

MOSES

I'm not your brother. I am the son of Amram and Jochabed, the Levites.

The gathering MURMURS at that, embarrassing Ramesses.

RAMESSES

What lie is this?

MOSES

You know it's true. You told it to Seti before he ordered my death.

Ramesses notes the crowd's interest is piqued. Stews. Steps closer to Moses and tersely whispers.

RAMESSES

What happened to you, Moses? Did you lose your mind in the desert? If it's pardon you seek, you've certainly chosen a poor tact.

MOSES

I do not seek pardon.

RAMESSES

You return to lay claim to the throne that escaped you then.

MOSES

I bring you word from the One and Only God.

RamesSES knows the gallery has heard Moses. Prompts him to make a point of being heard more loudly himself.

RAMESSES

The One and Only God? To which of our deities have you bestowed that honor...Amun, Ra...? The other Gods will be jealous.

LAUGHTER from the court. Moses sees Aaron, but he looks away.

MOSES

He's not a god of Egypt. He is The Almighty.

RAMESSES

The Almighty?
(plays to the Court)
Moses, do you think the rest of us unschooled in history? Tutankhamen did away with the belief in one God generations ago.

MOSES

I do not speak of The Aten.

RAMESSES

Oh. Then pray tell, what is *this* "one god's" name?

MOSES

He has no name. Nor can His image be captured.

RAMESSES

Then how do you prove his existence?

MOSES
 With proof of His power.
 (beat, then)
 Aaron, cast down your staff.

Aaron hesitates, doesn't want to be involved.

AARON
 Great Egypt, I do not know what --

RAMESSES
 Go ahead. Indulge him.

Aaron feels the weight of the room on him, is embarrassed.

AARON
 Of course, Great Egypt.

Torn between Moses and his public standing, he throws the staff to the ground. The gallery stares at it...

...but nothing happens. Aaron suffers the humiliation of both himself and his brother, when...

THE STAFF TURNS INTO A COBRA --

rearing with distended hood, the gathering reels. But Ramesses is unmoved, locks eyes with Moses.

RAMESSES
 I ask for a God and you give me a magic trick.

Ramesses grabs Balaam's staff, casts it at Moses's feet -- instantly turns it into an ASP.

The people APPLAUD.

But Moses just stares at the cobra -- which suddenly STRIKES the asp and rips its head off. The gallery GASPS as Moses grabs the cobra, turns it back into a staff.

MOSES
 God sends a message...

RAMESSES
 That's enough --

MOSES
 Let the Hebrews go.

Something stirs in Aaron at that command. Ramesses seethes.

RAMESSES

The Hebrew slaves belong to me.

MOSES

Heed this request or Egypt will
suffer a pain you've never seen.

Ramesse's rage threatens to break his cool facade. Has him
stepping close enough so only Moses can hear him.

RAMESSES

How dare you come here like this.
I offered you a place at my side
and now you come to embarrass me?
I could take your head.

MOSES

If you think that's wisest.

Ramesse stares at him. Knows Moses is testing his judgment.

AARON

If I may, Great Egypt. If Moses
wishes to live as a Hebrew, put
him in my custody. I'll see that
he works the pits of Goshen. He
can learn our ways and witness your
gracious treatment of our people.

Ramesse looks to the crowd, still marveling over the dead
asp. Looks to Nefertiri, clocks her concern. Aaron waiting
with baited breath for Pharaoh's answer, before...

RAMESSES

Very well. Let it be done.

Ramesse casts a last look at Moses, then quickly exits.

EXT. PALACE GROUNDS - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DUSK

Aaron walks in a worried rush, Moses trailing behind him.

MOSES

Aaron, wait --

AARON

Have you lost your mind? What
happened to you in the desert?

MOSES

He spoke to me, Aaron.

Aaron stops and wheels on him, thinks this is outrageous.

AARON
God spoke to you. *God*.

MOSES
I know how it seems --

AARON
God or no God, you can't just walk into the Great House and make demands! Relations between the Hebrews and Ramesses are delicate, but they are *improving*.

MOSES
I can handle Ramesses.

AARON
Ramesses is only half your problem.

INT. BALCONY - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DUSK

Ramesses stands looking out on the shimmering Nile. Nefertiri appears behind him, but he does not turn.

RAMESSES
Did you know he was alive? Did he contact you?

NEFERTIRI
No.

Ramesses turns and studies her face. Sees she's sincere.

RAMESSES
The Gods test me.

NEFERTIRI
That is what Gods do. But Moses is no match for you. He comes in the name of a God that does not exist, on behalf of a cause that's as absurd as his appearance.

Ramesses knows that's true. Gets to what truly bothers him.

RAMESSES
He should've come to me in *private*.

NEFERTIRI
Moses is a man who has laid waste to armies. Subtlety has never been one of his defining qualities.

RAMESSES

You think it was a mistake to let him return to the Hebrews?

(off her look)

He was once my brother.

NEFERTIRI

I remember. Too much perhaps. The unrest left in his wake. The pain he caused your father...and you.

RAMESSES

Our kingdom has changed. Where Seti destroyed, I build. Where he had war, I have peace. Killing Moses would only legitimize him in the eyes of people who once loved him.

NEFERTIRI

My opinion is no matter. But Moses is a dangerous man.

RAMESSES

And the leaders of the 12 tribes are dangerous, too. They are well-kept and won't take kindly to an outsider meddling in their affairs.

CUT TO:

TWELVE MEN --

crossing the dusty sand at sunset, they walk single-file over

EXT. DESERT OUTSIDE GOSHEN - MAGIC HOUR

Sun dipping below the horizon, the MOON rises in its place, hanging over an INCREDIBLE ROCK FORMATION -- a tomb cut into it, it's so discretely-designed, it practically disappears.

This is the Tomb of Joseph.

INT. TOMB OF JOSEPH - SAME

Moses kneels in prayer before the STONE COFFIN of Joseph. Aaron enters with the LEADERS OF THE TWELVE TRIBES -- men with political currency, they carry themselves as such.

They stop at the sight of Moses kneeling with his back to them. Wait for him to turn and greet them, but he doesn't. Familiar Reubenite Dathan looks quizzically to Aaron, then...

DATHAN

Stand before the Tribes of Israel.

Moses rises, turns to meet their gaze. Is a full-head taller than the stoop-shouldered bunch. All at least a decade older.

DATHAN (Cont'd)

I am Dathan of the tribe Reuben.
I speak for the Council of Elders.
Your presence causes confusion
among our people, yet your brother
says you talk of freedom with the
conviction of a liberator. Can you
deliver on your words?

Moses scans the faces of these men: they are far cry from the battle-hardened soldiers he once commanded.

MOSES

I have never known defeat. Though
this battle...it will test every
last nerve in your bodies.

Dathan looks to the others, full of himself.

DATHAN

I knew it. Did I not tell you?
(to Moses)
You've assembled an army. They lay
in wait of your command to claim
Egypt for yourself.

MOSES

No.

Dathan shares a dubious look with CORE (of the Levite tribe).

CORE

So you will train us as a militia?

MOSES

No. But you will need to think as
soldiers if you are to fight for
your freedom.

CORE

Freedom where? In Goshen? Pharaoh
will never allow it.

MOSES

We will leave Egypt. God asks that
I lead you to our Promised Land. A
Land of Milk & Honey.

YIGAL (of the tribe Issacher) can't hide his hopeful interest.

YIGAL

And where is such a place?

MOSES

He has not revealed that to me yet.

Dathan and Core take advantage of the uncertainty, play to the other leaders.

CORE

This is nonsense. We are the leaders of the Twelve Tribes. He is a stranger. We have no reason to trust him.

DATHAN

Forget *him*, why should we have faith in a God who has let us suffer in bondage for 400 years?

MOSES

Trust and faith are not the same thing. Your trust I must earn, but your faith: God demands.

His conviction is chilling. Momentarily silences them.

MOSES (Cont'd)

The Almighty has told me He has seen your suffering. And He will release you from bondage.

The oldest among them -- HAKKABUK (of the tribe Judah) -- seizes on those words. Beckons to the others.

HAKKABUK

Those are the words of the prophecy. The words that Joseph said would one day reveal our liberator.

A few of the leaders are taken with that. Nod along.

DATHAN

Those words are widely known. Any man could say them. He's telling you what you want to hear.

MOSES

You call me a liar then?

DATHAN

You say you speak for The Almighty, but offer nothing but an age-old adage as proof.

(MORE)

DATHAN (Cont'd)

You are no more the redeemer than
any one of us.

(to the others)

Come, brothers. Let us not waste
more of our time.

Dathan and Core start to leave, the other leaders following.
Aaron's unsure whether to stay or follow, when...

MOSES

You are correct.

The leaders slow their retreat. Look back to him.

MOSES (Cont'd)

I am no more a man than any one
of you. Blood courses my veins
just as it does yours.

Moses tucks his hand into his robe, presses it to his chest.

MOSES (Cont'd)

And as you do, I have questions.
Doubts...just as God said that
you would.

Moses removes his hand to reveal his skin white with LEPROSY.
Hideous lesions and pustules...the assembly is awestruck.

MOSES (Cont'd)

So He told me to show you this.

He dips his hand back into his shirt, removes it again --
his skin returned to normal. Familiar Neppach (of the tribe
Simeon) verbalizing the reverence felt by a few others.

NEPPACH

Praise be to the Almighty...

The leaders of a few of the tribes follow suit, but the
others stare skeptically. None more so than Dathan and Core.

CORE

That is the same magic you showed
Ramesses.

MOSES

Is freedom so far from your heart
that it no longer makes it beat?
What of the hope that your children
will grow up in a land where they
are not whipped? A *Promised Land*.

The men trade looks with one another...a small spark ignited.

ON AARON. Something akin to jealousy awash in his features, Moses clocks it. Will need to handle him with special care.

CUT TO:

THE MOON --

obscured by CLOUDS, it's fully cloaked for but a dull glow.

EXT. BANKS OF THE NILE - NIGHT

Moses sits on the riverbank. Watches the clouds pass to reveal a CRIMSON MOON. Casts the river in a HUE OF RED. The image lodges in Moses's mind. Aaron approaches from behind.

MOSES

What did they say?

AARON

Some are willing to follow your lead. Others are conflicted.

MOSES

And you?

Aaron doesn't immediately answer, Moses studying his face.

AARON

Moses, you don't understand the position this puts me in.

MOSES

My intention is not undermine the hard work you've done, brother.

AARON

Brother.

MOSES

You question my sincerity?

AARON

You call me brother, but for years I was one of the dogs you spit on.

MOSES

That was never me.

AARON

Nor was it you beside me in the mud pits. Or you looking after the family when father died. But now you return and expect I listen to you alone?

(MORE)

AARON (Cont'd)

I'm the elected diplomat of the Twelve Tribes! Any message brought before Pharaoh must be vetted and negotiated with the Council of Elders. The tribes do nothing without consensus.

MOSES

Winning a war isn't about building a consensus.

Aaron blinks at him, stopped cold.

AARON

That's what you think this is: a war? Where are the battlefields? Where are our weapons?

MOSES

Come.

Moses abruptly turns and walks away.

AARON

Where are you going?

MOSES

To show you the battlefield.

EXT. PORT - THE NILE RIVER - THE NEXT MORNING

Storm clouds roll in. Moses and Aaron pass MERCHANTS unloading fresh fruit, vegetables and livestock off ships.

EXT. ROYAL BATH - BANKS OF THE NILE - SAME

A grotto bath. CONCUBINES bathe Ramesses. He signals them to stop as a TEEN GIRL is presented to him by her MOTHER -- who removes her scared Daughter's robe so Ramesses may see.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - BANKS OF THE NILE - MORNING

Moses and Aaron fight the storm winds. Walking along a red clay path. The river CRESTS the bulkhead, spraying them.

EXT. ROYAL BATH - RESUME

Ramesses lasciviously watches his Concubines bathe the Girl.

EXT. THE NILE RIVER - MORNING

Moses wades into the water. Aaron standing unmoved.

AARON
What are you doing?

Moses extends his STAFF to Aaron.

MOSES
This is your weapon.

Aaron reluctantly takes the staff. Sees MEDJAY guarding the NEARBY INLET where Ramesses and the Concubine bathe.

MOSES (Cont'd)
Strike first in our war.

IN THE ROYAL BATHS. Ramesses has sex with the Girl in the blue waters, eyes closed in pleasure...her's closed in pain.

BACK ON MOSES & AARON. Aaron hesitates with the staff.

AARON
I don't understand what you're asking me to do.

MOSES
Touch the staff to the water. Let God show you His power.

To wit, Aaron tentatively touches the butt of the staff to the river water, prompting a sudden

VIOLENT EXPLOSION OF THICK RED BLOOD --

from the point of impact upwards, it cascades down on Moses and Aaron. Then ripples out in all directions as

THE RIVER TURNS TO BLOOD.

Moses stands covered in sickening gore, a warrior galvanized by the power he now wields. Turns to meet Aaron's gaze.

MOSES (Cont'd)
Do you see now?

Blood-soaked Aaron trembles at the vision before him. Chilled by God's power. He sees.

EXT. ROYAL BATH - RESUME

As Ramesses reaches climax, his eyes open. Sees the WATER RED WITH BLOOD -- swashing thick and viscid, Ramesses reels in horror, the Girl's eyes startling open with a SCREAM.

AUDIO MATCH TO:

A BLEATING FLOCK OF SHEEP --

charging en masse, their wool coats dyed red as they SCREAM in terror from a bloody watering hole. SHEPHERDS drop their staffs and run away, WIPING FRAME and triggering...

A HELL-SCAPE'S SERIES OF SHOTS:

A.) FISH float dead atop the red river surface, FISHERMEN pulling nets of DEAD FISH out of the water.

B.) Blood flows down the streets of Avaris, a DOG WHINING desperately for help as he drowns in the rising tide.

C.) CHILDREN splashing in a FOUNTAIN suddenly stop and SCREAM in horror as the water turns to BLOOD.

D.) HEBREW SLAVES working bloody-mud pits drink from water skins, then spit out the contents. Mouths red with BLOOD.

E.) A WAB PRIEST emerges from a TEMPLE, face falling as he sees that all the SACRED LAKES have turned to blood.

F.) A mob of ANGRY EGYPTIANS stand desperately outside a tall water silo guarded by several MEDJAY. A riot brewing.

RANDOM EGYPTIANS

We need water! The river is
poisoned! Open the water tower!

MEDJAY

Get *back!*

The mob charges the water silo, overrunning the Medjay. They climb the silo sides, their weight sending the silo CRASHING to the ground -- THICK BLOOD spilling onto the street as we

BLACK OUT.

REOPEN ON:

A SHAFT OF LIGHT creeps across the floor as a DOOR opens. A woman's figure slowly steps into the light...it's Miriam.

MIRIAM

Aaron?

INT. AARON'S MUD HUT - GOSHEN - MAGIC HOUR

The room cloaked in shadow, there's no sound but a man's breathing. She peers into the murky darkness...

MIRIAM

Are you in here --

...suddenly sees BLOODY FOOTPRINTS on the ground. She stares horrified, sees the footprints give way to a POOL OF BLOOD. They lead to Aaron huddled in the corner. Head hung low.

She kneels down, not sure where to touch him: he's literally COVERED IN BLOOD.

MIRIAM (Cont'd)

Aaron, what did you do?

Miriam wipes back his sopping blood-stained hair to reveal his face -- streaked in blood, tears fill his eyes. She recoils, startled by his appearance.

AARON

It is a powerful God, Miriam. We must prepare the people for what will come. We must spread the word.

EXT. ROOFTOP - GOSHEN - MAGIC HOUR

Moses stands like a General surveying a bloody battlefield -- the landscape turned a red-stained swamp far as the eye can see. In the distance, Avaris glows red in the setting sun.

Moses stares off at the Great House. *He has struck first.*

EXT. WINDOW OF APPEARANCES - GREAT HOUSE - MAGIC HOUR

Ramesses looks angrily out over the city: streets red with blood. A vision of Hell on Earth. Lykkis stands by his side.

LYKKIS

The mayor of the streets says it strikes every quarter.

RAMESSES

And Goshen?

LYKKIS

It strikes the slaves as well.

Ramesses turns away from the sight. Troubled.

RAMESSES

The river is our source of life. It waters our crops, drives our commerce. Without it, we'll be left to dine on sand.

Balaam enters with a wood bowl.

LYKKIS

Tell us you bring news.

BALAAM

Indeed. Medjay from the north
report your Nile is running clean.

LYKKIS

Praised be the Gods of Egypt.

RAMESSES

And what of an explanation?

Balaam removes a small pouch from his pocket, dumps RED DIRT
into the clear water in the wooden bowl.

BALAAM

Clay from the riverbed. Storm winds
dredged it up. See?

He stirs the water, turning it blood red. Ramesses is
pleased, turns to Lykkis.

RAMESSES

Take word to the people. The Gods
of Egypt have given me the answer.

Ramesses walks out with Lykkis, leaves Balaam behind. Looking
with concern as the suspension created in the bowl settles to
the bottom -- it's not a valid explanation.

EXT. SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - DAY

Moses and Aaron stand in ankle-deep bloody water. Looking
on as Dathan and his MEN toss those DEAD from dehydration
onto a cart. Moses looks worried. He wasn't expecting this.

MOSES

How many are there?

AARON

No one's made a formal count. A
few thousand maybe? Without fresh
water, the weak will die quickly.

(beat)

Moses, why would God do this to us?

MOSES

I don't know. He does not tell me
why. Only what to do.

A WOMAN rushes up to Dathan with a DEAD TODDLER in her arms.

WOMAN

Look at my child! My SON! The
Council brings rumor of deliverance,
but instead we're made to suffer!

DATHAN

(re: Moses)

It is because of him. Take a good look. *He* is the one who has brought this scourge upon our people.

The woman spins on Moses in inconsolable grief...

MOURNING WOMAN

Look! Look what you have done!
(holds up her dead baby)
You have no heart!

Moses doesn't know what to say. She SPITS in his face.

NEARBY. A tautly-muscled MAN (JOSHUA, now 25) -- loads bodies on a push cart. He pauses a moment, recognizing Moses.

ON AARON & MOSES. As Miriam leads the Mourning Woman away.

MIRIAM

You are not alone. The plague has torn many families apart. Let us find a spot to pray for your son.

Aaron turns to Moses, who wipes the spit from his face.

AARON

The people don't understand why they have not been spared. They will need an explanation.

MOSES

I cannot give them one.

AARON

Well...let us hope God is finished.

Moses considers the sorrow around him. Has seen far-greater death tolls on his fields of battle. But knows Aaron has not.

MOSES

Aaron...God is just beginning.

EXT. COLONNADED CORRIDOR - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - NIGHT

Moonlight crawls across the floor. Finds Nefertiri walking in a sheer robe towards the ROYAL BATHS. Suddenly, something falls from atop one of the pillars -- startles her.

She furrows her brow: just a FROG -- fat, ugly and repulsive. She walks quickly away.

INT. ROYAL BATHS - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - CONTINUOUS

Nefertiri removes her robe, walks naked towards a step-down bathing pool filled with rose petals. Just then, something CRUNCHES under foot. Has her recoiling at another FROG.

She grabs a WALL TORCH. Pans the floor.

Sees DOZENS OF FROGS gathered in clumps. Her pulse races. She raises the torch towards the tub. SCREAMS in horror as she sees that it's FILLED WITH FROGS.

EXT. STREETS OF AVARIS - DAY

A troubled Ramesses sits atop a sedan chair carried by MEDJAY down a STREETS FILLED WITH FROGS. Balaam walks alongside.

BALAAM

Clearly the frogs found the river
uninhabitable and ventured inland.

CITIZENS bow as the entourage passes, but Ramesses feels their damning eyes upon him nonetheless.

BALAAM (Cont'd)

That is the only explanation.

Ramesses considers the frogs hopping around. The people casting furtive glances at him.

RAMESSES

I suspect a different evil.

EXT. MARKET - SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - DAY

WOMEN broom back frogs as MERCHANTS try to maintain business as usual. Moses walks Gershom through the market, Zipporah carrying Eliezer. MERCHANTS give them all the evil eye.

ZIPPORAH

(to a DATE MERCHANT)

May I have three, please?

DATE MERCHANT

Take your family and go. You curse
us with your presence!

MOSES

Please, listen to me --

DATE MERCHANT

We were better off before you came
to us! Begone! Take your plagues
with you!

Moses suffers the indignation, when suddenly, the THUNDER of HOOFBEATS erupts somewhere. PEOPLE look up, scatter in all directions to reveal TWO CHARIOTS.

Charging down the road, they pull to a halt by Moses. Lykkis is one, some MEDJAY in the other.

MOSES

Lykkis.

LYKKIS

You are wanted by Pharaoh.

Zipporah looks worried, but Moses reassures her.

MOSES

Do not worry. If he wanted to kill me, he would not call for me to do it. I will return.

EXT. STREET OF AVARIS - DUSK

Dozens of APIS BULLS with flower garlands around their neck are paraded past cheering EGYPTIANS. Up steps to an ALTAR, where a WAB PRIEST sacrifices them. It's a sickening sight.

IN LYKKIS'S CHARIOT. Moses rides beside Lykkis with shackled wrists. Takes in the spectacle.

MOSES

Ramesses is wise. He allays their fears with food and sacrifice.

LYKKIS

His supply lines are strong, Moses.

Moses nods. Notices a statue of TEK (Ramesses's young son).

MOSES

But his armor has weaknesses.

INT. STABLES - ARMY BARRACKS AT AVARIS - DUSK

Lykkis leads Moses inside, abruptly turns to leave.

LYKKIS

Wait here.

MOSES

It's good to see you again, Lykkis.

Lykkis won't meet his eyes, but he feels the same way.

LYKKIS

I hope you and he make peace.
For everyone's sake.

He walks out, leaving Moses alone. He sees something in a paddock -- a WHITE HORSE. *His* horse. He drifts towards her.

MOSES

Hello, old friend...

A true fondness, he pets the horse. Closes his eyes. Memories of his former life flooding back. The power he once wielded.

RAMESSES (O.S.)

I remember the day you broke her.

Moses turns to see Ramesses enter from another door.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)

She put up quite a fight. But you didn't stop until you made her yours. You must miss riding her in battle.

MOSES

I do.

RAMESSES

Give me your wrists.

Moses lifts his shackled hands. Ramesses unlocks them with a key, Moses's noticing an EYE OF HORUS branded on the back of RAMESSES'S HAND. It looks new. No way this was given by Seti.

MOSES

Father branded you as well, I see.

Ramesses doesn't answer. Moses's suspicions confirmed.

RAMESSES

I brought you here so we could speak in private, as men who were once brothers. It is you who brought the plagues upon Egypt?

MOSES

It is God.

RAMESSES

Do not speak to me of God. This has nothing to do with Gods or freedom for the oppressed. This is not about the slaves. It's about me.

MOSES

You.

RAMESSES

You forget how long I've known you. You seek revenge. For what you think I took from you. And who can blame you really. One moment, you stand as a God in the making. The next, one of Egypt's dogs. But I know which one is truly in your heart.

MOSES

I'm not the man I used to be.

RAMESSES

And nor am I. I am all of Egypt. I'm not some boy you can just push into the water.

MOSES

That remains to be seen.

The sibling rivalry is still there. But as all of Egypt, Ramesses believes he has the upper hand.

RAMESSES

Let me ask you something, Moses: what would you do? If you were Pharaoh and I returned in the rags of a Bedouin and asked that you free 200,000 of your slaves into my custody -- would you do it?

MOSES

No.

RAMESSES

Then why should I?

MOSES

Because you're not me.

Ramesses can't believe his gall. Has had enough.

RAMESSES

I could have you killed. *I could have you all killed.*

MOSES

But what will they then call you on the Walls of Karnak: Ramesses the Weak? He Who Kills The Unarmed? Is that how you wish to be remembered?

RAMESSES

The walls of the Great Temple will remember me as I see fit!

MOSES

You have power over the writing on the walls. But you are not the author of this tale.

(beat)

Let them go.

EXT. ROCKY LEDGE OVER AVARIS - DAWN

Moses kneels in prayer, eyes shifting behind closed lids. The wind STIRS up, snaps his robe about his body and whips his hair. Aaron walks up behind him.

MOSES

Is there a decision?

AARON

They are unanimous.

Moses opens his eyes, turns to his brother.

AARON (Cont'd)

They accept the compromise. Three day to worship in the desert in return for an end to the plagues.

MOSES

They are cowards.

AARON

What right do you have to judge the strength of their conviction? You have not endured the hardships that these people have.

MOSES

But I seek an end to them. The people only need to follow.

AARON

You are not their General, Moses. Their allegiance is not required as it was of your men. They will not just follow you blindly.

MOSES

They prefer the safety of their servitude. Like the hopeless animals Ramesses thinks they are.

AARON

Their memory allows for no hope.
They have not lived amid the
pageantry of the Great House.

MOSES

I did not choose that life!

AARON

And the people did not choose this
one! They were born into it. For
400 years, they've had no choice.

A tense beat, then...

MOSES

This is your problem, Aaron: you
see them only as they are, instead
of who they can be. You love them
too much.

AARON

Perhaps you don't love them enough.

He walks away. Leaves Moses stewing, when Aaron suddenly
pauses. Hears a BUZZING SOUND. Shifts his gaze to the
distance, where a BLACK CLOUD appears on the horizon.

AARON (Cont'd)

Moses, what is happening?

Just then, a SWARM OF FLIES crest the ridge. They blot out
the sun, blackening the skies as they stream towards Avaris.

EXT. STREETS OF AVARIS - DAY

Day rendered night by flies. EGYPTIANS cover their faces.
SCREAM as they race for cover. The collective BUZZ of their
wings drown out any other sound, triggering a...

SERIES OF SHOTS: vegetables at MARKETS ripped apart by flies;
CROPS overtaken by swarming insects; LIVESTOCK buck and run;
PEOPLE furiously swat the air, overwhelmed by the bugs.

INT. PRINCE'S BEDROOM - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DUSK

Ramesses watches his son TEK (4) sleep in a beautiful bed.
He drapes a blanket on him, loves his child like any father.

NEFERTIRI (O.S.)

How is the future of Egypt?

Ramesses glances up to see his queen enter.

RAMESSES

I've never seen a more perfect child.

NEFERTIRI

Think of who his father is.

He clocks the concern on her face.

RAMESSES

Something burdens you.

CUT TO:

PILES OF DEAD FROGS --

swarmed by red-eyed HORSE FLIES, it's a veil of winged-devils so thick it looks like a black blanket.

EXT. WINDOW OF APPEARANCES - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DAY

Rameses and Nefertiri stand behind a veil of fly nets, the violent torrent of flies filling the air like black snow.

RAMESSES

I offer them three days in the desert to worship their imaginary God and they refuse. They refuse my generosity!

NEFERTIRI

It is Moses who refuses.

RAMESSES

I do not want to hear about *Moses* --

NEFERTIRI

There's gossip among the women who work the springs. Goshen has been spared this plague.

RAMESSES

And you think Moses has spared them?

NEFERTIRI

That is what people are saying. That he is in league with the heavens.

Rameses shakes his head in disgust.

RAMESSES

My brother may have been a great warrior, but you give him too much credit. Moses is no *prophet*.

NEFERTIRI

Maybe superstition gets the best of me...but what if he is the chosen one? The one of Hebrew legend?

RAMESSES

That prophecy is no more than a foolish folk tale.

NEFERTIRI

Your father believed in that prophecy so much he ordered all Hebrew boys killed --

RAMESSES

My father is dead! I am Pharaoh!
I alone am the God of Egypt!

His rage scares her. Leaves her shaken as he storms inside.

CUT TO:

A MEDJAY READING A DECREE --

MEDJAY

By order of Pharaoh, slaves will not be given straw to make bricks, but will gather it themselves.

EXT. SLAVE VILLAGE OF GOSHEN - DAY

HEBREWS listen to the Medjay read from his chariot. An uproar from the crowd. SHOUTS of angry protests.

MEDJAY

Failure to maintain the brick quota will result in death.

A mob mentality brewing. The people are up-in-arms.

CUT TO:

A COLOSSAL STATUE OF RAMESSES --

carved into a mountain side, it's one of four looming over...

EXT. GREAT TEMPLE AT ABU SIMBEL - LATE AFTERNOON

An ominous testament to Ramesses's ego. Still under construction. Thousands of HEBREW slaves toil at the massive site. Heads bowed in perpetual labor.

IN THE BRICKYARD --

SLAVES pack mud into wood moulds they set in the sun to dry. Dry bricks are then shaken from the moulds and stacked with thousands of others. OVERSEERS with cubit sticks watch.

Moses works among the slaves. Aaron sidles up, whispers.

AARON

We don't have enough bricks. We
won't meet the quota by sundown.

MOSES

They must work faster.

ON AN OBSERVATION TOWER --

Ramesses eats grapes one-by-one, looking out at the operation sprawled before him. Something inherently evil to his bored nonchalance. Lykkis stands beside him, taking notes.

RAMESSES

From now on, the City of Avaris is
to be renamed: Pi-Ramesses, Great
In Victory. And I want a temple in
Thebes --

(beat, a whim)

-- the Ramesseum.

Lykkis furrows his brow at that, writes it down nonetheless.

LYKKIS

How would you like the scribes to
document the recent plagues in our
living record?

Ramesses casts Lykkis a threatening look: *omit them*.

OVERSEER (O.S.)

It is time, Great Egypt.

Ramesses spits out a grape seed. Walks away without comment.

EXT. BRICK YARD - GREAT TEMPLE AT ABU SIMBEL - LATE AFTERNOON

Overseers cruelly prod the Slaves into ranks, platforms of drying bricks rising everywhere. Ramesses walks among them with a malicious gleam, stops near Moses and Aaron.

RAMESSES

How many do we have? Have they
met their quota?

The ROYAL BRICK MASTER presents him with a tally sheet, Ramesses reading it. His face betraying nothing.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)
Is this accurate?

The Brick Master nods. Ramesses hands him back the tally sheet. Tries to hide his chagrin.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)
It seems you've exceeded the quota
by sixty bricks.

Relief from the gathered slaves. Ramesses considers a nearby stack of bricks -- some one hundred perfectly piled.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)
Who is responsible for these?

AARON
They are offered in your honor by
the Tribe of Reuben, Great Egypt.

He nonchalantly walks closer to inspect them, casually TAPS one of the low-lying bricks with the tip of his sword...

RAMESSES
They appear well made.
(TAPS another brick)
This is why the temples of Egypt
rise above all others.
(TAPS another brick)
Our slaves take pride in their work.

He taps one last brick, which suddenly CRUMBLES to dust, the whole stack COLLAPSING in a heap of broken bricks.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)
But it seems pride is not enough.
You find yourself short.

The Hebrew Slaves watch in silent outrage as Ramesses steps back to Moses, who just stares at him with unwavering eyes.

RAMESSES (Cont'd)
My temple won't stand without
bricks. The men who made them
will stand in their place.

CUT TO:

A DOZEN SLAVES --

confined to an 8-foot tall wood moulding, Overseers move the fourth wall into place...boxing them in. They look up at...

EXT. ELEVATED PLATFORM - BRICKYARD AT ABU SIMBEL - DUSK

Where Moses stands above them. Holds a rope attached to a huge CAULDRON of mud suspended overhead. He looks down on the men. Their scared faces. Husbands. Fathers. Comrades-in-arms.

Moses didn't expect this. The reality of what awaits these men setting in. Ramesses steps up beside him. Looks down on the slaves standing below.

RAMESESSES

Take a look at your executioner.
He is the same man you can blame
for the quotas.
(to Moses)
Pour.

MOSES

Don't do this.

RAMESESSES

Pour.

Moses hesitates. Sees Aaron and Miriam watching from nearby.

RAMESESSES (Cont'd)

Your brother and sister can join
them if you like.

An impossible bargain. Moses looks back to the men staring plaintively up at him. Sees their plain clothes. Their scared eyes...**they are just people. They are not soldiers.**

Finally, he sadly pulls the rope. Tips the cauldron. Spills the MUD down on the men.

The victims watch the MUD fill up the moulding. Rising above their feet...over their knees...up to their waist. Their fate setting in, they begin to claw the sides. SCREAM in protest.

OUTSIDE THE MOULDING. Their LOVED ONES rush the sides as the cries from within become desperate. Medjay BEAT them back.

ON MOSES. Looking down at the faces of the people about to drown in the mud. *Silently dying for every one of them.*

ON AARON. Horrified by what's happening. The WAILS of sadness mixing into a discordant and painful auditory goulash.

ON RAMESESSES. Just watching Moses's face as he's forced to kill his own people. Until finally...the last bit of mud covers the men...and they disappear from view.

RAMESSES

(lowly, to Moses)

You brought this suffering upon
them. You can put an end to it.

Rameses steps off the platform. Leaves Moses to stare at the massive mould of mud. No rage in him. Only grief.

EXT. CEMETARY - OUTSIDE GOSHEN - MAGIC HOUR

A funeral for the Reubenites killed at Abu Simbel, the other tribes are all in attendance. A KOHEN (priest) recites a prayer for the dead as MOURNERS place rocks on empty graves.

AT THE BACK OF THE GATHERING. Moses stands with Zipporah and Gershom by his side. He feels like an outsider...people casting the occasional damning glance his way.

He notices Dathan consoling a mourning woman named RACHEL. Her young SON beside her, the boy's now without a father. An irreparable loss that Moses knows he's responsible for.

Prompts him to look to Gershom and touch his head. He can't fathom losing a child. The weight of his action striking him.

ON THE TRIBE EPHRAIM. Joshua among them, he takes note of Moses. The once great warrior standing in solemn sadness.

EXT. PATH FROM CEMETARY - OUTSIDE GOSHEN - DUSK

The Mourners walk back to Goshen, Moses, Zipporah and Gershom among them. Dathan sidles up beside Moses. A beat, then....

DATHAN

You are not one of us. You
should not have come.

He walks on past Moses.

EXT. MUD PITS AT ABU SIMBEL - DAY

Moses urgently works the pits, filling a palm basket with mud. Encouraging OTHERS to work quickly so no one else dies.

MOSES

Work together...quickly...
(to another SLAVE)
Here, take another basket....

He turns to grab an empty palm basket from the lip of the pit, bumps headlong into a stone-faced SLAVE. Moses abruptly GASPS, looks down to see that the Slave is holding

A SHIV --

driven into Moses's stomach, the slave TWISTS it. Moses reels in pain. Tries to push the man off to no avail. Suddenly, the slave is TACKLED roughly to the ground by Joshua.

Moses pulls out the shiv. Staggered. Turns to see Joshua hitting the would-be assassin with a ROCK. Knocks him out. Then looks to some other SLAVES rubbernecking in shock.

JOSHUA

Keep working. Work! You'll alert the overseers.

He grabs Moses, quickly ushers him out of the pits.

INT. GREAT TEMPLE AT ABU SIMBEL - MOMENTS LATER

Out of sight, Joshua helps Moses lie back onto a stone block. Quickly tears some cloth to dress the wound.

JOSHUA

Just lie still...

He presses the cloth into the wound to stanch the flow of blood, Moses grimacing in pain.

JOSHUA (Cont'd)

You've seen worse.

Moses considers Joshua's face.

MOSES

Who are you --

JOSHUA

You knew my father. Nun. I am Joshua. I was there the day you killed that overseer.

MOSES

Your father...

JOSHUA

He served you in Kush and died in the pits of Goshen. I won't let my children see me suffer that fate.

Moses is taken with his passion.

JOSHUA (Cont'd)

There is more support for you here than you think. The people will listen to you...but you need to listen to them first.

Just then, three HEBREW MEN quietly hurry over.

MOSES
Thank you, Joshua.

JOSHUA
(to his men)
Salt the wound and get him to fresh
water. Quickly.

The men nod, usher Moses off. Joshua watching worried.

EXT. APIS BULL PEN - DUSK

Ramesses lovingly pets one of his prized Apis Bulls. Admires the beautiful creature.

LYKKIS (O.S.)
I beg your pardon, Great Egypt.

Ramesses turns to see Lykkis approaching.

LYKKIS (Cont'd)
There is news from Goshen. Moses
has been stabbed in the pits. By
one of his own.

RAMESSES
Then he is dead?

LYKKIS
He went missing before the Medjay
could verify that.

Ramesses considers that a moment, then...

RAMESSES
Prepare another herd. All Egypt
will feast when I hear of Moses's
passing.

Lykkis bows and exits. Ramesses turns back to the bull. The poor animal has no idea of the fate that awaits it.

INT. MOSES'S MUD HUT - NIGHT

Moses sleeps fitfully by the fire. Shivering in a cold sweat. Life dangling by a thread. Zipporah keeps vigil by his side, changing the bandage on his wound.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - GOSHEN - DAY

Aaron speaks before a large gathering of CONCERNED SLAVES.

AARON

Do not believe the rumors you hear
of Moses's death. God protects him.
God keeps him alive. To fight for
you. Moses fights for you.

Tribal leader AMMON (of the tribe Gad) steps forward.

AMMON

But what will happen when he can
no longer fight? The people of my
tribe want proof that *God* will
fight for us...without Moses.

Aaron isn't sure how to answer. Gambles.

AARON

God will show them proof.

People optimistically murmur, but Aaron is uneasy.

INT. MOSES'S MUD HUT - NIGHT

Moses still sleeps, looks ashen and ill. His eyes slowly
open. Find focus on Aaron sitting at his bedside.

MOSES

Aaron...

He tries to sit up, but grimaces in pain.

AARON

Rest. Your wound is not yet healed.
Drink some water.

Aaron helps him drink, before Moses lies back. A beat.

MOSES

I had a dream, Aaron.

AARON

A dream. Of what?

MOSES

Of the Promised Land. Over distant
mountains. Beneath an endless sky.

AARON

What does it look like?

MOSES

I cannot say. I couldn't see it.
It was obscured by a mist. A fog.

(MORE)

MOSES (Cont'd)

I stepped into it...but no matter how far I walked, the fog never lifted. It only grew thicker. As though each footstep pushed it further out of view.

AARON

Yet you kept walking.

Moses solemnly nods. As though he's come to some realization.

MOSES

I am the one who does what other men will not. I am the monster. But what does a monster know of people?

AARON

You will learn.

Moses closes his eyes. Resigned. A beat, then...

MOSES

God will come tonight, Aaron. Just as you promised them.

AARON

How do you know I did that?

MOSES

You will learn.

Aaron just stares, surprised by his brother's prescience.

INT. LYKKIS'S VILLA - NOBLE QUARTER - DAWN

Lykkis sleeps in his bed, a BARKING stirring him awake.

EXT. NOBLE QUARTER - AVARIS - DAWN

Lykkis walks past villas hidden behind high walls, finds a DOG BARKING beside a DEAD GOAT. He furrows his brow, sees the dog's tail and ears are cowed...as though it's spooked.

Suddenly, the sound of more BARKING -- more than one dog -- erupting nearby, he quickens his pace. Follows the sound.

EXT. CORAL - ARMY BARRACKS AT AVARIS - DAWN

A thick FOG cloaks the coral. Lykkis walks in the BARKING's direction -- the dogs sound RABID and SCARED...like they're CRYING. Slowly, the fog begins to lift, revealing...

THOUSANDS OF DEAD APIS BULLS --

a staggering slaughter, Lykkis stares in total shock.

INT. ROYAL THRONE ROOM - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DAY

A bull lays dead before Ramesses as he questions Lykkis.

RAMESSES
They're all dead?

LYKKIS
Not just the bulls. The horses,
camels and cattle as well. None
of our livestock survived.

RAMESSES
HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?!

Lykkis shifts his weight, unsure how to answer.

LYKKIS
The citizens believe it's the
work of the Hebrew God. They leave
tributes of gold outside the gates
of Goshen and curse your name.

RAMESSES
My name?! Why would they not curse
Moses?!

LYKKIS
They feel it is in your power to
release the Hebrews.

RAMESSES
Perhaps they'd prefer to wash their
streets, clean their stables and
build temples in place of them.

LYKKIS
I mean no disrespect --

RAMESSES
GET OUT!

Lykkis hurries out, leave Ramesses stewing. Anger building in him, he BASHES his scepter on the throne. Strikes it over and over, chipping limestone and shattering the scepter.

EXT. MOSES'S MUD HUT - DAYS LATER

Zipporah washes clothes in a wash basin. Smiles at Gershom playing tug-of-war with a DOG over a stick. Looks up to see Moses emerge from the hut -- badly wounded, but alive.

EXT. MARKET - SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - DAY

Dathan speaks before a gathering of Hebrews, preying on their growing discontent. Aaron listens uneasily from the outskirts.

DATHAN

Moses will threaten us no longer!
 God has stricken him, just as He
 has the Egyptian livestock. Now is
 the time to negotiate with Pharaoh
 for better terms!

Shouts of support from some, a MURMUR suddenly ripples through the crowd. People in the rear turning around...

RANDOM HEBREWS

It's Moses. Moses lives.

...to see Moses being helped through the crowd by Zipporah.

RANDOM HEBREWS (Cont'd)

He lives! Praise be to Moses!

Moses takes the praise in stride. **The measured diminishment of a man who once basked in it.**

ON RACHEL. The weeping woman from the funeral. She looks up to see Moses weakly approach her.

MOSES

What is your name?

RACHEL

Why do you ask?

MOSES

I don't want to be a stranger to
 you any longer.

(to the OTHERS)

To any of you.

Dathan tries to reclaim the pulpit. Calls across the crowd.

DATHAN

Do not listen to this man! He wants
 only to usurp the authority of the
 Council. The men you have elected.
 He does not wield God's power. The
 Almighty works his wonders *without*
 Moses -- His last plague is proof!

ON MOSES & RACHEL. Moses ignores Dathan's rant, beckoning Rachel with look alone. She studies his face. Finally...

RACHEL

I am Rachel.

MOSES

Your husband was among those killed
at Abu Simbel.

(off her nod)

I am sorry for his loss. Freedom
will not bring him back. But when
you taste it...you will know he
did not die in vain.

RACHEL

Thank you, Moses.

ON DATHAN. Face souring at the sight of the crowd welcoming
Moses. Embracing his return.

Aaron joins his brother, clocks the crowd's growing support.

AARON

Speak to the council, brother.
Convince them to join us.

INT. MEETING PLACE OF COUNCIL OF ELDERS - DUSK

The Leaders of the Twelve Tribes sit in silence, staring at
Moses standing across from them. He takes in their stoic and
doubting faces a moment, then...

MOSES

I have never been a Man of God. I
am a Man of War. I have killed men.
I have seen my own men die. I have
laid waste to nations in the name
of victory. All this I've done
without question. That is why God
chooses me. But you did not.

EXT. CHARIOT YARD - ARMY BARRACKS AT AVARIS - DUSK

Hundreds of CHARIOTEERS ready their death wagons, when they
hear a low BUZZ. Growing louder, they see a BLACK CLOUD
approaching, can't tell what it is...

MOSES (O.S.)

So today I ask you to choose me.

INT. MEETING PLACE OF COUNCIL OF ELDERS - RESUME

MOSES

For while I may have been raised
a Prince of Egypt, I am not one
of her sons.

EXT. CHARIOT YARD - ARMY BARRACKS AT AVARIS - RESUME

A SWARM OF LOCUSTS bristle through the CHARIOTEERS like bullets. A billion razor-sharp WINGS and JAWS RIPPING off the mens' skin, laying the Charioteers to waste.

MOSES (O.S.)
I am Egypt's enemy.

INT. MEETING PLACE OF COUNCIL OF ELDERS - RESUME

MOSES
I am a Hebrew.
(beat)
For generations, our people have toiled in service of tyranny. The pride and dignity of countless families consigned to interminable suffering. But this will change.

EXT. STREETS OF AVARIS - DUSK

The locusts roll through the streets like a tidal wave. EGYPTIANS flee in a panic for the nearest interiors.

MOSES (O.S.)
God's wrath will continue.

The locust tsunami devours everything in its path, turning PEOPLE, PRODUCTS and ANIMALS to DUST. The whole world seeming to reverberate with the horrific HUM of their beating wings.

INT. MEETING PLACE OF COUNCIL OF ELDERS - RESUME

MOSES
For Egypt, it will be horrible. But for us...it will be glorious.
(beat)
I know there are those among your tribes who worry what life will be beyond Goshen's gates. Who fear the uncertainty of the Promised Land. Some cannot even conceive of its existence. For those, I ask you to tell them this: tell them to *imagine it for themselves*. To imagine a world of their choosing. To imagine their life as they hope to be. Whatever that looks like.
(beat)
The Promised Land is what we make it.

The leaders trade looks with one another, swept in.

EXT. AVARIS - DAY

Bodies of DEAD and DYING Egyptians line the streets, victims of some horribly contagious disease. Other CITIZENS cover their mouths with rags as they hurry past.

NEFERTIRI (O.S.)

The plague that claimed our livestock has spread to the streets.

INT. MARISTAN - AVARIS - DAY

An ancient hospital. EGYPTIANS pocked with SORES and BOILS fill the beds and halls, wretchedly MOANING. Ramesses and Nefertiri walk among them. Morbidly consider the suffering.

RAMESSES

Moses paints me the villain.

NEFERTIRI

Your people are too occupied with this trouble to search for answers that live beyond Egypt's walls.

(off his look)

They look to you for that.

He scans the pained faces of his CITIZENS.

RAMESSES

This all ends now.

EXT. PRAYER ROCK - ABOVE THE NILE RIVER - DAY

Moses kneels in prayer with his eyes closed, THUNDER CLOUDS overhead. Suddenly, a pair of BOOTS step up behind him -- Ramesses...he stares at Moses with eyes of hooded menace.

RAMESSES

You should not have tested me.

Moses opens his eyes. Doesn't protest as MEDJAY roughly grab him. Shackle his wrists. Lead him past Ramesses.

MOSES

Your true test has yet to come.

EXT. CITY CENTER - AVARIS - DAY

Medjay usher Moses through the city center on a horse-drawn litter -- EGYPTIANS spit on him, throw rocks and curse...a great display of acrimony as a MEDJAY rallies the crowd.

MEDJAY

Behold the slave who has brought
the plagues upon you! Pharaoh
brings him to justice!

Despite the chaos, Moses just stares straight ahead.

INT. JAIL CELL - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DAY

Moses sits in chains, the MOB OUTSIDE growing louder by
the minute. A MEDJAY enters, roughly nudges him.

MEDJAY

Get up.

Moses stands as a CLOAKED WOMAN sweeps into the room. The
Medjay leaves.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Hello, Moses.

She removes her hood...it's Nefertiri.

NEFERTIRI

Its been a long time.

MOSES

Ramesses sends you to speak on
his behalf.

NEFERTIRI

He doesn't even know I'm here.

(off Moses's look)

He doesn't wish to kill you.

Despite everything you have done.

Moses can see the logic in Ramesses's move.

MOSES

He wants me to surrender.

NEFERTIRI

Accept him as all powerful and you
will be spared. Think of your wife.

Your sons.

MOSES

They are why I will not surrender.

NEFERTIRI

I thought a man of your military
background would know when to cut
his losses. It seems you are still
too stubborn to admit defeat.

MOSES

One does not admit defeat when they
are on the brink of victory.

Just then, the Medjay returns.

MEDJAY

It's time.

NEFERTIRI

You don't have to die today.

MOSES

I'm not going to.

Moses is lead out. Nefertiri watching quizzically.

EXT. ENTRY COLONNADE - GREAT TEMPLE OF SETI - DAY

STORM CLOUDS over a rowdy CROWD gathered for an execution --
EGYPTIANS drink from wine sacks. WOMEN dance to MUSIC beat by
MEN on drums and tambourines. All CHEERING the arrival of

THE QUEEN'S ENTOURAGE --

Nefertiri and young prince Tek (4) sit atop sacred barques to
the God Amun. They're carried through the crowd. Set down to
watch from a VIEWING PAVILION across from

THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE --

an execution platform with an X-POST set at its center,
Ramesses stands beside it. Torture tools laid out on a stand.

A ROAR from the gathering. Ramesses turns to see two SHERDEN
dragging Moses through the crowd. Egyptians JEER and throw
rocks. The Sherden shove Moses up the steps to the altar.

They tie his arms and legs to the X-post. Leave Moses
positioned across from the viewing platform. Allows him
to lock eyes with young prince Tek beside Nefertiri.

Nefertiri clocks Moses's gaze lingering on her young son,
feels unsettled by it. Ramesses steps in front of Moses,
obstructing his view.

RAMESSES

Renounce your God and bow before
the Lord of All Egypt.

Moses doesn't answer, just stares, prompting...

RAMESSES (Cont'd)

Remove his robe.

The Sherden rips open Moses's robe. Ramesses grabs a KNIFE, drags it over Moses's chest without warning. Moses tries to silently bottle his pain, but the real pain hasn't come yet.

Ramesses tosses the knife, reaches into a jar of NATRON POWDER. Pulls out a handful and tosses it on the fresh cut. Moses reacts with a SCREAM, the crowd CHEERING in response.

ON THE VIEWING PAVILION. Nefertiri stares blankly beside Tek.

IN THE CROWD. Lykkis watches, can't stand the sight of Moses's torture.

ON MOSES. Face twisting in pain. Ramesses grabs his head by his hair, leans close and whispers.

RAMESES (Cont'd)
Your God is not coming.

Moses raises his bloodshot eyes to meet Ramesses's.

MOSES
My God is already here.

With that, a sudden SHOCK OF LIGHTNING erupts, preceding...

THE HAIL OF FIRE --

raining from the heavens in flaming shards, massive MOLTEN BOMBS and soaring FIRESTRANDS fall like celestial munitions. ICE shatters on impact, sends FLAMES rippling into the crowd.

Egyptians catch fire, a pandemonium of terror breaking loose.

ON THE VIEWING PAVILION. Lykkis helps Nefertiri and the young prince down amid the chaos, scuttles them to cover.

ON RAMESES. Staring in disbelief, he shares a last look with Moses just as a FLAME BOMB streaks by and

HITS THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE --

wood exploding into the air, impact sends Ramesses and the Sherden soaring. It violently cripples the X-post, Moses toppling to the ground, stuck to it and unable to move.

ON RAMESES. Panic ensues around him. He stares at the temple walls POUNDED and CRUMBLING by fire and ice. Sees Moses pinned beneath the X-post and unsheathes his sword, when...

LYKKIS (O.S.)
Great Egypt!

Lykkis grabs Ramesses, tries to pull him away.

LYKKIS (Cont'd)
 You must take cover! Take cover
 with the Queen!

Ramesses looks at Nefertiri and prince Tek huddled in a doorway, then back to Moses, before reluctantly joining them.

ON MOSES. Struggling to free himself from his restraints, FIRE burns his back and singes his hair. Suddenly, Lykkis appears out of the smoke and flames with a sword in hand.

Moses locks eyes with him as Lykkis raises the sword...

...and then brings it down on his shackles.

LYKKIS (Cont'd)
 Go. Quickly.

Moses nods his thanks, then runs off into the firestorm.

DISSOLVE TO:

A TORCH --

held by Aaron, he looks out at Avaris smoking in the aftermath of its bombardment. Joshua beside him.

JOSHUA
 All of Egypt burns...

EXT. CAVE - CLIFFS OUTSIDE GOSHEN - DUSK

Aaron and Joshua turn to Goshen's mud huts sprawling untouched by fire adjacent to the burning city.

JOSHUA
 ...yet Goshen is untouched.

AARON
 Assemble the leaders, Joshua.
 The Exodus is at hand.

INT. CAVE - CLIFFS OUTSIDE GOSHEN - SAME

A bloody and burned Moses quietly pleads with Zipporah.

MOSES
 You must leave.

ZIPPORAH
 I nearly just lost you and now you
 want me to leave?

MOSES

I can't have you and the children
in harm's way.

ZIPPORAH

You said we were in this together.

MOSES

I can't protect you here. The only
thing that scares me is losing you.
Please: go with them.

She looks to some of Joshua's Men waiting a distance away to
escort the family.

ZIPPORAH

Where will they take us?

MOSES

To where God first spoke to me.

He touches her face. Soaks in her image. Kisses her. Then
watches as she reluctantly walks off to join Joshua's men.

MOSES (O.S.)

Soon the time for miracles ends.

EXT. MARKET - SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - TWILIGHT

Moses stands in the middle of a huge gathering of Hebrews --
he is their leader, but is among them...not in front of them.

MOSES

The Almighty has scorned Egypt with
nine plagues...but He has one more.
And we must prepare for it with the
utmost care -- for that is the price
of our liberty.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - TWILIGHT

Miriam and some HEBREW WOMEN quietly gut slaughtered lambs
hanging by ropes. Blood flowing thick across the ground.

MOSES (O.S.)

In four days time, we slaughter our
lambs so every one of our people
may eat and fill their stomachs.

EXT. ROASTING PITS - SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - TWILIGHT

The lambs roast on outdoor spits throughout the village.

MOSES (O.S.)
As they roast by fire...

Village MEN take PAPYRUS BRUSHES from BUCKETS OF LAMB BLOOD.

MOSES (Cont'd, O.S.)
...we will dredge reeds from the
Great River in their spilt blood.

EXT. AARON'S MUD HUT - TWILIGHT

Aaron marks his doorpost with the blood-soaked papyrus.

MOSES (O.S.)
It shall serve as a sign upon our
doorposts.

WIDEN TO REVEAL, slaves marking their homes with blood.

INT. AARON'S MUD HUT - TWILIGHT

Aaron, Miriam and their FAMILIES eat a meal of lamb, herbs
and flatbread.

MOSES (O.S.)
We will eat quickly and not take
time to leaven our bread...

INT. MARKET - SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - RESUME

MOSES
...for at midnight, the Angel of
Death will descend upon the land.

EXT. DESERT - OUTSIDE AVARIS - NIGHT

An eerie quiet...then it begins: some primeval VAPOR seeping
out of the cracked Earth. The tendrils slowly take the form
of hideous **SPECTRAL REAPERS**, whisking off in all directions.

MOSES (O.S.)
He will visit all of Egypt.

EXT. SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - NIGHT

The Spectral Reapers sweep through the narrow passageways.

INT. AARON'S MUD HUT - NIGHT

Miriam and husband CALEB hold their children. Aaron looks
toward the door, sees wisps of VAPOR through the bottom
crack, eddying as if to enter. Threatening from outside.

MOSES (O.S.)
But when he sees the blood marking
our doors...

EXT. AARON'S MUD HUT - SAME

A Spectral Reaper hovers over the blood-smearred door...

MOSES (O.S.)
...Death will pass us over.

...then rises up and whips away.

INT. FIRE HALL - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - NIGHT

Ramesses and Nefertiri eat dinner silently before the massive
hearth, a deathly stillness permeating the space.

MOSES (O.S.)
But in the City of Ramesses, things
will be different.

A MUTED SCREAM erupts somewhere in the city, startling them.

EXT. STREETS OF AVARIS - NIGHT

Spectral Reapers coil through the city, rolling like carpet
under doorways. SCREAMS OF TERROR piercing the night.

MOSES (O.S.)
There, a great cry will rise in the
night.

EXT. COLONNADED CORRIDOR - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - NIGHT

Ramesses walks past torches. CRIES growing louder and more
numerous outside the palace walls.

MOSES (O.S.)
There, Death will visit the bed of
every first born child...

He strides towards a door at the end of the hall. Pauses
outside it. His pulse racing as he opens the door and enters.

INT. PRINCE TEK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ramesses looks at his son's bed silhouetted behind curtains.
Stops at the sight of VAPORS curling out under the silks.

MOSES (O.S.)
...and Death will show no mercy.

Gathering his courage, Ramesses parts the curtains to see

THE ANGEL OF DEATH --

looming over the DEAD PRINCE TEK, it raises its hooded head to reveal a **SKULL FACE like Moses wore in Kush** -- it spreads wide skeletal wings rimmed with sharp talons.

Ramesses's eyes widen in fear.

The Angel ROARS. Lunges a face of fangs from the dark hood. Sends Ramesses falling backwards with a SCREAM.

INT. MOSES'S MUD HUT - NIGHT

SCREAMS echo in Egypt, sporadic CRIES of shock, horror and grief blending into one lamentation for the dead. Moses prays alone -- firelight flickering his face -- when his eyes open.

EXT. BANKS OF THE NILE - DAWN

The spot where Moses and Ramesses drank beer. Ramesses now stands alone. Watching a funeral barge carrying his son's body as it's led onto the gleaming river by WAB PRIESTS.

Ramesses weeps openly. His soul ripped out. He has lost his child. His dignity. His power.

Just then, the approach of FOOTSTEPS behind him. Ramesses turns to see Moses.

MOSES

This was not the way I imagined you
would bring your son here.

Ramesses isn't in the mood for his sympathy. Speaks in a voice so calm, it makes our skin crawl.

RAMESSES

The people of Egypt call for me to
send you off. So take your dogs and
go. Be Pharaoh of their miserable
masses while you can. For when my
chariots find you, I will spill
your blood all over the desert.

He looks back to the funeral barge. Moses walks away.

CUT TO:

THE GATES OF GOSHEN --

slowly CREAKING open, HEBREW MEN turn big winches on either side of the hulking iron gates.

EXT. INSIDE GATES OF GOSHEN - DAY

Aaron moves through the THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS of HEBREW SLAVES gathering to leave Goshen. They're anxious. Unsure of what awaits them.

AARON

We leave no man behind. Gather your families. Quickly.

CAMERA BOOMS BACK over the throngs of people, revealing SAND-SLEDS, DONKEYS, YOKES and BRICK-CARRIERS crammed with whatever food, supplies and possessions will fit.

ON MOSES AND JOSHUA. As the doors kick up a CLOUD OF DUST. Sunlight bleeding in grows brighter as the gates open wider. Hebrews anxiously awaiting, the doors fully open to reveal

THE DESERT BEYOND --

sand stretching into the distance, the view unobstructed but for the PILES OF TREASURE that rest outside the gates -- dozens of baskets of gold jewels and frankincense.

JOSHUA

The Egyptians leave tribute.

MOSES

Take it all.

Aaron steps to their side.

AARON

We'll use it to construct a symbol of our power to walk before us. It will remind people of our triumph.

MOSES

No. That is a vestige of Egypt's Gods. No image can capture our God's glory.

If he only knew that he himself had already become that image.

MOSES (Cont'd)

We'll need it to build our nation.

Joshua's men move to gather the treasure, when...

VOICE (O.S.)

Moses.

Moses turns to Lykkis, standing before hundreds of Egyptians.

LYKKIS

There are many from within Egypt
who want to come with your God.

MOSES

God welcomes all men.
(to Aaron)
Sound the call. We must hurry.

Aaron blows a SHOFAR -- a cry from the ram horn, other TRIBAL LEADERS blow their horns as well. But not Dathan, watching with a grimace beside Core as the Hebrews begin to exit.

CORE

Fools. They follow blindly into the
desert with no thought to a plan.

DATHAN

When the time is right, we will
wrest control.

EXT. DESERT OUTSIDE GOSHEN - DAY

The great moving stream of the Exodus, Goshen's sprawling slums barely visible in the rear-view as it crests a slope. CLOSER, this isn't a lazy walk. It's urgent.

ON AARON & MOSES. Leading the welter of humanity up the slope of sand. Aaron looks back at the village behind them...but Moses's eyes never waver from what lies ahead.

EXT. WINDOW OF APPEARANCES - GREAT HOUSE AT AVARIS - DAY

Nefertiri -- in all black -- stands next to Ramesses, looking angrily out at the Hebrew herd snaking off into the desert.

EXT. DESERT - SUNSET

The Exodus moves over the sands like a great body with a thousand arms and legs. No one speaks, just the urgent passage through the desert. Aaron walks beside Moses.

AARON

Moses, we need to slow down. The
people can't keep this pace.

MOSES

They will die if we don't.

AARON

But the desert stretches in every
direction. Which way do we choose?

MOSES

We are not choosing.

Moses points ahead, Aaron following his gaze to...

A SANDSTORM --

rising off the ground, tiny particles spin around into a SAND DEVIL -- a veritable TORNADO stretching from the ground to the sky, it whirls in a fury. Blazes a path ahead.

MOSES (Cont'd)

God shows the way.

The Hebrews stare -- first frightened, then hopeful -- before following the glory of God's hand. Off the spiraling sand...

MATCH CUT TO:

A STORM OF ASHES --

coughed from the black smoke rolling off a great stretch of mud huts, they're being torched by Medjay. A raging fire.

EXT. SLAVE VILLAGE AT GOSHEN - NIGHTFALL

Ramesses emerges through the inferno of smoke and flame like a hellion. Familiar Cavalry Captain Hatep at his side.

RAMESSES

Prepare the chariots.

CUT TO:

A LIGHTNING BOLT --

SLAMMING to the Earth, it explodes the ground ahead of the infinite column of Hebrews walking in the PELTING RAIN.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Moses and Aaron press on as people cry out in fear and confusion. The flock is coming undone.

AARON

We must take shelter.

MOSES

We keep moving.

Another LIGHTNING BOLT strikes the Earth at the TORNADO center. Turns the cyclone of sand into a remarkable

PILLAR OF FIRE --

whirling tongues of divine flames stretching to the heavens,
the Hebrews SCREAM.

AARON

Dammit, Moses! The people are afraid!

Moses considers the Hebrews cowering at the meteorological
spectacle before them. Dathan playing on their fears.

DATHAN

Take shelter! Take shelter now!

Some follow him, others simply stop, creating instant
confusion. The inertia of 200,000 HEBREWS bumping into those
who stop or change directions turning order to disarray.

People are knocked over and trampled underfoot, chaos flaring
beneath booming THUNDER, LIGHTNING and RELENTLESS RAIN.

ON MOSES. Breaking into action, he pulls himself up onto a
horse. Charges off to where Dathan is dividing the herd.

MOSES

THIS WAY! DO NOT BE AFRAID!!

But they still flee, prompting Moses to move his horse to the
high ground. He blocks their advance, yells above the din.

MOSES (Cont'd)

We will die at the hands of
Ramesses if we do not walk on!!
Follow the fire!!!

The Hebrews turn to regard the Pillar of Fire, lighting the
way through the darkness like a beacon.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Do not fear what's ahead!
Fear what's behind you!!!

Joshua moves through the crowd.

JOSHUA

Listen to Moses! We can not stop
here!

Moses waves his staff, trying to direct the flow of traffic.

MOSES

That way! Away from Egypt!!!

Sure enough, the flock regroups, follows the Pillar of Fire.

CUT TO:

HORSES HARNESSSED TO CHARIOTS --

SOLDIERS mount WHINNYING charges, Hatep rallying them on.

HATEP

Ramesses The Great, God of
Egypt calls you to duty! Do not
disappoint him!

EXT. CHARIOT YARD - STABLES AT AVARIS - NIGHT

Ramesses puts on his war helmet, his face a mask of black
hatred and dedicated destruction. Raises his sword high...

RAMESSES

Kill them all!

He whips his horse, sending his chariot streaking off like a
golden comet. A stunning host of 6000 CHARIOTS following with
a RATTLING of wheels and hooves.

AUDIO MATCH TO:

INCREDIBLE THUNDER --

booming like artillery shells, LIGHTNING flashes in the sky.
Backlights some strange VOLCANIC ASH floating in the sky over

EXT. STEEP SLOPE - NIGHT

Moses leads the Exodus down a gorge into FOG beside Aaron --
the Pillar of Fire disappearing into the mist, they're barely
able to see what's in front of them.

Just then, the sound of a ROAR resounds up ahead, growing
slowly louder -- like some beast awaits, Moses furrows his
brow. Aaron nervously trying to see through the haze.

AARON

What was that?

Moses listens closer, steps forward, when Miriam grabs him.

MIRIAM

Moses, you should stop. You do us
no good if --

MOSES

Quiet.

MIRIAM

But --

MOSES

Please.

An expectant beat, the roar SWELLS louder, taking the form of
A HUGE WAVE --

rolling into their sight line, it batters the rocks around
them. Blows people back. Knocks them down. Sends them
SCREAMING and SCRAMBLING backwards, soaking wet.

A moment...the torrent recedes. Moses rises, steps *forward*.

MIRIAM

Moses!

Moses reaches the rocky edge, looks down to see he's on

A CLIFF --

the world receding below into angry rocks and water, he turns
back to the Hebrew horde, pressing forward themselves...

MOSES

Stop! STOP!!!

But that many people can't stop at once, a handful TUMBLING
DOWN THE ROCKS.

AARON

Stop! Wait! STOP!!!

The fallen cling to the cliff-face. Others scramble to pull
them to safety. Panic ensues. Moses squints into the misty
night, trying to get his bearings...

AARON (Cont'd)

Where are we...?

No response from Moses, the FOG answers for him...seems to
take on an almost CRIMSON HUE, slowly dissipating to reveal

THE RED SEA

The angriest body of water ever seen by man. Crashing tides
LASH and GROWL. They pound the cliff-side with a holy deluge
under a blood red, fire-filled sky.

Moses stares out at the vast body of water. There's no way
around it.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - NIGHT

Ramesses leads the THUNDERING heard of chariots in battle formation as they ROAR towards the hill edging The Red Sea.

EXT. GORGE AT RED SEA - SAME

The Hebrews angrily mill about, don't realize they've been marched to a dead end. They openly GROUSE and COMPLAIN.

AT THE BACK. Lykkis sweeps the rear of the line on horseback. Stops to look back. Listens to something more felt than heard. He turns the horse around, rides back up towards the hilltop.

EXT. HILLTOP - CONTINUOUS

Lykkis brings the horse to a stop. Looks into the distance to see a CLOUD OF DUST streaking the skyline. His face falls.

LYKKIS

Ramesses.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - RESUME

Before the ROAR OF THE SEA, Aaron petitions Moses.

AARON

People are in a panic, Moses. You have to do something.

MOSES

We need to get out of this gorge. We'll make a pass over the hills.

Lykkis gallops up on his horse.

LYKKIS

We can't.

Moses looks past Lykkis...a low RUMBLE rattling the ground. The Hebrews turn, look up the distant hill at a DUST CLOUD swelling on the other side. The RUMBLE growing in advance of

6,000 CHARIOTS

Cresting the hill. They gallop along the top of the gorge. War horses SNARLING, AXLE SWORDS spinning.

A CRY of fear from the Hebrews. Overcome with terror. Dathan presses to the forefront.

DATHAN

Were there no graves for us in
Egypt!? You had to lead us out
here to be slaughtered?!

MOSES

(to Joshua)

Shut him up.

Joshua and his men grab Dathan, Moses rushing to the edge.

AARON

Moses -- !

Moses stands at the edge of the cliff, closes his eyes. Holds his rod low over the water. Aaron looks from the approaching chariots to Moses, torn between faith and fear.

AARON (Cont'd)

MOSES! DO SOMETHING!

But Moses is unresponsive, his body shuddering as the SKY OVER THE SEA RIPS APART -- clouds roll towards the shore, wrathful waves CRASHING the rocks before Moses.

Aaron and the Hebrews look up at the sky seemingly at war with itself...when a HELLSTORM OF FIRE suddenly BURSTS from the clouds like a nuclear explosion. An act of God.

Flames rip OVER THEIR HEADS, soar straight towards the charging Egyptian Army and

SCORCH THE EARTH BEFORE RAMESSES --

the gorge alighting in a SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS in front of the chariots, Ramesses PULLS UP violently. His war horse rearing to a frenzied stop before a remarkable

WALL OF FIRE --

a flaming nebulae, CHARIOTEERS try to bring their horses to a HALT. But some are too late, SET AFLAME as horse and rider careen through the fire. SCREAM in howling pain.

ON ANOTHER CHARIOTEER. Pulling back on his reins, his horse can't stop. Hits the chariot in front, upends our Charioteer. Sends the cart flying and EXPLODING into the wall of flames.

ON RAMESSES. He climbs from his chariot, immune to the burning bodies around him. He approaches the fire. Reaches out. A flame snakes off, burns the back of his hand.

Ramesses recoils. Looks at his hand: the EYE OF HORUS brand has been burnt illegibly black. He looks to the wall of fire, stares in wonder at the barrier between he and vengeance.

ON THE HEBREWS --

awe-stricken at the WALL OF FIRE barring advance down the gorge, SHOUTS of wonder and relief erupt from their ranks.

AARON (Cont'd)
God bars their path...

He turns to Moses on the ledge -- his head tilted back, wind whips his hair. Eyes moving behind closed lids as his body trembles on, like he's having an out-of-body experience.

Wind fiercely blowing. Miriam looks at Moses's oscillating form...as though he's channeling some impossible power. She screams to other WOMEN over the sound of the ROARING SEA.

MIRIAM
Gather the children and take
shelter behind the carts!

Winds from every direction gathering in one place, the Hebrews look up to the THUNDERHEADS set to grapple above.

ON MOSES. Raising his arm over the turbulent sea, a HOWL OF WIND screams off the water. Our hero straining as he

LIFTS HIS STAFF TO THE SKY --

one man's gesture to eternity that men are meant to be free, heaven responds with an ORGY OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING. An astounding display. The end of time must be upon us.

The Hebrews watch in awe. Cloud banks collide with an impact that fuses them a moment before detonating a maelstrom of

TORNADOES --

first one...then another...and another...a *dozen* tornadoes spiral down from sky to sea. Sending the sea churning into billowing foam against the embattled clouds, suddenly...

MOSES RAISES HIS OTHER HAND --

the ultimate iconic pose brought to full bare, he strains against the forces of nature. As though he were a combatant himself, a defiant SCREAM erupts from the belly of his soul.

God answers his wrathful call: the sea water EXPLODES IN A FURY. Surface heaving high, the tornadoes RIP the waters apart, creating a mighty cleft as

THE RED SEA PARTS --

torn by the Hand of God Himself, twin walls of water rise up. They over-tower the scene, exposing the rocky sea bottom.

ON MOSES. Opening his eyes to behold the sight before him. He slowly lowers his arms...the walls of water holding firm. He turns around, meets Aaron, Miriam and Joshua's awed eyes.

ON THE HEBREWS. Their gaze shifting from the spectacle before them, to the man who made it happen -- they see Moses as more than their leader...**they see him as the embodiment of God.**

They stare at Moses with a reverence he can't ignore. It catches Moses off guard. This was not his plan.

MOSES

This is for you. Take it.

They stare uncertainly at this brave new world before them. Moses can see the anxiety in their faces. Looks to Aaron.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Aaron...lead them down God's path.

Aaron takes the first step...pauses by Moses.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Show them the way.

He descends into the canyon formed by the walls of water. The Hebrews watch, then follow into the aqueous corridor.

ON RAMESSES. The Egyptian cavalry still blocked, he glares through the curtain of flames. Hatep at his side.

HATEP

Moses parts the waters...

Ramesses just stares, simply can't believe what he's seeing.

EXT. CORRIDOR OF WATER - RED SEA - MOMENTS LATER

Beauty and wonder enshrouds The Exodus as the people walk across the exposed sea bottom, something truly *holy* happening right before their eyes.

ON MOSES. Standing at the entrance watching the people -- MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN -- walking nervously.

ON A LITTLE BOY. Parents nowhere in sight, he's afraid to enter the corridor of water. Moses approaches, kneels down.

MOSES

You're scared.

(off his nod)

Do you believe in God?

(off his nod)

Then you never have to be afraid.

Moses and the boy look UP at the ROARING wall of water, appearing to be effervescently alive from within. Moses reaches his hand towards the water.

The boy watches nervously as Moses touches it -- passing his hand through and back -- the wall of water undisturbed.

MOSES (Cont'd)

See?

The little boy smiles, reassured. Moses offers his hand.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Walk with me.

The boy takes Moses's hand and they walk off through the canyon of water towards freedom.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE CORRIDOR OF WATER - RED SEA - LATER

The masses press onward, heads bowed to the wind as they stumble in a ceaseless stream through the walls of water. Joshua and his men keep the herd moving from on horseback.

JOSHUA

Keep moving! Keep moving!

EXT. GORGE BEFORE RED SEA - SAME

Ramesses visible through the curtain of fire, he looks at his men standing idly...horses BRAYING about, when...

HATEP

The fire fades...

The WALL OF FIRE begins to rip and tear, shredded by some invisible hand. WIND blows fire TOWARDS the chariots. Ramesses SHIELDS HIS FACE as the swaying flames grow thin.

RAMESSES

Sound the pursuit...

PIECES OF FIRE float free like falling debris. Flames dissipate into thin air when they hit the ground. The barrier dissolves to reveal the Hebrew Exodus nearing the far side.

Ramesses turns to the men like a dog straining at a leash...

RAMESSES (Cont'd)

CHARGE!

...as his chariot bounds forward, leading the cavalry.

EXT. FAR BANK OF RED SEA - SAME

Hebrews begin to arrive at the distant shore, struggling up a steep bank. Relieved as they clamber to the shore in droves.

BEHIND THEM. Tens of thousands TRAIL in the water corridor. Joshua pricks up his ears. Regards the RUMBLING ground, then climbs up on a BIG ROCK on the sea floor, face falling at...

JOSHUA

CHARIOTS!

ON THE CHARIOTS. Galloping between the towering walls of water. They race over the exposed seabed from the far shore.

ON MOSES. Moving up the steep shoreline with Aaron, Miriam and the children. Turns to the CRIES erupting behind him. Sees Hebrews running...chariots approaching in the distance.

MOSES

Hurry! Climb the banks!

Total panic ripples through the crowd as they stampede, stumbling over one another in a frenzy to survive.

ON THE CHARIOTS. Ramesses leads the charge, chariots speeding four abreast. SPEARMEN standing with javelins at the ready.

ON THE HEBREWS. Order devolved into chaos, they claw their way up the muddy banks in absolute terror, swarming past

MOSES --

standing on a rock like an island unto himself, he doesn't know what to do. Appears overwhelmed by the soul-searing ordeal...by the hopelessness...the WALLS of fear.

Suddenly, he's JOLTED by some otherworldly force. One so powerful, it brings him to his knees, as if shot in the back.

MIRIAM

MOSES!

Miriam hurries to his side. Sees Moses TREMBLING in pain. Struggling to hold his arms up...the rod in his right arm. Suddenly, the raging winds grow still, sighing into silence.

ON THE WALLS OF WATER. Starting to come apart. Waves roll off the tops, CRASH down on Hebrews trying to get to the shore.

ON THE CHARIOTS. Moving faster...drawing nearer. Ramesses whips his horse on. Unaware of the waves rolling off the water-walls, cascading into the corridor behind his calvary.

ON MOSES. Straining to keep his arms high and wide, seemingly holding the waters at bay until the Hebrews reach the beach.

JOSHUA

Quickly! Run!

Joshua and some men hurry down the slope, helping the OLD and INFIRM. Picking up CHILDREN and ushering them ashore.

AT THE FAR WESTERN SHORE --

two titanic rims of waves seethe forward, typhoon-like force sending the walls COLLAPSING in on themselves. A colossal TIDAL WAVE blasting East behind the Egyptian Army.

ON RAMESESSES. Leading his chariots along the alley of water. A ROARING THUNDER builds. Grows louder than the RUMBLE of the chariots over the ground, Ramesses looking behind him to see

THE TIDAL WAVE --

racing down the length of the collapsing corridor, it closes in on the cavalry of chariots. Consumes horses and men in the back of the pack, drowning them in the advance of water.

Fear alights on Ramesses's face as he looks back to the Eastern shore. Still too far away, he's not going to make it.

ON MOSES. No need to restrain the waters any longer, he lowers his arms to his side, sending the walls of water

COLLAPSING ON EACH OTHER --

a seemingly boundless volume, it engulfs the corridor all at once. ANNIHILATING the Egyptian army in one fell swoop, HORSES and MEN drown in the deluge. Tossed like rag dolls.

ON THE EASTERN SHORE. The Hebrews watch awed and dazed, the debris of horses and chariots being swirled around.

Pharaoh's army is decimated.

Moses suddenly collapses to the ground in exhaustion. His fall rippling through the crowd like a shock-wave. Those closest quickly rushing to his side.

Miriam gets to him first, drops down beside him.

MIRIAM

Moses...Moses...

Moses lifts his head to see the roiling expanse of the Red Sea before him -- remnants of a tragic victory on display.

MOSES

Help me up.

Joshua and Miriam help Moses to standing, our hero rising up to face the 200,000 Hebrews before him -- a sweep of people far as the eye can see...one-by-one, they kneel down.

Bow their heads in admiration. Prostrating themselves in a show of unwavering allegiance. While Moses may have once basked in the glow of a parade, this devotion is unsettling.

DISSOLVE TO:

WAVES LAPPING THE BEACH --

foaming in a steady and saturating SHOWER OF RAIN, suddenly BLOOD darkens the water.

EXT. WESTERN SHORE OF THE RED SEA - DAYS LATER

Thousands of dead Egyptian Soldiers and HORSES litter the beach among the debris of destroyed chariots. EGYPTIAN INFANTRYMEN drag the bodies onto horse-drawn DEATH WAGONS.

Nefertiri walks in the sand, soaked by the warm rain. She looks stunned. Taking in the scene of death and destruction, it looks like the aftermath of some natural disaster.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Great Queen!

Nefertiri turns, sees some MEN gathering down the beach.

EXT. ROCKS - WESTERN SHORE OF THE RED SEA - MOMENTS LATER

Nefertiri approaches -- afraid of what she might see -- the soldiers parting to reveal a battered and bloodied Ramesses. Hatep incredulously looks up from his side.

HATEP

He lives, my queen.

She considers Ramesses's broken form -- their eyes connect a moment, before she kneels beside him.

NEFERTIRI

Let them go.

Ramesses knows she means from his heart and mind. Suffers the thought for a moment. Then...

RAMESSES

Time will forget them.

The steady rain continues to fall, the sound of THUNDER rumbling in low as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNT SINAI - DAY

The imposing and jagged mountain of rock, the same dreary rain falls in sheets. The Hebrew encampment sits sprawled before the mountain, acres of entangled jury-rigged tents.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - MOUNT SINAI - DAY

A JACKAL howls in the rain, storm clouds brewing over the valley...as if alive. Just then, a TWIG SNAPS, the jackal turning to see Moses climbing up the treacherous rocks.

It's slow going...but he's driven.

EXT. HIGHER SLOPE - MOUNT SINAI - DUSK

A flash of LIGHTNING illuminates Moses climbing higher through a THUNDERSTORM. Angry bolts strike the mountain peaks behind the clouds above, as if leading the way.

EXT. PEAK - MOUNT SINAI - NIGHT

Fireworks of LIGHTNING spiderweb the sky. Moses stares in fear and wonder at the celestial display. Suddenly, a bolt of lighting SPEARS a ROCK nearby...narrowly missing him.

Its impact leaves an acrid smell in the air, smoke coming off the rock. Dissipating to reveal a burning imprint of what appears HEBREW LETTERING...etched into the stone.

Moses stares at the incredible sight. It's no coincidence.

EXT. VALLEY - MOUNT SINAI - DAY

RAIN continues to pelt the Hebrew encampment.

DATHAN (O.S.)

Not even Moses would dare say God brought us out of slavery for *this*.

INT. MEETING TENT - HEBREW ENCAMPMENT - SAME

Water drips through the cloth, falling intermittently on the leaders of the Twelve Tribes. It's cold and the men are sick. Aaron plays the diplomat on behalf of his absent brother.

DATHAN

But then again, where is Moses?
He has been gone thirty days.

AARON

He told me God asked him to ascend
the mountain.

DATHAN

And perhaps the mountain claimed
him. Or perhaps he chose to leave
us to reconvene with his wife and
children in Midian.

(off Aaron's look)

You needn't look so shocked. We
know he intended to meet them here.

AARON

This is the mountain where my
brother first spoke to *God*. I
assume God has more to say.

CORE

But you don't know.

Aaron can't deny that. HOSEA (of the tribe Ephraim) offers:

HOSEA

I sent Joshua up the mountain to
look for him, Aaron...he has not
returned either.

AARON

I can't speak for Joshua, but Moses
would not abandon us. He'll return.

DATHAN

Your objectivity is compromised.
Moses has failed. He's led us to
the middle of nowhere. We are more
than 200,000 people -- how are we
to sustain ourselves here?

CORE

The people want order.

AARON

Moses will give them order. Has
he not given you enough reason
to trust him? Plagues. Wonders.
Freedom itself.

CORE

Moses has shown us many wonders.
But if you ask me, the people don't
need more wonders. They just need
something familiar.

Aaron looks to the others for support, but none comes.

AARON

What do you propose we do?

Dathan casts a looks at the others. He's already vetted this.

DATHAN

We head back to Egypt and its
familiarity. When we arrive, we
can negotiate terms for better
conditions in return for our labor.

CORE

(assuaging Aaron)

Your brother's defeat of Pharaoh
puts us in a stronger bargaining
position.

The leaders reluctantly nod their assent. Hakkubak gestures
to the piles of TREASURE rimming the tent interior.

HAKKUBAK

But what of the gold?

Dathan thinks about that a moment.

DATHAN

We divide it among the tribes.

NEPPACH

How do you suppose we do that?

DATHAN

You'd rather we give it back?

BICKERING immediately ensues, but Aaron sees opportunity...

AARON

The gold represents our victory
over the Egyptians.

The leaders stop talking and look to Aaron.

AARON (Cont'd)

A victory.

Aaron does a gut check, then betrays Moses's earlier command.

AARON (Cont'd)

If we are to return, it should be behind a symbol of our power -- a symbol of Moses's strength. To remind our people of their God.

A beat, the leaders trade looks, nod in agreement.

DATHAN

You are wise to propose this, Aaron.

Others concur, nod in agreement. Aaron has an immediate feeling of unease over what he's just proposed. Somewhere, the sound of primal DRUMMING bleeds in as we...

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS --

the gold of Egypt is placed in cauldrons; FIRES are stoked beneath; women work wicker into a crude sculpture; cover it with mud, the beginnings of an animal's body taking shape.

As the LIQUID GOLD is poured on the sculpture, DRUM BEATS grow louder, building in intensity for the revellers at the

EXT. BASE OF SINAI - NIGHTFALL

Bonfires blazing amidst light rain, it's like the ancient equivalent of Burning Man -- hordes of drunken HEBREWS with PAINTED FACES and WILD HEAD ORNAMENTS dance in a frenzy.

Dathan leads a train of dancing FOLLOWERS, who shield themselves from the occasional rock hurled by

THE FAITHFUL

Watching from a low ridge just above. They YELL insults at the orgiastic bacchanalia raging below. Sporadic fist-fights break out between the parties. Others breaking it up.

EXT. HIGH LEDGE - MOUNT SINAI - SAME

CAMERA drifts across the rocky crags to find Joshua, carefully descending the mountain. His search for Moses futile, he pauses to catch his breath...

...when he hears the DRUMS beating far below.

EXT. BASE OF SINAI - RESUME

Miriam watches the party building toward anarchy. Looks uneasily towards a ROCK PEDESTAL serving as an altar for

AARON --

standing with arms raised to the heavens, the Followers CHEER for *him*. He basks in their adulation. Their fervor reaching a crescendo upon the appearance of

THE GOLDEN CALF

An APIS BULL made of gold. The symbol of strength is set on the pedestal beside Aaron. A massive and muscled idol, people sink to their knees before it, exulting in praise.

AARON

Behold this Apis Bull! Let this familiar symbol remind you of our power over Egypt!

People CHEER. Sudden thunder and lightning turns the cloud cover to a stew. Rain falls. Wild DANCING ensues. DRUMS beat louder and louder, reverberating through the valley.

EXT. HIGH LEDGE - MOUNT SINAI - NIGHT

Joshua stares at the burning party down below, drums THUMPING in the cold night. The sound of shifting gravel behind him. He turns, sees Moses descending from a different ledge...

...carrying two heavy STONE TABLETS.

JOSHUA

Moses...

Joshua marvels at the slates, miraculously etched with words. Moses looks past him. Taken by the sound of the swelling drum beats. Anger raging behind his eyes.

MOSES

What have they done?

EXT. BASE OF SINAI - RESUME

Thousands of people dance in rapture around the calf, others lay burnt offerings before the pedestal. Around a bonfire, naked bodies lay entwined, MEN and WOMEN engaged in an orgy.

ON MIRIAM. Watching these proceedings in utter dismay. Her gaze is suddenly drawn up the mountain. Eyes going wide at...

MOSES --

standing with the tablets beside Joshua on a low-ledge -- he's been watching. Fire in the sky behind him, fires down below...**he couldn't appear more powerful if he tried.**

MIRIAM

Moses.

Like wildfire, his name ripples through the crowd -- Hebrews turn to regard Moses looming on the ledge above; DRUMMERS and DANCERS slowly stopping; even Dathan turns, surprised.

Moses looks down on them. Scans their faces...eyes settling on a man atop the pedestal with the golden calf -- the man finally turning to see Moses...**revealing himself to be Aaron.**

Aaron.

ON MOSES. Confusion fights contempt on his face. Sadness battles with anger. Conflicting emotions coming into focus.

MOSES

WHY?!

In a fury, Moses HURLS THE TABLETS. Sends them falling. SHATTERING on the pedestal. Aaron looks frightened, Moses's eyes nearly bleeding with rage.

The Hebrews stare in frightened silence, scared to death. To them, Moses is the man who killed Egypt's first born. Who brought the sea down on the chariots. He is the wrath of God.

MOSES (Cont'd)

Spread word among the tribes: any man, woman or child who stands by me stands with God!

(at Aaron)

Everyone else stands alone.

He walks towards his tent, leaving a silent void. Then, as though his actions again separate a troubled sea, the flocks of Hebrews begin to break apart.

Most murmur thankfully that Moses has returned. Praise him. Drift back to their tents. Some gather by the golden calf. Dathan seizing the opportunity to galvanize his followers.

DATHAN

Follow Moses and die here in the desert! Follow me back to a better life in Egypt.

Through the SHOUTS and CHAOS, we find Aaron on his knees. Trembling as he picks up the pieces of the tablets, his eyes going wide at what he sees.

INSERT: Words etched in a hand that could not belong to man. The words we know to be The Ten Commandments.

EXT. MOSES'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Moses approaches the tent flap, a wake of FOLLOWERS forming behind him. He stops. Turns to Joshua.

MOSES

When God's people have assembled,
come in and give me account.

JOSHUA

And what of the others?

A moment of consideration. Moses closes his eyes, as if he has just heard troubling words. *God's words.*

MOSES

Kill every one of them.
(opens his eyes)
But leave my brother to me.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT NEAR GOLDEN CALF - BASE OF SINAI - NIGHT

A vast tangle of tents, still-smoldering fires cast an evil glow on the Golden Calf. Those Followers not asleep in tents lie in drunken heaps throughout the camp.

BY THE GOLDEN CALF --

Dathan lays awake...drunk and exhausted, yet nervous. Two WOMEN passed out beside him.

He tries to get comfortable, when he sees something -- a SHADOW darting across the face of a tent a distance away.

He wonders if his eyes are playing tricks on him. Then sees ANOTHER SHADOW darting by. A handful MORE SHADOWS streaking past his line of vision deep within the block of tents.

His heart starting to race, Dathan stands up. Startles at the sound of a SCREAM. A blood-curdling one. Then ANOTHER. And ANOTHER. SCREAMS now erupting from tents throughout his camp.

The SCREAMS draw CLOSER. Get LOUDER. Then they're joined by other sounds -- STABBINGS...CLUBBINGS...STRANGLINGS -- the sounds of men killing other men.

Dathan panics, turns to run...but suddenly stops.

Sees Lykkis seize the golden calf from atop the pedestal. SMASH it to the ground. Then set the pedestal on fire.

Dathan turns to run the other way, but bumps headlong into...

JOSHUA --

standing before him with a knife in hand, his body is soaked with other people's blood.

DATHAN

Please.

Joshua jams his knife into Dathan's stomach. Dathan's mouth opening as Joshua violently yanks the blade UP, gutting him. Dathan falls to his knees, then pitches forward. Dead.

INT. MOSES'S TENT - SAME

SCREAMS of death resounding. Moses listens to the horrific sounds. Eyes fixed on the dying fire, he watches the last embers burn to SMOKE, plunging him into DARKNESS as we

BLACK OUT.

REOPEN ON:

EXT. HEBREW ENCAMPMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

A mist drifts over the brutal aftermath of dead Hebrews. Moses walks among the maw. A warrior on a battlefield he never thought he'd be on, he surveys the sea of dead.

3000 people. *His people*. Laid out in every direction. Of all the fields of battle he has been on...this is the worst. This is not a victory. This is a loss of staggering proportion.

The only loss in battle he has ever suffered.

His body wracked with insurmountable pain and sadness, he sinks to his knees. Weeps as he's never wept before. Lifts his head to the heavens. Barely manages a whisper.

MOSES

If they are sinners then kill me,
too. You ask too much of me. I beg
of you...please, blot my name from
your book.

He rips his shirt open, bares his chest to the sky. Clouds roil overhead, as if deciding what to do with him.

MOSES (Cont'd)

DO IT! I DO NOT WANT THIS!

Moses's great challenge to God, he's begging to be put out of his misery. To be killed rather than lead these people. He closes his eyes, his death surely upon him. But then...

...all goes silent. His eyes flicker open, see clouds slowly beginning to recede. Dissipating as RAYS OF LIGHT finger the sky. The heavens offering one last low RUMBLE, and then...

SUNSHINE --

showering down in full gale, Moses shudders...he's still alive. The sun warming his face. Eyes an impossible blue. Tears reflecting back light that's been hidden far too long.

Just then, FOOTSTEPS approach, Moses turning: it's Zipporah.

INT. MIRIAM'S TENT - DAY

Miriam plays with a familiar WOODEN PUPPET with Gershom and Eliezer. Moses sits nearby with Zipporah, watching his kids. His voice is hoarse, beaten to a calm.

MOSES

Funny how the mind of a child works. They hear a voice coming from one place, but they're willing to believe it belongs to something they know isn't really speaking. When do men lose that ability?

Zipporah looks at him. Knows he's troubled.

ZIPPORAH

What are you going to do with him?

Moses just stares at her. A tortured look on his face.

EXT. MIRIAM'S TENT - HEBREW ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Moses emerges from the tent, feels the eyes of the HEBREWS upon him. Gravely watching him. He considers his staff resting beside the door.

Eschews it for his SWORD.

Murmurs rippling through the crowd as he walks slowly through the encampment. Makes his way to a tent where Joshua stands guard outside.

INT. AARON'S TENT - DAY

Aaron kneels on the ground, his arms tied to the post at the tent center. Eyes closed in prayer, he opens them to see Moses standing across from him. Sword in hand.

AARON

Moses --

Moses holds up a hand, silencing him. Considers his brother's tortured visage. Finally...

MOSES

Why.

Aaron studies his face.

AARON

You really don't know?
(off his long silence)
Because...I am not you.

Moses considers that a moment. Some deep truth dawning.

MOSES

I am not me anymore, either.

He sticks his sword in the dirt -- puts the man he used to be to rest. The brother's sharing a knowing look as....

MOSES (V.O.)

The oppressed life is difficult...

EXT. HEBREW ENCAMPMENT - SUNRISE

The sun creeps over the horizon, breaking through the clouds. People emerge from their tents, turning to the mountain. One-by-one, they stop at the sight of something...

MOSES (V.O.)

It robs man of his will.

Find Zipporah cuddled with Gershom and Eliezer, she sits up, looking toward the mountain...

MOSES (Cont'd, V.O.)

It tramples his dignity.

Find Joshua stepping from his tent, his eyes alighting.

MOSES (Cont'd, V.O.)

But a life lived free is more difficult. Because with freedom, comes responsibility.

Lastly, find Aaron, who opens his eyes from his morning prayers and stands. Eyes never wavering from the sight of

MOSES DESCENDING THE MOUNTAIN --

back-lit by the SUN, he holds TWO TABLETS. Presenting the most hopeful moment in history to the masses. The leader of Pharaoh's army has become the moral leader of God's.

MOSES (Cont'd, V.O.)
 So while the time for miracles has
 ended, our work has just begun.

Moses stops on a low cliff in plain sight of all the Hebrews.
 His face flushed with an otherworldly glow, it's as though
 its been touched by the Light of God itself.

MOSES (Cont'd, V.O.)
God gives you The Ten Commandments.

EXT. HEBREW ENCAMPMENT - MORNING

Moses walks slowly among the people, offering them a closer
 look at the tablets.

MOSES (V.O.)
 I am the Lord your God, who led you
 out of Egypt. Have no other gods
 before me. No image or idol. Do not
 use my name in vain. Remember the
 Sabbath and keep it holy. Honor
 your father and mother.

People close on Moses in a circle as he enters the center of
 the encampment...as if beckoned by the tablets.

MOSES (Cont'd, V.O.)
 You shall not kill. You shall
 not commit adultery. You shall
 not steal.

Moses puts the tablets in an ARK held by Joshua and his men.

MOSES (Cont'd, V.O.)
 You shall not bare false witness
 against your neighbor. Nor shall
 you covet his wife or possessions.

Aaron steps to him. Moses embraces his brother.

INT. TABERNACLE - NIGHT

Moses and Aaron sit surrounded by MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN,
 an altar of incense bleeding blue smoke.

MOSES
 These are God's rules. Follow them
 as you would the beating of your own
 heart. *Obey them as the moral basis
 on which all mankind is built -- not
 merely as a guide for your actions,
 but as a light for your very spirit.*

As that settles, Moses turns to the Ark.

MOSES (Cont'd)

And while these tablets will one day turn to dust, let God's Law live within you. So that no matter how difficult our times may be -- we can feel safe in knowing...

(beat)

God is with His people...always.

EXT. HEBREW ENCAMPMENT - THE NEXT DAY

Camp has broken, the mass Exodus getting ready to move on.

EXT. BASE OF MOUNT SINAI - SAME

Moses and FOUR LEVITES stand around THE ARK OF THE COVENANT, Leaders of the Twelve Tribes around them.

MOSES

We will travel north to the Promised Land. Let the Ark walk before us for all men to see.

HAKKABUK

And who walks as our first priest?

MOSES

My brother.

Aaron emerges through the crowd.

MOSES(Cont'd)

For years he has been the voice of the people. From now on, he will be the voice of God.

EXT. DESERT PASS - DAY

The ARK leads the people. Close to 200,000 HEBREWS walking with their heads held high. But rather than lead them, Moses walks among them -- a shepherd -- with Zipporah at his side.

Just then, he hears a SQUAWK, looks up to see a familiar SPARROW HAWK -- soaring overhead, it lands on a boulder.

Something about this sign from above troubling our hero.

EXT. HEBREW ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Thousands of tents sleep beneath the moon. Moses stands outside his tent, looking up at the vast starfield overhead. Suddenly, the gentle sound of a bird's FLAPPING wings.

He turns, see that same SPARROW HAWK perched on a branch. Its black eyes staring at him. Beckoning him. A look of bemused resignation crossing Moses's face. His time is at hand.

He watches the sparrow hawk fly off into the night.

A sad reality setting in.

EXT. THE RIVER JORDAN - DAWN

Moses stands with Zipporah, looking across the vista into the green and fertile PROMISED LAND beyond. Despite the beauty of what awaits, there's a sadness between them.

ZIPPORAH

I don't understand. At least step foot in the place He has given us.

MOSES

My Promised Land has never been across that river.

It's her...and she knows it.

ZIPPORAH

Where will I find you next?

He reaches out, places a hand on her heart.

MOSES

Carry me here and you will never have to look far.

EXT. SLOPE OF MOUNT NEBO - MORNING

Joshua walks up the rocky slope with Moses, the Hebrew encampment sprawling into the distance behind them.

JOSHUA

You are our leader. You must take us in.

MOSES

My entire life, I have been an outsider. Mine is not to go inside.

JOSHUA

But this was your dream.

Moses stops. Turns to him.

MOSES

Dreams don't die with the dreamer.

Moses offers Joshua his staff.

MOSES (Cont'd)

They live on across generations.
So long as they're carried forward.
Carry them forward.

Joshua understands, takes the staff.

JOSHUA

Just tell me, so all may know: how
may we honor you?

Moses takes off his sandals -- the gesture that began
his service to God so long ago -- and considers the empty
footwear for a moment...

...then levels his mournful eyes on Joshua.

MOSES

Turn their praise for me into
prayers to God.

With that, he turns from Joshua and ascends the mountain.

CUT TO:

GENTLY FLOWING WATER --

a shallow current trickling along, it BABBLES its way down...

EXT. THE RIVER JORDAN - DAY

A dozen pairs...then hundreds...thousands...CAMERA CRANES UP
to expose the glory of Hebrews crossing the Jordan -- 200,000
feet SPLASHING, we delight in the sound of a dream fulfilled.

EXT. PISGAH PEAK - MOUNT NEBO - MAGIC HOUR

MIST dances in the breeze, day's last light falling on Moses.
He looks down at the Hebrews crossing the river below -- an
all day event -- their trail stretches across the horizon.

His eyes wet with tears, he watches with a lifetime of love,
pride and sorrow. Suddenly he feels the wind pick up, rifling
through his long hair and drawing his attention to

A FALLEN TREE --

hollowed by weather, it lies like a couch. He considers it
a moment. Then gently sits down. As though made to fit his
form, he places down his robe, then sits and looks out across

THE PROMISED LAND --

the panoramic expanse as far as the future land of Dan; the mountains that will be Naphtali; the Jericho valley and its distant city of palms.

And then...MIST.

A mist that seems to cloud his vision, it rolls in up the mountain. Thick and impenetrable. Moses can't see through it. His view of the Promised Land obscured. Just like his dream.

Wisdom, majesty and sadness appearing on Moses's face all at once, the mist begins to crawl up the platform where he sits. Enveloping him as he speaks in the softest of voices.

MOSES

Our days are so short compared to
the time you know in Heaven.

His breath labored and shallow, life's slipping away.

MOSES (Cont'd)

But before I go, God, I ask you:
bless the people -- so they may
know without seeing; hear without
listening...

(closes his eyes)

...and feel your love in every
breeze...every breath...every kiss.

A gentle breeze...

...Moses breathes a last breath...

...mist touches his lips in a kiss...

...and wisps of divine mist carry him to freedom.

THE END