

MORTAL KOMBAT

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. LIU KANG'S VILLAGE -DAY

In a disjointed DREAM SEQUENCE a young Asian man, LIU KANG, wanders through his native Chinese village as the inhabitants go about their daily affairs, seemingly oblivious to his presence. Liu is dressed in modern American clothing and carries a small carry on bag, as if he has just arrived. An ancient temple nestles in a hillside at the far end of the village.

Liu smiles at the familiar scene and turns to look out over a verdant rice paddy - the ripe stalks of rice waving in a gentle breeze under a sunny sky. Then, a dark cloud covers the sun, and the wind turns cold. Liu looks to a nearby hill. Two figures fight, silhouetted against the sky, circling around an ancient altar of stone.

A raven calls high overhead. Liu looks up at the bird, which soars and circles. When Liu looks back at the hilltop, one of the figures is staggering back as the other attacks. Because this is a dream, Liu can suddenly see the face of his brother, CHAN. Chan falls back before the attack of his opponent, clad in black silk, whose face he cannot see. Chan, strangely, seems to look right at Liu, and in a frightened, despairing voice, cries out....

CHAN

Liu!

The second fighter lands a deadly blow, and Chan crumples to the hard stones. The second fighter stands over his inert form a moment, and then turns to gaze impassively down on Liu. Again, in the dream, Liu can clearly see the features of SHANG TSUNG.

LIU

(screams)

Chan!

2 INT. LIU KANG'S APARTMENT - CHICAGO - DAWN

Liu awakens in a tangle of sheets, calling his brother's name.

LIU

Chan!

Liu blinks at the familiar surroundings of his room, with posters on the wall, simple but modern furnishings, a stereo... and nearly smiles at the reassurance the familiar things give him after the dream. A nearly packed suitcase reminds him of something. His eyes fix on the crumpled telegram on the night table next to his bed, and another nightmare floods over him.... Only this one will not go away. Liu switches on the lamp, picks up the telegram and rereads it. But the message has not changed...he hasn't dreamed it.

LIU
(grieving)
Chan.

Liu throws the telegram down and goes into the bathroom to start his shower.

ZOOM IN ON

The telegram which reads, simply: BROTHER DEAD. RETURN HOME. GRANDFATHER.

3 EXT. URBAN DOCKS - AMERICAN CITY - DAY

A young American man, JOHNNY CAGE, dressed like a very hip cop with a turtleneck sweater wearing an Italian sports coat, fights six very tough looking stevedores armed with packing hooks, clubs, brass knuckles, and lengths of pipe. But, in an incredible display of grace and martial arts skill, Johnny takes down one tough guy after another - although it does seem they take turns rather politely - until there remains only one huge dude with the lead pipe. Johnny drops to one knee, punching the thug very low. The big dude stands over Johnny, frozen, confused.

JOHNNY
This is where you fall down.

Enlightened, the big dude dramatically keels over. Johnny shakes his head, rises and turns away, throwing his arms up in despair.

JOHNNY
Where do you get these guys!

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Cut!

NEW ANGLE

We now see the camera and lights. Johnny and the others have been acting a scene from an action film. The DIRECTOR approaches, apologetic. The stunt men climb to their feet.

DIRECTOR
Sorry, Johnny.

JOHNNY
You'll be sorrier when they pull you off my next picture, Sid.

The FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR now bellows into his headset.

FIRST ASSISTANT
All right, everybody. Reset! We go again in fifteen minutes!

JOHNNY
(stalking off)
I'm not doing it, again.

Johnny heads for his star trailer.

DIRECTOR
Johnny, its the last shot of the
picture. We're losing our light here.

But Johnny continues to his star trailer where his agent, NANCY,
intercepts him.

NANCY
Johnny, there's someone in your trailer,
who wants to talk to you....

JOHNNY
If it's a reporter, I'll eat his liver
for lunch.

4 INT. JOHNNY'S TRAILER - ON TABLOID

The Tabloid headline reads: JOHNNY CAGE'S 'STAND IN' TAKES THE FALL...
with a picture of Johnny yelling at a paparazzi underneath. A man
sits casually in the trailer, reading the inside story as Johnny
storms in.

WIDER

LIU
I don't know who let you in, here, pal,
but....

The man reading the paper, BILL BOYD, lowers it, smiling. Johnny's
expression turns from anger to one of awe and respect.

BOYD
Hi, Johnny.

JOHNNY
(astonished)
Sensai Boyd! Sorry, I didn't....

Johnny has lost his arrogance and eagerly shakes the older
man's hand.

BOYD
(nods to paper)
I see the press is still giving you a
hard time.

JOHNNY
My stand-in sits around while they
adjust the lights. They think I'm a big
fake.

BOYD

I know you're not.

JOHNNY

(new thought)

Sensai, you were my idol, growing up.
It means a lot, you saying that.

BOYD

Johnny, you're one of the best martial
artists in the world. And I know a way
you can prove it.

JOHNNY

Prove it? How?

BOYD

A tournament. The Tournament. Held
once a generation.

Boyd takes a small scroll with ebony handles out of a pocket and hands
it to Johnny.

THE SCROLL

When unrolled, is inscribed with Chinese characters and the Mortal
Kombat logo in the center.

JOHNNY

I've gotta brush up on my Chinese.

BOYD

It's the most ancient tournament in the
world.... Held on an island in the
South China Sea.

JOHNNY

I've never heard of it.

BOYD

All the participants are sworn to
secrecy.

JOHNNY

Well, if it's secret, I don't see
how....

BOYD

The fifty best fighters in the world are
invited. If you win The Tournament,
you'll win their respect. They'll tell
the entire world you're the real goods.

JOHNNY

I... I'm supposed to be prepping for my
next film as soon as this one raps
tonight. I just don't see....

Boyd stares silently at him, then reaches for the scroll.

BOYD

Of course. If your reputation isn't as important as the box office, then....

JOHNNY

No! I mean... I'll work around it. I'm honored.

BOYD

(smiles)

I've got a lot of faith in you.

JOHNNY

How do I, uh...?

BOYD

Be at pier forty, Hong Kong, Tomorrow night.

JOHNNY

Hong Kong! I.... Right. Sure.

5 EXT. DOCK - MOVIE LOCATION - DAY

Boyd steps from the trailer, shakes hands with Johnny.

JOHNNY

Thanks for everything.

BOYD

See you in the movies.

Johnny goes back into his trailer as Boyd walks away. Boyd walks past the electricians and grips, and, once out of sight, he morphs slowly into the features of Shang Tsung.

6 EXT. HONG KONG PANORAMA - DAY

Establishing. Superimpose: HONG KONG.

7 EXT. HONG KONG WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY

A band of black-clad commandoes moves stealthily toward the guarded door to a warehouse, covering for each other as they rush the building. One of the team leaders, SONYA BLADE, beautiful and hard as nails, speaks softly to the second team leader, JAXX, a Black American, over tiny headsets.

SONYA

(into headset)

Kano will be heading out the back door as we come in the front. Be there to cut him off.

JAXX
(over headset)
Oh, ye of little faith. Trust me.

SONYA
I trust one person on the planet, Jaxx,
and you're talking to her. We go in
ten.

Sonya raises a fist and pulls it down hard, twice. The two teams attack.

8 EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The guard at the door is overwhelmed almost instantly without a shot being fired. The two teams split up and Jaxx heads for the back with his men. Sonya and her team group around the door.

SONYA
Stun grenade.

A team member takes a stun grenade from his satchel. Two other members heave a battering ram against the door, breaking it in with one blow. The stun grenade is thrown inside. The team back off and hold their ears as it goes off inside. Then they rush through the door.

9 INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sonya's strike team fan out inside, The criminals inside go down bloodlessly in hand to hand combat.

SONYA

Moves in a direct line through the building, knocking aside anyone who gets in her way. She is driven, kinetic, never stopping as she uses all available cover to further infiltrate the building. Shots are fired at her. She returns fire with her automatic weapon. She can hear Jaxx's team crashing through the rear entrance with a loud stun grenade explosion. Shouts, gunfire, and more hand to hand combat all round. Sonya ignores most of the battles and keeps searching. She's looking for someone. A ruffian surprises her. She kicks his weapon away, and slams him hard with the butt of her gun, then continues, as if he were nothing but a nuisance.

10 INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - DAY

The office has a window to the warehouse interior. A large man with a shaved head and one red glass eye--his trademark-- peers out the window. This is KANO. He smiles, saunters over to a large packing crate, shoves it aside with his incredible strength, to reveal a large, heavy grate, leading down into the sewer. Shang Tsung sits across from him, watching impassively. Again using his brawn, Kano lifts the heavy grate.

KANO

You sure she'll follow me down here?

SHANG

She'll follow you into hell. Just make sure she gets on that boat.

KANO

I'll deliver her like a warm pizza.

SHANG

I've taken a liking to this one.
Deliver her alive.

INSIDE WAREHOUSE

Sonya crouches near the office, and speaks into her headset.

SONYA

Jaxx? Have you seen Kano?

JAXX (O.S.)

(over headset)

Negative.

SONYA

I think he's in the office.

Sonya moves quickly toward the warehouse office, gun ready.

JAXX (O.S.)

(over headset)

Sonya! Wait for backup!

11 INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE

Sonya crashes through the door, tucks, rolls, and comes up ready to blow anyone in there away. The only living thing inside is a large raven on a perch. Then Sonya sees the open grate.

SONYA

Damn.

The raven croaks, a strange "wood chime" sound, which catches her attention. She stares at the large, impassive bird, puzzled.

12 EXT. LIU KANG'S VILLAGE - DAY

Liu Kang, in his leather jacket, blue jeans and work shirt, stands just outside his native village as a bush taxi drives off. It looks exactly like his dream - so much so that he actually looks over the rice paddy at the neighboring hill. No one stands there, now. Liu's GRANDFATHER, comes slowly toward him, his back bowed with grief, but his face full of joy at seeing Liu. The old man embraces his grandson.

GRANDFATHER

It's good you are here.

LIU

I wasn't here for Chan.

GRANDFATHER

(a moment)

He spoke of you, daily. You were his big brother... more than that since the disappearance of your mother and father. He was so proud of you, living like a real American in Chicago. He wanted you to be happy.

Liu is pierced by pangs of guilt as they walk into the village.

LIU

How did he die, Grandfather?

GRANDFATHER

After you left for America, six years ago, he made the decision to become a monk. This you know. But he did not tell you he was following in your footsteps... preparing for The Tournament.

Liu stops and stares. His voice rises in anger.

LIU

The Tournament? It wasn't enough you filled my head with that... nonsense?

The Grandfather is hurt. Liu feels even more guilty.

GRANDFATHER

The Tournament is real.

LIU

I'm sorry. It's just.... In Chicago it is hard to imagine such a thing.

GRANDFATHER

Chan believed in it. He trained very hard. He could never be as good as you... but he tried to be worthy to represent the Order of Light.

LIU

How did it happen?

GRANDFATHER

I don't know for certain. I was away on the business of our temple when... a stranger came.

NEW ANGLE - THE VILLAGE

In FLASHBACK as the Grandfather narrates we see the stranger enter the village, dressed in black silk, his back to us. High overhead, a raven turns in a narrowing gyre, croaking its strange "wind chime" call. The stranger approaches...

13 INT. BLACKSMITH'S FORGE

The stranger enters. Liu's brother, CHAN, a large, genial youth of twenty, is working at the forge, hammering at a piece of wrought iron for the temple gates, his face aglow from the light of the fire. When he sees the stranger he is puzzled, but then offers a friendly smile.

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)

He sought out your brother and told him that he, too, was training for The Tournament. The two decided to train together. Chan was very naive... he mistrusted no one.

REVERSE ANGLE

We now see that the stranger is Shang Tsung. END FLASHBACK.

14 EXT. THE VILLAGE - PRESENT

The Grandfather stops, reliving the grief. Then continues.

GRANDFATHER

He went off with the stranger. When I came back that evening, Chan had not returned. When we discovered him.... It was strange. There were bruises... but It was more like... life had been sucked from him. We found him there, on the crest of the hill, near the Altar of Light.

At that moment, a raven calls out loudly. Liu looks to the hill, but it is deserted.

LIU

(haunted)

Grandfather.... I dreamed his death.

GRANDFATHER

The dreamer does not cause the thing he dreams.

(puts consoling hand on
Liu's shoulder; then)

Tell me.

Liu puts his arm around the frail old man, and they walk toward the village.

LIU

Chan is fighting on the Altar of Light.
He calls my name, then he falls. And
the stranger turns to look at me.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 EXT. LIU KANG'S VILLAGE - DAY

Once more, we are in the DREAM SEQUENCE. Chan's body is now laid out on the stone altar. Shang Tsung raises his hand in a strange, somehow frightening gesture...like a bird's talon.

REVERSE ANGLE - DISORIENTING JUMP CUT

The rice paddy is now muddy and foul, the raven circles in a leaden sky above the deserted village. An evil wind moans through the mysteriously empty houses.

LIU (V.O.)

(narrates; his voice
echoing)

In the dream, everything in the village suddenly changes. Houses are empty.... Crops... ruined. But.... something else happens after Chan's death. Something I can never remember when I wake up. As if... it were too frightening to remember.

The raven croaks its odd staccato call, like someone rapping with a staff on a hollow wood chime. END DREAM SEQUENCE.

16 INT. VILLAGE TEMPLE - DAY

We now see that Liu, still in his American clothes and leather jacket, has been recounting his dream to a circle of priests and elders. The priests wear simple white robes. In the center of the circle is a large, bowl-like torch, its flame fed by sticks of wood. The Grandfather sits to one side. The CHIEF PRIEST raises his head and speaks.

CHIEF PRIEST

It is true. Liu Kang has been given The Dream. He is the Chosen One.

SECOND PRIEST

(angry)

No! He left our village... turned his back on The Order of Light and its teachings! He isn't worthy!

GRANDFATHER

For many years he was the best student among you! He was a monk, like you!

THIRD PRIEST

Look at him! Look at the clothes he wears. He's no longer one of us!

SECOND PRIEST

He's forgotten everything he learned!

CHIEF PRIEST

(to Liu)

Is this true?

LIU

I remember everything. I tried to forget.... But you taught me too well.

(then; humbly)

I want to represent The Order of Light at The Tournament.

Heated debate breaks out among the monks and elders. The Chief Priest claps his hands twice, and they instantly fall silent.

CHIEF PRIEST

Why?

LIU

The man who killed my brother will be there. I know this.

The Chief Priest is disappointed.

GRANDFATHER

That cannot be your only reason for going! Or you will fail! The Tournament is not a quest for vengeance. There is so much more at stake....

LIU

(angry now)

What? What is at stake, Grandfather?

(mocking)

The fate of the World?

CHIEF PRIEST

Do not mock our sacred teachings! You know these things to be true.

LIU

I know only that I am the direct descendent of Kung Lao. Five hundred years ago he returned from The Tournament victorious!. Once a generation since that time a monk of this temple has been chosen to fight in The Tournament. And for Five Hundred years, they have lost.

Liu's eyes blaze as he walks around the circle, challenging the old men and the monks with his look.

LIU

Send the blood descendent of the last
great champion of The Order of Light. I
promise that I--

Suddenly, a voice like thunder booms into the temple, cutting Liu off.

RAIDEN

Promise nothing, you braying jackass!

Everyone turns to find a large figure standing in the doorway: a coolie hat keeps his face in shadow. His clothing is in rags, his feet bare; he carries only a simple wooden staff. The imposing figure approaches.

RAIDEN

You come to the temple, dressed like
a ... department store dummy..!
Spraying pronouncements around the
sacred flame like donkey spit!
(mocking tone)
'I remember everything.'

Raiden moves face to face with the stunned Liu and raises his head, revealing his features at last: RAIDEN. Liu's Grandfather is the first to recognize him.

GRANDFATHER

(awe; fear)
The Lord Raiden.

The others murmur in astonishment. As one, they throw themselves to the ground and prostrate themselves, still in a circle, around one of their principal gods. Liu is too astounded to react. He stares at the priests and elders, then back at the wizened face before him.

RAIDEN

You have forgotten everything of value.

Liu's Western experience takes over.

LIU

Grandfather. Get up! He's just a
beggar.

CHIEF PRIEST

(bowing, almost reciting)
Thus it is written. The god Raiden
comes humbly, dressed in rags, asking
little. Woe to him who turns away.
Swords of fire! And Wind to blow away
the Ash!

The other monks wail and groan in unison, truly terrified. Liu is amazed.

LIU

Raiden? This isn't your god of thunder and lightning. You've scared yourselves stupid with the stories you tell your children!

GRANDFATHER

(desperate plea; prostrate)
Spare him, my lord Raiden. American life has enfeebled his mind. Too much television....! He will learn.

Raiden squints at Liu. Then he turns his back, and - with surprising gentleness, extends a hand to the Grandfather.

RAIDEN

I doubt that very much, my friend.

Raiden helps the Grandfather to his feet. The others are in awe, now, of the Grandfather.

RAIDEN

His skull is as thick as these temple stones.

LIU

Leave my grandfather alone. Play your con game somewhere else.

A flash of anger illuminates Raiden's face. Then he turns to Liu.

RAIDEN

Spoken like a great champion and defender of his people. So, you're going to win The Tournament? Something you didn't even believe in, yesterday?

LIU

(surprised; recovers)
Yes. I am.

Raiden nods, as if pondering this as he walks around the young man. Then, he lunges in with his staff. Liu parries the stroke, tries to counter, but Raiden moves the staff with lightning-like speed, and sweeps Liu's feet out from under him. The younger monks laugh. The elders look grave as Liu gingerly climbs to his feet.

RAIDEN

The last living descendent of the great Kung Lao. You are indeed the last of the last. Your brother at least had Kung Lao's heart, if not his skill.

LIU

If you are Raiden, why did you let him die? Why didn't you protect him!

The temple falls utterly silent. Raiden speaks simply.

RAIDEN

Why didn't you?

Liu is devastated. His face flushes with guilt.

LIU

I should have.

Raiden softens at this real show of sorrow and contrition.

RAIDEN

The gods do not control men's destiny...
and they cannot protect you from it.
I'm not your bodyguard.

Liu still thinks he's talking to an old fraud.

LIU

You're good. You're very good.

RAIDEN

(winks)
The best.

Liu looks around the temple once more, and sees he has convinced no one.

LIU

I'm outta here.

Liu stalks out of the temple. The Grandfather speaks quietly to Raiden.

GRANDFATHER

There is no one else.

RAIDEN

I know.

Raiden begins to walk out of the temple, then he turns and speaks to all of them.

RAIDEN

And, whether any of you like it or
not... he is The Chosen One. You
shouldn't have tried to replace him with
his brother.

And, with a weary, regal tread, the beggar-like figure leaves the temple, leaving the men inside with their guilt.

17 EXT. VILLAGE - SUNDOWN

The old bush taxi once more waits outside the village. Liu says goodbye to his Grandfather.

In the distance, all the monks are on the crest of the hill, surrounding an enormous bonfire, which towers high into the darkening sky and reflects off their white robes. Other villagers stand at a respectful distance from Liu and the old man, watching them silently.

GRANDFATHER

The fire - taken from the sacred flame -
has been lit once again. It will burn
day and night until your safe return.
Keep it here...

(he touches Liu's chest)

It will light the way home.

Liu nods, moved with affection for the old man. The two men hug, then Liu gets in the battered vehicle, which drives off down the winding dirt road.

GRANDFATHER

(alone)

Raiden, give him wisdom. Show him the
way back.

The old man fights back his tears. Out beyond the village, heat lightning dances for a second in the sky, followed by a distant rumble. Grandfather nods with a small smile and turns, along with every villager, to gaze up at the magnificent beacon of fire - brighter than the setting sun - on the hilltop overlooking the temple.

18 EXT. PIER - HONG KONG - NIGHT

A dark, ragged-looking "junk" is moored at the pier, its mast tops half in shadow. Men walk up the gang plank and go aboard, staring at the strange craft in disbelief. Fifty men and women from many different walks of life congregate on the dock. Others already go on board. A black limousine pulls up and stops. The rear window slides down and Johnny Cage gawks at the vessel. Nancy sits beside him

JOHNNY

This can't be right.

(to driver)

I said Pier forty.

DRIVER

This Pier forty.

NANCY

(amused)

I figured you for more of a Love Boat
kind of guy, Johnny. I'm impressed.

JOHNNY

You can be replaced, you know.

OUTSIDE THE LIMO

Johnny climbs out. She joins him. Neither takes this threat seriously.

NANCY

Don't be a grouch. I'm the one who should be upset. My star client is disappearing to some mysterious island for a secret tournament.

(looks around, aghast)

Who are these people?

JOHNNY

The fifty best fighters in the world.

The menagerie of fighters is growing more bizarre by the moment.

NANCY

If you say so. Johnny, you don't need to prove anything. You're a star.

A gaggle of young teenage boys spot Johnny. They rush toward him, waving pens and autograph books, taking pictures and shouting Johnny's name.

JOHNNY

What's this?

As they swarm around their hero, Johnny begins signing autographs.

NANCY

The local fan club.

JOHNNY

You organized this? I told you I was travelling incognito.

NANCY

And I was supposed to believe you?

A huge, muscle-bound American, BEAU GRIFFEN, wearing gold chains and a nose ring, lumbers past carrying his own suitcases like they were lunch boxes. He spies Johnny Cage amidst the teenagers, and scowls. A second man, handsome and well built, ART LEAN also stops to watch.

JOHNNY

I'd better get on board.

Johnny picks up a couple of bags, but Griffen runs into him roughly.

JOHNNY

Hey, watch it!

GRIFFEN

Oooh! Whatcha gonna do? Get your stunt double to beat me up?

Griffen cringes in mock terror. Art Lean sees them and steps in quickly.

ART LEAN

Not here, fellas.

GRIFFEN

(low tones; to Johnny)
See you on the Island, Pretty boy.

JOHNNY

You're going to The Tournament?

GRIFFEN

Most of us are going to fight, not for a photo opportunity.

And with that, Griffen picks up his suitcases and shoves past Johnny.

ART LEAN

My father told me never to fight an ugly man. They've got nothing to lose.

JOHNNY

I'll make an exception for him.
(studies Lean)
You're Art Lean! I saw you fight in London. You were great.

ART LEAN

Thanks. I've seen a couple of your films. You can't fake some of those moves of yours. Don't let Griffen psych you out. He was born with a bad attitude and that nose ring.

JOHNNY

I'll remember that. Guess we're going to the same place.

ART LEAN

I guess we are.

Art Lean picks up his single bag and heads up the gang plank. The driver has unloaded the last bag and slams the trunk, looking a little disgusted. Nancy is worried in spite of her jokes as she eyes the decrepit wooden ship. She is paying several Asian dock hands to carry Liu's bags up the gang plank. They shoulder the big Gucci suitcases, and head onto the boat.

NANCY

They'll take your bags on board. I already paid them. Last chance to change your mind.

JOHNNY

No. I'll be back in a week.

NANCY

I tried. Take care of yourself, Johnny.

She gives him a little kiss on the cheek and gets back into the limo. The Driver is already behind the wheel.

NANCY

Driver, take me to the nearest bar. One
with lots of sailors.

Johnny smiles at her last joke as the limo drives away. But now he
feels alone and friendless.

NEW ANGLE

Liu Kang has just left his battered taxi and pays the driver. The
taxi drives off. Liu stands next to one of Johnny's suitcases,
wearing more traditional Chinese shirt and slacks, now. He looks up
at the junk. Johnny turns, sees him, and mistakes him for one of the
dock hands.

JOHNNY

You missed one?

LIU

One what?

JOHNNY

The suitcase. Don't get cute. You've
already been paid.

LIU

(glares; then; slyly)

Oh? The suitcase? Very nice.

(fake coolie accent)

Oh, shuah thing, Mistah! Chop chop!

And with a demonic grin, Liu takes the suitcase and shuffles with
gleeful exaggeration up the gangplank. Half way up, he turns, loses
the grin, and throws the heavy suitcase into the black water. It
floats away. He turns to Johnny, astounded, back on the dock.

LIU

(mocking)

So solly!

And he turns and walks onto the boat.

JOHNNY

Hey! Heyyy!

Johnny hustles after him.

19 EXT. HONG KONG WATERFRONT - VAN - NIGHT

The unmarked van creeps along the deserted wharves, lights off.

20 INT. VAN

Jaxx, wearing night-vision goggles, is driving. Sonya rides shotgun,
peering through night vision binoculars. A half dozen team members
ride in the back, weapons ready.

JAXX

You're not even sure that sewer leads to the waterfront.

SONYA

I know Kano. He's in his element here... with the other wharf rats.

Just then, as they pass a dark alley, bright headlights shine into the van, blinding them. A roar of an engine, and the vehicle pulls out in front of them. The driver fires a short burst from a machine pistol which ricochets off the pavement in front of the van. Jaxx tears off his night goggles, throws on his headlights, and gives chase.

SONYA

That's Kano. I can smell him.

21 EXT. WATERFRONT - CONTINUOUS

The van careens after the second vehicle, until it crashes into bales of cotton, near Pier Forty. Kano leaps out.

22 EXT. PIER - JUNK - NIGHT

Kano heads for the junk, which is already preparing to leave the dock. With the agility of a circus performer, he runs up a mooring line, just as the van screeches to a halt. Sonya leaps out. Jaxx steps from the cab as well.

JAXX

Hold on. We don't have a warrant to go on board.

SONYA

Paperwork was never my strong suit.

Sonya fastens her web belt, and begins running toward the mooring line, just as two dock hands cast off the lines.

23 EXT. JUNK - DECK - NIGHT

Johnny Cage spots Liu Kang, unrolling a mat on deck and storms over to him.

JOHNNY

Hey, you!

Just then, Kano nearly kicks him in the head as he leaps onto the deck, knocking Johnny over, then turning to watch the dock.

KANO

Come on, baby. Come to papa.

Kano turns and dives into the central hold, leaving Johnny lying on the deck. He picks himself up just as the junk is moving away.

ON THE DOCK

Sonya has climbed onto a crane, grabs the cable, and swings out over the junk.

JAXX

Sonya, wait!

24 EXT. DECK - JUNK - NIGHT

Johnny once more tries to confront Liu Kang. He spins him around.

JOHNNY

Hey, I want to--

Just then, Sonya swings like a pirate onto the deck and crashes into Johnny, sending him flying. She tucks, rolls, and jumps to her feet, her eyes sweeping the vessel for Kano. Johnny jumps to his feet and spins her around.

JOHNNY

You want to play rough, asshole?

He sees two things simultaneously, her pretty face... and the nine millimeter pistol she points at his chin.

SONYA

No. Do you?

JOHNNY

(movie star charm)

Oh. I mean... I'm Johnny Cage. And you are...?

SONYA

Where did he go?

JOHNNY

(deflated)

The guy who came up the rat lines? He went down into the hold.

Sonya heads for the hatchway and climb down the ladder. Liu Kang has seen it all.

LIU

Just another star struck fan....

25 INT. JUNK - BELOW DECKS - NIGHT

The wooden ship creaks and objects sway as Sonya makes her way through the bowels of the ship. She sees a door at the end of the passageway and makes for it. A burly brute, the junk's CAPTAIN, suddenly steps in her way.

CAPTAIN
Help, you, Missy?

SONYA
What's on the other side of that door?

CAPTAIN
Private quarters. No admittance. But I
can give you a special tour of my
cabin.

SONYA
(shows her identification)
I'm looking for a murderer. He boarded
this ship.

CAPTAIN
I'm the Captain. You got no authority
on my ship, Missy.

Johnny comes up behind Sonya and overhears.

JOHNNY
Be nice to the lady. She's just doing
her job.

The Captain moves to Johnny and looks him up and down.

CAPTAIN
And I'm just doin' mine.

And without warning, he punches Johnny in the stomach, doubling him
over. Sonya immediately reacts, sweeping the Captain's legs and
sending him to the deck as Johnny fights to catch his breath.

JOHNNY
(gasping for breath)
I...uh... had him under control.

SONYA
I noticed.

She turns and heads toward the wooden door when it opens and a large
figure steps out, wearing a ninja outfit. This is SUB ZERO.

JOHNNY
Trick or treat.

Sub Zero doesn't speak. He remains blocking the door.

SONYA
Move aside.

Nothing. She draws her sidearm and shows her badge.

SONYA
Stand aside!

Sub Zero looks down at the weapon, then opens his mouth, and blows. A frosty blast of air envelops the gun and Sonya's fingers, freezing the weapon to brittleness. Sonya stares at it, then tries squeezing the trigger.

THE GUN

is white with frost. The trigger snaps off like an icicle. Sub Zero's hand comes up and snaps off the barrel.

WIDER

Johnny moves to help, when the Captain lunges forward, punching Johnny hard in the midriff, and doubling him. Sonya wheels, and engages the Captain in a brawl. She is the better fighter and soon has him bouncing off the bulkheads.

NEW ANGLE

Liu Kang arrives. He sees Sub Zero coming up behind Sonya, grabs the bulkhead, and uses both feet to kick Sub Zero aside. He grabs a metal rod and makes it whistle as he tries to take Sub-Zero down at the knees. Sub Zero grabs it, freezes it to a brittle popsicle, and shatters it, as well.

LIU

Hey! Chill out!

But, in the blink of an eye a third nemesis appears, scurries into view, SCORPION, a black-cowled figure. Johnny tries a judo move, grabbing the aggressor's arm, only to discover he has hold of a razor sharp pincer claw. Johnny falls back, amazed. The three do their best to fend off this bizarre attack... but things look bad, until....

A BLUE BALL

of electricity streaks down the passageway, and knocks the three attackers aside like bowling pins, causing them to glow in the dark for a second, while miraculously leaving Sonya, Johnny and Liu unharmed. Another eye blink, and the two strange beings disappear into the bowels of the ship. The Captain lies groaning on the deck. Liu, Sonya and Johnny turn in near shock.

WIDER

The beggar-like figure of Raiden standing behind them. Liu recognizes him.

LIU

You! You're not.... I mean, you are....

RAIDEN

(ignores him; thundering voice)

Shang Tsung!

The preternaturally loud voice nearly deafens the three humans. The oaken door swings open, and Shang Tsung steps calmly through it. Liu stares, struggling to remember where he's seen him before.

SHANG

Lord Raiden. How good of you to grace us with your presence.

RAIDEN

You sicked your circus menagerie on three of my combatants in the Tournament. That is forbidden, as the Emperor Kahn well knows.

Sonya, Johnny and Liu huddle together to one side and listen.

SONYA

What tournament? What's he talking about?

SHANG

(to Raiden)
My apologies. It won't happen again.

RAIDEN

I shall see to that.

SHANG

Of course.... Until we reach the island. Where you have no dominion.

RAIDEN

My dominions are well known to me, Sorcerer.

Shang turns to go back inside. Sonya grabs his wrist. Shang bristles, then looks into Sonya's pretty face. He softens.

SONYA

Hold on. Did he say I was participating in a Tournament?

SHANG

Yes, Sonya. You have been chosen.

And he goes back through the door, closing it firmly. Raiden turns and starts back down the passageway.

RAIDEN

(thundering voice)
Come with me, all of you!

26 INT. SHANG'S QUARTERS - JUNK - NIGHT

The quarters take up the entire stern of the boat below decks, luxuriously appointed with Chinese silk screens and elegant ebony furnishings. A feeble knock on the door.

Shang waits calmly as the Captain slinks in. Kano sits on a chair, legs dangling over the arms, peeling a fruit with a knife, and grinning at the Captain's terror.

CAPTAIN

You wanted to see me?

SHANG

Is it so difficult, Captain, to prevent a noisesome female from disturbing me in my quarters?

CAPTAIN

I... she... There were three of them.

SHANG

I'm impressed. You can count to three. I was humiliated just now... forced to apologize to a Being I detest. Do you know how much I loathe apologizing, Captain?

The Captain looks like a cornered rodent. In fact, rodent like whiskers begin to grow on his face, and his ears begin to elongate!

CAPTAIN

I'm sorry, sir. Like you said... it won't ever happen again.

Kano loses interest in the fruit and stares.

SHANG

I believe you.

The Captain continues his fearful transformation into a huge rat! Then Shang blinks.

SHANG'S EYES

are now reptilian and yellow.

WIDER

Shang transforms into an enormous cobra, coiling and rising until the hooded head brushes along the bulkhead, moving toward the rat/Captain, who squeals and cowers in a corner, his own rodent eyes transfixed by the hypnotic gaze of the serpent/sorcerer. The cobra hovers over the rat another long moment, then lunges... and swallows him whole! The squeals of the rat become muted as the bulge moves down the giant serpent's neck. Then... silence.

KANO

swallows the bite of fruit in his mouth.

WIDER

Shang once more stands before him in his normal shape. Only his eyes are still those of the snake's, yellow and menacing. He fixes Kano with that same hypnotic stare, freezing him in his tracks. Then Shang blinks, and the eyes are once again normal.

SHANG

Any questions?

Kano remains silent. He takes another bite of the fruit, but discovers he can't swallow it.

27 EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Johnny, Sonya and Liu stand confused, as they move across the deck. Raiden has disappeared.

JOHNNY

All right. Okay. There's got to be a rational explanation for this. If we all... There was.... I...am clueless.

He sits down on a barrel, trying to think.

SONYA

Where'd that guy go? Who is he?

JOHNNY

What is he?

LIU

Raiden. God of Lightning, and Protector of the Realm of Earth. Although I didn't believe it until this minute.

Johnny is nursing a cut over his eye. Johnny explores a few tender ribs.

JOHNNY

Uh-huh. Yeah. Well, a bad head trauma will do that to you.

LIU

Oh, and nobody laid a glove on you?

SONYA

(seething)

While you two are measuring testosterone levels... a wanted criminal is still hiding down there.

JOHNNY

Excuse us, officer. Arrest him. Don't let us interrupt!

They are now in the bow of the ship away from the others. There is a sudden strange electrical discharge.

RAIDEN (O.S.)

Enough!

Raiden appears before them, standing near the bow sprit. This apparition awes them all into silence.

RAIDEN

I really don't know why I bother.

(to Sonya)

You just want to play cops and robbers!

(to Johnny)

You act like this is some... publicity junket!

(long pause; to Liu)

And you... you're here for revenge. I expected more from you. None of you are worthy to fight in The Tournament.

SONYA

What is this... this Tournament?

RAIDEN

(annoyed)

I was getting to that....

(more solemn)

The Fifty best fighters of each generation are chosen... must be chosen.... to meet in one to one combat fifty of Kahn's best warriors... like you, chosen from his vast realm.

LIU

The Emperor Kahn? From Outworld.

RAIDEN

Exactly.

JOHNNY

What's Outworld? Who's Kahn?

LIU

(recalls his lessons)

An Immortal with magical powers.

JOHNNY

Get outta here! So now we're fighting supernatural beings who can't die?

RAIDEN

No. The Tournament is called Mortal Kombat.

SONYA

Mortal combat? Fighting to the death is a form of dueling. It's strictly outlawed in every country in the world.

LIU

He means only mortals can participate.

JOHNNY

As opposed to... immortals... which
would include... someone like...you?

RAIDEN

(matter of fact)

Precisely.

Johnny is dazed. He sits down again.

JOHNNY

I feel much better, now.

LIU

According to the legends, Kahn can't
enter the Realm of Earth until his
warriors defeat the best mortals in ten
great Tournaments.

SONYA

So we're like... representing the whole
human race? Fifty people on a leaky
boat are going to save the world?
That's crazy.

RAIDEN

War is crazy. This is very rational.
The Tournament isn't about death, it's
about saving millions of lives.

LIU

In the stories, my ancestor stopped
Kahn's forces once, five centuries ago,
by defeating a great sorcerer.

RAIDEN

You do remember your lessons.... And
you're starting to believe.

LIU

I didn't say that.

OFF THE BOW

a huge, thick fog bank looms. Raiden turns and sees it.

RAIDEN

It's begun.

Raiden stands, staring at the approaching wall of fog as it rolls
toward the junk.

IN THE RAISED STERN

The sorcerer, Shang Tsung prowls, near the helmsman. He stops and raises his arms to the enveloping mist, exalting.

SHANG

It has begun!

ON DECK

Johnny Liu, and Sonya stare up at the masts overhead. Through the fog... they begin to glow with a phosphorescent light! In a moment the boat, and everyone on it are glowing as well, staring at their hands and at each other in amazement. The boat radiates a cool light from stem to stern.

28 EXT. BAY - NEAR ISLAND - DAYBREAK

Morning finds the junk anchored off a beautiful yet forbidding island, whose cliffs rise up into the mist and clouds, thousands of feet above the masts. A cleft in the cliff face is carved with a stone stairway, which winds up the fissure into the mist. On a promontory above the clouds, the ruins of an ancient temple gleam in the first rays of the sun.

29 EXT. JUNK -DECK -DAY

Johnny awakens from an uncomfortable night's sleep, curled on the wooden deck, to the sounds of Sonya trying to raise someone on her uplink phone, a small contraption with a circular antenna.

SONYA

Hello? Is anyone monitoring? Jaxx,
this is Sonya? Hello?

Johnny works out a crick in his neck. Liu stands at the rail, studying the island.

JOHNNY

Order in some coffee while you're at it.

SONYA

Do I look like your secretary?

JOHNNY

It was a-- I was.... Forget it.

SONYA

No snappy comeback without a script?
(fidgets with antenna)
That electrical disturbance last night
must have blown out the transistors.
St. Elmo's Fire I think they call it.

LIU

(turns)
And what was Raiden.... and those guys
in the hold? The Northern Lights?
We're not in the South China Sea. Look
at your compass.

Johnny is as curious as Sonya, who opens her wrist compass.

THE COMPASS NEEDLE

spins wildly, not fixing on any direction.

WIDER

Johnny and Sonya exchange a glance, then join Liu at the rail, looking
out over the lagoon at the island. Johnny is queasy.

JOHNNY

Wherever we are, that looks like solid
ground. I get seasick in my bathtub.

SONYA

(re: island)
It's beautiful.

JOHNNY

Kinda spooky, if you ask me.

LIU

(smiles; shakes head)
I wonder.... No.

JOHNNY

What?

LIU

I was just thinking.... What if all the
legends were true?

30 EXT. BEACH - ISLAND - DAY

The junk rides at anchor in the distance. A half dozen long boats
transport the remaining combatants to shore. A mute MONK in a black
robe, acting as a sort of Beach Master for the landing, walks along
the shore with a scroll, checking off names. Sonya, Liu and Johnny
walk alongside of him.

SONYA

Can you tell me if there's a phone on
the island? A police station? Navy
base?

JOHNNY

Club Med?

He won't acknowledge them. She pulls out her badge.

SONYA

I'm Lieutenant Sonya Blade, on special assignment with--

He stops, finds her name, checks it off. She sees.

SONYA

Wait a minute? What's my name doing on that list? Hey, you!

She grabs the Monk's arm. The cowl partially falls away, revealing that the monk's lips have been sealed with old rawhide stitches, now overgrown with scar tissue. Amazed, she and the others follow him with their eyes as he continues down the beach.

JOHNNY

His lips are sealed. Takes on a whole new meaning.

Johnny contemplates his remaining four bags, piled at his feet, then looks up at the steep, winding staircase. Many of the others have already begun the climb, appearing smaller and smaller until they disappear into the low clouds.

LIU

Gonna hire someone to carry those up for you?

Johnny actually brightens for a beat, then realizes it's a joke. Grimly, he gathers up his four bags.

31 EXT. TOP OF STAIRS - DAY

Johnny arrives sweating from head to toe at the top of the stairs with only one small bag. Liu walks beside him. The stairs end at

AN ORNATE MARBLE BRIDGE

which traverses the cleft in the cliff and leads to a beautiful statuary garden. Sonya is stationed at the bridge, looking like she could still run a four minute mile. The two men exchange a glance.

LIU

(guesses)
See him?

SONYA

No. Maybe he stayed on the boat... the cockroach.

She falls in with them and they walk through....

THE STATUARY GARDEN

which has several dozen statues of ancient warriors... some of them distinctly non-human. Liu stops in front of one, surprised.

LIU

This is my ancestor, Kung Lao.

Johnny and Sonya look up at the handsome, age worn statue in front of them. There is a vague likeness.

JOHNNY

Yeah?

(nods to a gargoyle-like statue nearby)

I hope he isn't somebody's ancestor.

LIU

He might be.

SONYA

You seem to know more about all this than anyone else.

LIU

I was trained from the age of one to compete in Mortal Kombat. My teachers talked of little else... until I grew sick of the very words.

JOHNNY

But here you are.

A stir behind them causes them to turn. Dark monks carry a silk-shrouded palanquin across the garden.

JOHNNY

Suppose we could have rented one of those to haul our butts up here?

The curtain sways open for a second, revealing an Asian woman of startling beauty, KITANA. She looks straight into Liu's eyes, as they walk alongside the palanquin, until it is carried toward the Great Hall on the other side of the garden. Liu's gaze continues following the palanquin.

JOHNNY

When a woman looks at you like that, it usually means something.

SONYA

(mutters)

It means she's a bimbo.

Liu is ashamed, remembering his mission. He begins striding away in another direction.

LIU

I didn't come here for that. I'm looking for my brother's killer.

JOHNNY

Sorry.

Sonya stops, startled, her own thoughts darkening her face.

LIU

walks on alone along a low marble wall. Then he stops. He has sensed, rather than actually seen something there, blending into the wall. The thing, whatever it is, suddenly moves camouflaging itself perfectly into the surroundings, so that when Liu turns, he cannot see it. Liu frowns, and continues on, unaware that he has just had his first run in with REPTILE, the chameleon.

NEAR THE GREAT HALL

Johnny and Sonya walk to the far end of the statuary garden. He puts down his suitcase to rest.

SONYA

I'm going to track down Kano. If he's on the island, I'll find him.

JOHNNY

(yawns)

I'm going to find a bed that doesn't rock and sway all night.

Sonya moves off quickly. Johnny reaches for his suitcase, and notices for the first time the shadow of a four armed-monster reaching toward him on the paving stones. When he looks up, the sun is directly behind the largest statue in the garden, a huge four-armed creature standing at the very entrance to the hall. Johnny blinks, and a chill runs through him.

32 INT. CORRIDOR - OFF GREAT HALL - DAY

Sonya moves stealthily down a corridor, trying doors, peering inside, then moving on. Each door has a brass plaque with the name of the intended occupant in whatever language and characters he or she would understand. She does a double take when she sees her name engraved on one such plaque: LT. SONYA BLADE. Annoyed, then curious, she goes in.

33 INT. SONYA'S ROOM

The room is spartan, looking more like a personal gym than living quarters. Most of the space is taken up with weight equipment, and a suspended kick bag. A cot with army sheets and a blanket you could bounce a quarter off is tucked down tight. She explores, finds a closet and opens to find clothes in it, most of it your basic black fatigues and turtlenecks, like the clothing she has on. She holds it up, amazed to see it is her size. Then she realizes she's been wearing the same duds for forty-eight hours, holds up her armpit and takes a whiff... and recoils. She pokes her head into the bathroom, then peels off her outer clothing, revealing black, no-nonsense underwear and a superb, athletic body. She begins pulling off her athlete's halter top just as she steps into the bathroom and disappears from sight. We hear shower water running.

34 INT. SMALL PAVILION - DAY

Liu stands just inside his cottage-like lodgings, admiring the detail. Posters similar to the ones he had in his Chicago apartment. Liu admires a neon art sculpture, and turns to the mute Monk who accompanies him.

LIU
All the comforts of home. Very
thoughtful. But we're not home, are we?
Where is this island?

The mute Monk studies him, then turns and leaves. Liu is uneasy among such familiar trappings from his own life. He opens a sliding door screen to reveal...

A MINIATURE STONE GARDEN

with a few well trimmed shrubs, rocks, and a fountain.

35 INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - DAY

Johnny is escorted by another monk - mouth sealed - to his lodgings and let in. Johnny whips out a fiver to tip him, but the monk is already heading back down the corridor.

JOHNNY
Can I ask you something? How do you
guys eat?

36 INT. JOHNNY'S SUITE - DAY

The digs look like the luxury suite at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel - a little garish, but lavish. At the center is an immense bed with purple bed cover. Johnny nearly staggers over and collapses face first onto it. It's a waterbed! Johnny groans as he's sloshed about.

JOHNNY
No. Stop moving. Please!

37 INT. GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

At a welcoming banquet in a long tracking shot we follow Liu, Sonya and Johnny through the great diversity of the competitors in The Tournament, whose icon (i.e. the Mortal Kombat logo) hangs on banners from balconies. The decor is largely ancient Chinese. The human contingent is a study in contrasts. An ascetic monk eats from a rice bowl next to a Cossack who tears a slab of roasted meat from a spit in a big fireplace. A primitive Bushman with a horn knife, drinks blood from the side of a live sheep! Sonya sees someone who resembles Kano from the back, moves in cautiously, and sweeps him to the ground. It isn't Kano!

SONYA
Sorry.

They move on as the man's friends help him to his feet. Johnny speaks above the incredible din and clatter of plates.

JOHNNY

I noticed you apologized to him.

Sonya tries to ignore him. Johnny smiles. He's getting to her.

JOHNNY

Don't you ever smile?

SONYA

I grew up around sisters who grinned at everything a man said. It was like a nervous female tic!

She imitates an inane "feminine" smile.

JOHNNY

Lighten up. They were being friendly.

NEW ANGLE

Even stranger are the non-human competitors - denizens of Outworld...as we shall learn. Some seem perfectly human, like a small woman, JADE. But others are monstrous. A biped with translucent parts like a jellyfish is digesting an entire invertebrate, still struggling through the intestinal tract. A blind, bat-like albino humanoid emits high shrieks near a lantern, then snatches huge flying insects with impossibly rapid hand movements and devours them. Two goat-headed creatures with round, curving horns, charge and butt heads furiously, knocking over a table. No one pays them any attention.

KITANA

sits at a raised table, where she is served like royalty by cowed Outworld monks. Liu hesitates as he passes her table, but she does not let her gaze linger on him as she did earlier. In fact, she seems to deliberately ignore him. He rejoins Sonya and Johnny.

A LONG TABLE

Art Lean sits with some other men, all completely amazed by what they see on the other side of the hall. He sees Johnny and rises.

ART LEAN

Hey, Johnny! What do you think? This is better than WrestleMania, isn't it?

JOHNNY

I'm glad you can still laugh about it.

ART LEAN

What's the point of getting freaked out? Listen.... my old sensai used to say, they still put on their "gi's" one leg at a time....

ANOTHER ANGLE

Two cat-like creatures, BARAKAS, suddenly begin a furious fight at one end of the hall, black onyx-like claws bared, hissing, knocking things over.

RESUME ART & JOHNNY

Who watch the fight from a distance.

JOHNNY

Or one paw at a time.

Johnny gives Art a friendly pat on the shoulder, then rejoins Sonya and Liu just as a frenzied thudding of oriental drums silences the hall.

SHANG TSUNG

appears amidst great pomp and ceremony, preceded by a cortege of black cowled monks. He steps onto a dais. He is dressed in his most elegantly embroidered silk. His eyes sweep the hall. The denizens of Outworld practically shrink from him, their heads lowered, cowed. His appearance commands silence in the hall.

SHANG

Welcome! You are here to compete in Mortal Kombat, the greatest of all tournaments. You should be proud! Each one of you has been chosen for your excellence, your skill, and your courage! You are the best fighters of your generation, worthy to represent the Realm of Earth... and the Realm of Outworld!

The human contingent mutter among themselves, a little baffled.

38 INTERCUT LIU AND RAIDEN

Liu spies the humbly garbed figure of Raiden standing aloof from the others. Raiden instantly senses the gaze and turns to meet Liu's eyes.

SHANG

Tomorrow morning, the great combat begins. Fifty matches...the opponents chosen by lots. The winner of each combat will progress to the next.... Until only one remains!
(wicked gleam in his eye)
Some of you will even have the privilege of fighting Prince Goro, the reigning champion.

(MORE)

SHANG (cont'd)
(chilling smile; to human
contingent)
You are all witnesses to one of the
great turning points in the history of
the World!
(slyly ironic)
Treasure these moments....

Shang steps from the dais Once more the drums roll, echoing through
the hall

NEW ANGLE

Liu is deeply troubled.

LIU
(to himself)
Goro?

JOHNNY
The reigning champion? If its been
fifty years since the last Tournament,
he's got to be using a walker by now.
Probably just a token honor, letting him
participate.

LIU
In the legend taught to me as a child,
Goro was a giant, who defeated my
ancestor, Kung Lao.... Five hundred
years ago.

JOHNNY
Five hundred years? Then we've really
got nothing to worry about.
(smiles)
Lighten up. It's not the same guy.

SONYA
(distracted)
Kano isn't here. If anyone knows where
he is, that one does.

She nods toward the departing Shang Tsung, and heads after him.

JOHNNY
You gotta admire her. When she sets her
mind on something....

Both men watch her go after Shang Tsung. They exchange a silent look,
and slowly follow after her.

ON A DARKENED BALCONY

at the far end of the great hall, heavy curtains keeping it in deep
shadow, a huge figure stands unnoticed.

FROM THE BACK

The figure, in a long silk cloak, reveals only massive shoulders and long, flowing black hair, which fans out over the cloak and cascades to waist level. This is GORO. Golden earrings gleam in the light from below. The figure is watching

JOHNNY AND LIU - HIS POV

who walk directly under him out of the hall. A low murmur, nearly a growl, comes from Goro's throat.

GORO

spins and leaves the balcony, giving us the merest glimpse of a

LARGE, BLACK EYE

The iris of the eye dilates as Goro re-enters the darkness, until the pupil seems to engulf us in its emptiness.

WIDER

We see Goro's back receding as he descends a secret stone staircase leading into a dark cavern below. Goro's retinue of torchbearers are all lithe, cat-like Barakas, who jostle each other for position and hiss as they hurry to light the way for their master.

39 EXT. STATUARY GARDEN - NIGHT

Shang Tsung leaves the Great Hall unescorted and makes his way across the garden, when he is accosted by Sonya.

SONYA

I want to talk to you.

Suddenly, two shadows loom, Sub Zero and Scorpion. Sonya wheels to face them, but Shang waves them off.

SHANG

It's all right. Leave us.

Like bass sinking back into deep water, they recede into the night. Shaken, Sonya turns back to Shang, more conciliatory in tone.

SONYA

Do they always follow you around?

SHANG

That is one of their functions.

SONYA

Ugly job.

SHANG

(ignores the insult)
Yes, especially since they hate each other.

(vaguely suggestive)
I enjoy throwing total opposites together to see what... chemistry occurs.

She senses his double meaning, but doesn't let it intimidate her.

SONYA

You're the head honcho... the Grand Master of the Tournament, aren't you?

SHANG

(charming)
I have that privilege.

SONYA

Why am I here?

SHANG

I already told you. You're one of the fifty. You had to come.

SONYA

You shanghai'd me!

LIU

You boarded the boat of your own free will, did you not?

SONYA

I was chasing someone.

SHANG

Kano, the man who murdered your partner.

SONYA

How could you know that? Unless you're hiding him.

SHANG

Catching him is the most important thing in your life. The only thing.

SONYA

Where is he?

SHANG

Oh, he's here... and you will meet him. In fact, you are going to fight him... provided you survive the preliminary bouts.

SONYA

I didn't come here to fight in The Tournament.

SHANG

Then you'll never meet Kano face to face. Tell me you haven't dreamed of killing him.

(unctuous)

I know I'm not supposed to play favorites, but I sincerely hope you win.

The attraction that Shang seems to feel for Sonya gives her the creeps. Shang smiles, and starts off again across the moonlit statuary garden. A dark thought causes her to call out to him again.

SONYA

You'd know about my partner's murder....

(Shang stops, turns)

If you'd arranged it.

SHANG

Tsk, tsk. Your job has made you cynical. Always looking for the bad in people. It's unattractive in such a pretty woman.

Shang fixes her with another unsettling look, then turns and leaves the garden. Johnny and Liu step from hiding. They are close enough to have heard everything.

SONYA

What are you doing here?

JOHNNY

Watching your back.

SONYA

In case you haven't noticed, I don't need protection.

JOHNNY

We couldn't help ourselves. It's a 'nervous tic.'

Liu, meanwhile, starts after Shang, who has crossed the garden and disappears as they watch.

SONYA

What are you doing?

LIU

Following him.

SONYA

I can shadow him better alone.

LIU

You aren't the only one interested in
this guy.

Liu silently moves through the garden. Exasperated, Sonya follows.
Johnny reluctantly brings up the rear.

40 EXT. CAVE MOUTH - NIGHT

Shang disappears into the half concealed entrance to the cave.
Moments later, Liu, Sonya and Johnny appear. Liu starts to move
forward. Sonya grabs his shoulder.

SONYA

You can't just follow him in. It's bad
tactics.

LIU

Maybe you should radio for backup.

She scowls and studies the cave entrance.

JOHNNY

She's right. In all those old black and
white movies on TV, whenever the good
guys went into a dark cave, bad things
happened.

Liu ignores them, and creeps toward the entrance.

LIU

We didn't have television in my village.

Sonya enters the cave after Liu. Johnny follows reluctantly after.

JOHNNY (O.S.)

No television? What did everybody do
at night? You know... For fun?

LIU (O.S.)

Human sacrifice.

Their echoing voices grow fainter. The white-clad figure of Kitana
appears, then enters the cave after them. The merest shift in the
light indicates that she is being followed, as something well
camouflaged enters the cave after her.

41 INT. CAVERNS - NIGHT

Johnny strikes a match, dimly illuminating the three faces and a stone
stairwell carved in the rock, which leads down into the darkness, as
well as another tunnel leading off at an angle.

SONYA

(whispers)
Face it, we're lost.

JOHNNY

I prefer 'directionally challenged.'
Ouch!

The match burns his fingers. He drop it. Darkness. Far below, there is light.

LIU

There's a light down there.
(hears something)
Listen.

Johnny strikes a match as they listen. There is the rumble of male voices coming from somewhere. They creep down the stairs toward the light source.

42 EXT. GORO'S THRONE ROOM - CAVERNS - NIGHT

The natural subterranean chamber is studded with stalactites and stalagmites, and illuminated by the flames from a dozen torches. Gold and silver ornaments and tableware gleam in their flickering light on a polished ebony table with high-backed chairs. An ornate oriental rug spreads out in a circle from the center of the huge, vaulted "room." Beautiful tapestries are hung behind a massive throne where Goro sits, draped in his cape, one arm holding a jewel encrusted mirror, while "the" other hand rather daintily holds a metal file, which he uses to sharpen points on several of his teeth. The four Barakas, Goro's retainers, stand nearby. Across from him, at a table laden with food, Kano eats his fill, speaking with his mouth full, but nervously eyeing the giant across from him.

KANO

So then, he changes into this big snake and swallows the rat whole. Almost lost my lunch.

GORO

(mock horror)
Disgusting.

Kano misses the irony; and belches.

KANO

Guy gives me the creeps.

GORO

That was his intention. Shang Tsung is a great sorcerer. The wise cultivate his favor. Those who challenge his power... become his slaves.

KANO

Haven't seen any of them around.

GORO

He enslaves souls...
(uneasy at the thought)
He learned the black crafts from the
Emperor Kahn himself.

KANO

I've heard of Kahn. Nobody talks about
him much.

GORO

No. That wouldn't be wise.

KANO

You're some kinda royalty, too, right?

GORO

(ironic)
That's very perceptive of you.
(bored)
I am Goro, general of the armies of
Outworld and Prince of the subterranean
realm of Shokan.

KANO

Subterranean? That's like...
underground?

GORO

(condescending)
Yes, like that.

KANO

Yeah, well I'm kind of an underworld
chief myself. You know, back home.

GORO

How lucky for them..."back home."

Shang's voice burst in on them, startling the four Barakas, who never
heard him coming. They hiss and yowl.

SHANG (O.S.)

It's true, Prince Goro. Why else would
I chose such a disreputable-looking
cretin?

SHANG

stands at the foot of the stairway, haughty, amused. The Barakas grovel
at his feet and inch away from the sorcerer.

SHANG

Look at him. No dignity. No manners.
But in the realm of Earth, men like him
can amass wealth and almost godlike
power. They even call some of them
godfathers. Strange, isn't it?

Goro bows formally to Shang. Shang nods back.

KANO

(nervous; miffed)

Yeah, well, I'd like to get back to my amassing as soon as possible. When do I get paid?

SHANG

After you've fought the girl. That was our "deal." Only remember, she mustn't be harmed... only humiliated. I have...plans... for the beautiful Sonya.

KANO

Well, let me at her, then. Think I like hiding down here in a cave like some kinda slimy toad?

He suddenly realizes that Goro might take this the wrong way. Goro leans down until his huge head is on a level with Kano's, two hands clutching the arms on his throne.

KANO

(nervous)

No offense intended.

Kano smiles nervously as a third massive arm suddenly appears from the lower folds of the cape and a huge hand with a gold wrist ornament reaches out toward Kano, the palm outstretched a foot from Kano's throat.

GORO

(quietly menacing; over polite)

None taken.

And Goro lightly--almost playfully--slaps Kano on the face, like Marlon Brando conveying some subtle sense of immense power to a foot soldier in the Mafia. Kano manages a weak smile. Shang is amused. Goro sits back in his throne, and a fourth hand shoots from the other side of the cape and snaps its fingers.

GORO

Where is my dinner?

Instantly, two more Barakas hurry into the "throne room, bearing a large, silver platter with a domed cover between them. Goro impatiently arches an eyebrow, waiting to be served. The two "kitchen" Barakas - wearing aprons - each glares at the other, hissing at each other in Baraka-speak. Finally, one of the Barakas cautiously approaches the huge silver cover, grasps the handle with dread and hoists it off. Underneath the dome is a large creature - half kimodo dragon, half gila monster in appearance - who snaps at the retreating Baraka and whips him with his spiked tail. The Baraka yowls and scurries into a corner. He mutters and hisses at the other "kitchen" Baraka. Goro leans over to examine his meal, eyes gleaming.

GORO

One of my favorites. Anyone care to join me?

KANO

(astounded)

Thanks.... I'll pass.

The lizard-dragon springs from the silver platter and scurries up the wall of the cavern.

43 INT. CAVERN - ON STAIRS

Sonya, Liu and Johnny are much closer to the light source below them, and can see the topmost part the far wall of Goro's "throne room, with shadows of stalactites and stalagmites enlarged and projected on it by the flickering torchlight. Suddenly, Liu puts up an arm and stops both of them. They all look where he is staring, and their eyes register his amazement.

THRONE ROOM WALL - THEIR POV

Although the "throne room" is still well below them, the shadow of Goro as he rises from his throne is immense, covering most of the far wall. Goro and the others are invisible from the vantage point of the stairs. The gigantic shadow throws off the cape, revealing the four massive arms. Goro lets out a horrific roar which echoes through the caverns, and with the agility of a panther, Goro's shadow scampers up the side of the cave - out of their line of view. They watch as his shadow easily climbs up the unseen wall.

RESUME JOHNNY, LIU, SONYA

The three are speechless, staring at the shadow as Goro roars again. Johnny tries to combat his own fear... whistling in the graveyard.

JOHNNY

(whisper)

I don't suppose there's a little guy down there, doing... shadow puppets?

He makes a "rabbit" hand puppet and wiggles two figures for the ears.

LIU

Come on.

Liu sees a narrow ledge leading off from the stairs. They silently creep crawl onto it.

44 INT. THRONE ROOM

Kano and Shang study Goro high above them on the vaulted rock ceiling.

KANO

What's he doing?

SHANG

Shokans hunt their food. Each meal is a fresh challenge to their agility and cunning.

KANO

I'd rather send out for pizza.

SHANG

Which is why the Realm of Earth is doomed.

KANO

Because of...pizza?

SHANG

Because you've become decadent, lazy fools. Prince Goro has won every Tournament for five hundred years, isn't that proof enough? Earth deserves what's coming.

KANO

What's that?

SHANG

Complete and utter domination by...
(lowers voice; semblance of reverence)

...our Liege Lord and benevolent Master, the Emperor Kahn. With the help of his humble servant.

KANO

Well, if we're such pushovers, how come you haven't done it, before?

GORO

wears only a simple loin covering, a wide, jeweled belt and golden armlets. He creeps along the high cavern wall, using his cloven two-toed feet and his four arms to purchase a new grip on the stalactites. Now he emits a low, rumbling chuckle. Shang is chagrined.

SHANG

Once, five centuries ago, we were very close. I was the undisputed champion of Mortal Kombat for nine Tournaments in a row. Nine sweet victories.

Shang allows himself a small smile.

GORO

And one defeat. To a village monk.

Goro enjoys his little jibe. Shang is displeased.

SHANG

Yes. to Kung Lao. One of Raiden's disciples. I underestimated the power of The Order of Light. The emperor was very displeased.

GORO

He was banished to the cobalt mines of Shokan....

Shang is angered by this new humiliation.

SHANG

But I began again. I made a pact with a young, ambitious, but ignorant Shokan prince...

(enjoys the barb; then)
Who became our estimable friend, ally... and subject.

The barbed repartee continues.

GORO

And defeated Kung Lao in the next Tournament.

SHANG

And everyone since. Until once again, we are on the verge of absolute victory. This is the tenth Tournament.

45 INT. A LEDGE

near the stone stairs, Liu, Sonya and Johnny hear the words echoing up to them, and exchange glances.

KANO (O.S.)

So if you win, what do I get out of it?

SHANG (O.S.)

How does... Europe sound to you? When the Emperor Kahn at last can enter the Realm of Earth, those who have been loyal to him, will be rewarded with undreamed of power, unimaginable spoils.

46 INT. THRONE ROOM

Shang and Kano watch, as Goro continues stalking his prey.

GORO

approaches the lizard/dragon, which crouches in a crevice on the wall, hissing and showing it's long tongue. Goro lets out a low growl and lunges! The lizard/dragon scurries from the crevice up onto the cavernous ceiling - with Goro in close pursuit!

He grasps the lizard/dragon from the crevice with two hands, clinging to the ceiling stalactites with the other two. His long hair hangs straight down like a wizard's beard. The lizard/dragon writhes and thrashes it's tail and Goro uses his long, pointed teeth to pierce the thick carapace on the creature's back. A black ooze begins to flow from the wound as it writhes in pain, and howls strangely.

SHANG AND KANO

watch from below. Even Shang can't help register some disgust at the spectacle. A large drop of the black ooze falls into Kano's good eye. He wipes it away and sees what it is, appalled.

47 INT. LEDGE

Sonya, Liu and Johnny watch the shadow show on the cavern wall, as the writhing lizard is torn to pieces and devoured.

48 INT. THRONE ROOM

Goro has finished his meal and now climbs, head first, back down the sides of the vast underground room. When Goro arrives on the ground, a Baraka hurries to bring a large towel and wipe Goro's chin. Another brings him his crimson silk robe, which he dons.

GORO

Kung Lao's descendent reminds me of his ancestor.

SHANG

Yes. And for that reason, he will fail. Actually, only one combatant concerns me. Princess Kitana, the Emperor's ward.

GORO

Why is she here?

SHANG

Perhaps she's observing for our Beloved Master...? In any case, I have charged my most loyal spy to watch her and report on all of her movements. She can bear witness to my greatest triumph.

KANO

If we win.

Both Goro and Shang fall silent. Kano realizes his gaffe and almost cringes.

SHANG

The emperor must not be disappointed again!

GORO

The emperor will not be disappointed.

SHANG

No, I have every confidence in Prince Goro. He fears only one thing, and this thing motivates him more than gold...or dreams of conquest....

Goro wraps his cape around him, as close to humble as he can be, his eyes fixed on Shang. Shang's voice is a raspy whisper, his eyes bright with malign delectation.

SHANG

He fears the loss of his warrior soul...
to me! But that... unfortunate event
will only happen...
(steely; directly to Goro)
...if you lose!

Goro sits in his throne, huddling under his cape as if seized by a sudden chill. Kano, too, is cowed by Shang's power.

A BARAKA

near the stairs, begins sniffing the air, sensing something.

49 INT. LEDGE

Johnny, Liu and Sonya have heard most of this enlightening conversation.

JOHNNY

(whispers)
Have I got this straight? We're facing
a four-armed monster, a sorcerer...and
the fate of the entire world is riding
on this Tournament. Jeesh, I hope they
give a nice trophy.

LIU

Shh.

50 INT. THRONE ROOM

The Baraka nearest the stairs begins a low growl. Shang and Goro become alert.

SHANG

What is it?

GORO

He smells something.

Shang Tsung closes his eyes and lets his mind expand, probing the cavern tunnels.

SHANG

Yes. We aren't alone.

Goro raises a hand. The Baraka bodyguards scamper up the stone stairway.

51 INT. CAVERN STAIRS

Liu and the others are already on the run, back toward the cave entrance.

SONYA

(angry)

So, he has "plans" for me, does he?
I've got some plans for him.

JOHNNY

Could you hold that thought until we get out of here?

52 INT. THE LEDGE

The Barakas sniff the ledge out thoroughly, and continue up the stairs.

53 INT. SIDE TUNNEL - CAVERNS

Kitana stands in the narrow passage way, holding a torch. Liu nearly passes by the narrow entrance as he climbs the stairs; then he sees her. Kitana turns and hurries away.

LIU

(to others)

She must be the Princess Kitana. I think she's trying to lead us out.

JOHNNY

Yeah, right. She's this emperor guy's step-daughter. She only wants what's best for us.

LIU

We should follow her.

He touches his head, as if receiving some kind of garbled message.

LIU

I can sense her, calling us. She's trying to lead us out.

JOHNNY

Oh, yeah, he's gone.
(to Sonya)

Liu heads down the narrow passage.

LIU

(whispers)

We have to follow her.

JOHNNY

(loud whisper)

Liu!

(to himself)

I hate this.

SONYA

Right. If this were one of your films, you'd find a clever way to get us out of here.

JOHNNY

(smiles; "gotcha")

So.... You have seen my films. Which ones?

SONYA

(annoyed at herself)

Does it matter? They all have the same plot.

JOHNNY

They do not!

SONYA

The woman is always in jeopardy, and you always rescue her.

JOHNNY

Hey... art reflects reality.

Sonya, disgusted, pushes past him, following Liu.

JOHNNY

What?

He hurries to catch up.

54 INT. NARROW PASSAGE - LIU - NIGHT

Liu is following a distant light down the dark passageway. He continues on. Then the natural cave tunnel is replaced by hand hewn stone walls and a curved ceiling. Stone stairs lead upward.

THE CATACOMBS

are lit by narrow holes in the ceiling, leading to the outside. Shafts of moonlight come down through them and leave round, barred shadows on the paving stones of the floor. Strange, gargoyle-like bas relief's stand out from the walls, silent sentinels. Liu sees the light disappearing around another bend in the tunnel and moves toward it. He comes abreast of a particularly hideous, gray stone gargoyle, a lizard head on a human body.

But as Liu passes it, something bothers him. Unlike the other gargoyles, the eyes are closed.

THE GARGOYLE (REPTILE)

opens his green eyes. A long, pale pink tongue flicks out and the mouth hisses hot, vaporous acid. The long, reptilian claws rip into Liu's flesh.

LIU

Momentarily blinded by the steam, Liu cannot react as Reptile trips him. He falls to the paving stones, and can only hear, not see the thing which rushes past him, its long claws clicking on the cold stones.

LIU

(cries out)

Aaaahhh!

Moments later, Sonya and Johnny appear and pull him to his feet.

JOHNNY

What happened? Liu?

Sonya quickly wipes the acid from his face and eyes.

LIU

There's something... it's following her, too, I think.

Behind Johnny, down a dark side tunnel, a pair of large yellow eyes blink! A huge Baraka appears behind Johnny, poised to pounce! Sonya turns, sees, drops to the ground and sweeps Johnny's legs from under him.

JOHNNY

Hey!

As Johnny goes down, the Baraka hurdles past him, slashing Sonya's arm with it's obsidian claws. It lands like a big fur ball, rolling off the far wall. Liu, still standing, finishes it with some no-nonsense punch kick combinations, and stands over its unconscious form. Johnny sees the wounds on her arm, and shakily helps her to her feet. He gently examines the wound.

JOHNNY

You okay?

SONYA

Just a few scratches.

JOHNNY

I was going to... If I'd seen....

Finally, a real moment. Johnny drops his facade.

JOHNNY

Thanks.

Sonya is surprised. She studies him. Just as sincere....

SONYA

Don't mention it.

JOHNNY

(his old self)

Believe me, I won't tell a soul.

She is once again annoyed. Liu sees something down the long narrow hole where the first Baraka emerged.

LIU

Look!

IN THE DARK HOLE

They can see six more pairs of eyes, gleaming yellow in the middle distance, coming toward them. Six Barakas, razor sharp claws bared, shriek a fierce, puma-like howl, enter...

THE CATACOMBS

and circle. Johnny, Liu and Sonya form a three point triangle, facing out. Then the Barakas attack. Our three heroes fight off the first wave, but the cat-like Barakas spring back and regroup, circling, waiting for their chance. A second rush is even more vicious, and it takes all our heroes skill to neutralize it. Two of the Barakas are now injured, but the others smell blood.

LIU

(keeps eyes on Barakas)

Anyone hurt?

A LONG SHADOW

falls across the stone walls of the catacombs. The Barakas stop, their yellow eyes turn to see

A LARGE, CAT'S EYE MARBLE

bouncing down the stairs, with loud, echoing clicks as it rebounds off each stone step. The marble rolls to a stop amid the startled Barakas.

WIDER

The Barakas' cat-like curiosity draws them closer to the marble. The Baraka leader picks it up and holds it for inspection by the others.

THE CAT'S EYE MARBLE

takes on very eye like qualities. The violet iris suddenly dilates, and swirling clouds inside it part, revealing in miniature the same scene-- the six Barakas huddled around a glass marble!

Then, inside the marble, there is a blinding burst of light! Six miniature lightning bolts electrocute the six miniature Barakas!

WIDER -THE BARAKAS

The life sized Barakas stare in astonishment, murmuring among themselves. Then...six lightning bolts strike with an incredible, deafening thunderclap. The Barakas are now nothing more than piles of eroding ash.

JOHNNY

(astonished)
Kitty litter.

RAIDEN

cast his long shadow down the stone stairs as he steps into view, his features chiseled into a scowl in the circle of moonlight from a grate high overhead.

RAIDEN

Can't I leave you alone for a minute?
(turns, walks up stairs)
Come along.

JOHNNY

Oh great. It's us he's mad at.

They step gingerly through the piles of ash and follow Raiden up the stairs.

55 EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Bathed in the moonlight, Johnny, Sonya and Liu stand meekly, as Raiden paces, trying to collect his thoughts. He stops, fixes them with a stern eye... then softens a little.

RAIDEN

Well, at least this way you've seen what you're up against. Shang is a great sorcerer. His power comes from the souls of vanquished warriors... Both those whom he has killed, and those offered in tribute to him by the warriors of Outworld after each victory. To fight Shang is to face not one, but a legion of adversaries.

SONYA

But, then neither Shang or Goro are mortal. How can they participate in the Tournament, if you can't?

RAIDEN

They can both be killed. Shang's power can be destroyed by mortal men and women... you must believe that, absolutely! Every human has the ability to defeat Kahn's minion's, no matter how bizarre their powers may seem. No matter how strong! There is always a way! There is only one thing that can defeat you... your own fear.

JOHNNY

What if we're not afraid?

RAIDEN

If you believe that, you've already lost.... You, Johnny, are terrified of failure. Deep down inside, you're afraid you really are a fake. To counter that fear, you'll fight... bravely enough... but foolishly... carelessly... and you'll be beaten.

(to Sonya)

And you, Sonya, are afraid to admit there are things even you cannot accomplish alone. If you are afraid to trust... you will lose.

Liu sits aloof from the others, listening, gazing off at the moon. Raiden glances over at him. His tone softens.

RAIDEN

It's late. You have to prepare for tomorrow.

LIU

(gazing off)

What about me, Lord Raiden? What am I afraid of?

The others turn to see what Raiden will say. Raiden approaches and speaks almost gently, but with the darkest urgency.

RAIDEN

Your own destiny. You already fled it once, when you went to America... and now that fear has brought you guilt for the death of your brother, whom you loved.

LIU

I am responsible for Chan's death.

RAIDEN

Then you are responsible for his life! Are you more powerful than the gods?

(MORE)

RAIDEN (cont'd)

Every mortal is responsible for his own destiny! Chan believed this. Why can't you?

LIU

I've tried!

LIU

(intense; hoarse whisper)
Despair is the most dangerous fear of all. Guilt over the past.... Dread of the future. These are your enemies.
(to them all)
I know all this. And so does Shang.

JOHNNY

How?

RAIDEN

He can peer into your soul and use the fear he sees there against you. You must be prepared!

56 EXT. LIU KANG'S VILLAGE - DAY

In the DREAM SEQUENCE, Liu once more stands on the edge of the village as the people in it go about their daily lives. The rice stalks wave in a stiffening breeze. A raven swoops overhead, calling its strange, wood chime call. Liu's eyes follow the bird to the crest of the hill, on the Altar of Light where a figure stands in silhouette.

JUMP CUT TO CLOSE UP

The figure is Shang Tsung, standing over Chan's body, extending his hand - talon-like - above Chan's head, then pulling back, as if yanking something out of it. Just for a moment, we see some ethereal matter rise from the body, then...

CHAN (V.O.)

(ethereal voice)

Liu!

Shang now turns and looks straight at Liu. He clutches something in the hand, a black onyx stone - something like Raiden's marble, only pitch black. He thrusts the black stone skyward in a talon-like gesture, and it begins to grow... spread. Only it is no longer a stone, it is Darkness, and it spreads from the hill, pours down it over the paddy, toward the village, like a tidal wave! The Darkness reaches out to envelope everything... a surging Void which washes over the dreamer.

LIU'S POINT OF VIEW - BROKEN RICE STALK - LATER

a pearl of water hangs from the broken stalk, then falls into the muddy water.

WIDER

Liu rises, coated with mud from the decimated rice paddy. The Darkness has passed, leaving the earth, land and sky a uniform grey. The village is desolate and abandoned. The raven circles overhead, cawing loudly. Liu AWAKENS.

57 INT. LIU'S PAVILION - NIGHT

Liu lights a candle, revealing a face drenched in sweat. The room and its modern decorations mock him. He rises, and rips the closest poster from the wall.

DISSOLVE TO:

LIU'S PAVILION - LATER

The room is empty. All decoration have been removed, showing only bare walls and a simple mat on the floor. A glow comes from the little garden outside the sliding doors.

CONTINUE THROUGH DOORS TO GARDEN

where Liu sits cross legged in front of a bonfire, made from the posters and furnishings. Sparks float up like prayers, fiery stars blending with the first faint glow of dawn.

58 EXT. ISLAND - SUNRISE

The island is beautiful, majestic, mysterious as the red sun illuminates it.

59 EXT. TOURNAMENT GROUNDS - DAY

Establishing. The grounds are bustling with activity as the participants pick up their assignments from mute, black-clad monks - the emblem of the Raven on medallions around their necks - who pass out small parchment scrolls and let the fighters find their arena themselves as the competitors AD LIB questions and comments.

SONYA - CONTINUOUS

Sonya searches for her own bout, weaving through throngs of fighters doing the same. Some warm up in their rings. Others are already fighting. She stops for a moment when she recognizes Liu.

60 EXT. GROUNDS - LIU'S BOUT

Liu, fighting staff in hand, matched up against a brawny Outworld monk, who seems to read every move Liu makes before he makes it. But Liu's skill and reflexes fend off the monk's attacks. Both men retreat to a corner of the mat. Liu closes his eyes, cleanses his mind... and waits. the monk charges. Liu waits.... the staff whistles toward his head.

Liu steps aside and brings his own staff down once, twice, three times. Match over.

SONYA

continues on, past another match, this one between Kitana and a human Kendo Warrior.

61 EXT. GROUNDS - KITANA'S BOUT

The Princess, dressed in a simple white silken gi steps onto the raised platform, where an enormous KENDO WARRIOR warms up, his back to her. He turns to see the small, delicate woman across from him. His disbelief turns to raucous laughter. Kitana bows slightly from the head. The black-robed judge signals the contest to begin. The Kendo Warrior draws his boken, a wooden saber, whirls it expertly through the air to intimidate her. She doesn't move. He smiles, and moves in. Kitana's movements are a graceful combination of aikido and T'ai Chi. The wooden saber whistles around her body without effect. Then she seems to spring high into the air, flips, lands behind the Kendo warrior, and with a strange, almost loving gesture, places her fingers on the side of his bulging neck. The gesture paralyzes her opponent. She has found a pressure point which causes him to topple unconscious with a thud. Kitana bows out, and turns to look directly at...

LIU

Who has stopped on his way to another match. Liu is nearly hypnotized by her gaze. She turns and exits.

62 EXT. GROUNDS - JOHNNY - CONTINUOUS

Johnny squints at the scroll in his hands as he walks among the throng of monks and competitors. He taps a monk official on the shoulder.

JOHNNY

Hey, could you tell me--

The monk turns to stare at him, his mouth stitched closed.

JOHNNY

Skip it.

The monk moves off... Johnny tries to decipher the scroll, so intent on it that he doesn't see the bout between Sub Zero and a huge Baraka behind him.

63 EXT. GROUNDS - SUB ZERO'S BOUT

Sub Zero begins to lower his own body temperature, until frosty mist surrounds him. The huge Baraka leaps high into the air, fangs and claws bared. In SLOW MOTION we see Sub Zero exhale a frigid blast of air. The pouncing Baraka passes through the frigid blast, and freezes solid in midair its features frosted over like a chilled beer mug.

Sub Zero shifts slightly to let the hurtling popsicle streak past. The Baraka shatters into a hundred pieces when it strikes a nearby pillar. Match over.

64 EXT. GROUNDS - JOHNNY'S BOUT - DAY

Johnny finds his fight location at last, and climbs into the ring. He begins warming up, when Beau Griffen makes a huge entrance, waving his arms at the small crowd, including some friends who have gathered to watch and shout AD LIB encouragement. He wears a garish outfit, and leers at Johnny. Then Griffen goes to his side of the mat, scowls and warms up, slashing the air with powerful arm movements. The silent monk referee brings them to the center.

GRIFFEN

(mocking menace)

Ready for your close up, now, Mister
Cage!

Johnny is not his normal, flamboyant self. He bows. The monk withdraws. Griffen charges in. Johnny dismantles the larger man with merciless punch kick combinations, and finishes with a flying side kick that sends Griffen tumbling from the arena. Match over. Johnny bows out to the monk, and leaves without uttering a word. Griffen groans as he tries to focus on the departing figure.

JOHNNY
(hard-edged)
See you at the movies, Griffen....

Griffen passes out cold.

JOHNNY - CONTINUOUS

Johnny is in search of another match: Sonya's. He stops when he sees her in a ring.

65 EXT. GROUNDS - SONYA'S BOUT - DAY

Sonya bows to her opponent, JADE, a diminutive woman dressed in a green Balinese costume, and carrying an ornate fan. Sonya speaks to her as the monk/judge stands between them.

SONYA
Listen, I really don't want to hurt you.
But I've got to get through this bout.
Okay? Hello?

The monk withdraws and Jade begins a graceful Balinese like dance, circling around a puzzled Sonya. The fan is an expressive extension of her body.

SONYA
Listen, folk dancing festivals were
never my thing. Let's go.

THE FAN

glints in the sunlight, and we see that their are long, razor sharp blades concealed in the fan.

WIDER

Sonya takes a fighting stance as Jade dances in closer. Then the fan whistles, very close to Sonya's face. Her arm instinctively blocks it, and the black turtleneck is shredded by the blades. Sonya jumps back and examines the slashed clothing.

SONYA

You people keep doing that.

Sonya decides to take this bout seriously. She stays on her guard, circling Jade warily. Sonya has broken a sweat, trying to make contact with the graceful Jade, who produces a second deadly fan, and begins whirling both of them faster and faster, until they are only a blur as she daintily dances in toward Sonya.

Sonya removes her heavy leather belt and swings it, buckle first, to shatter one of the fans. She then steps inside, gets Jade's "fan arm" in an elbow lock, moves inside, and executes an excellent hip throw. Sonya now holds the fan. She examines it, scrapes it across a stone wall, where it leaves white striations; She mimics Jade's graceful mincing dance a second, then tosses it away, gets Jade in another judo hold, and this time hurls her off the mat. Fight over.

JOHNNY

makes a triumphant gesture.

JOHNNY

(to himself)

Yes!

Then, a little surprised at himself, he hurries away before Sonya can see him.

SHANG AND SONYA

Shang stands near the arena. Sonya only notices him as she leaves.

SHANG

Excellent.

She scowls and moves past him.

66 EXT. GROUNDS - JOHNNY

As he walks toward the judges to get the scroll for his next fight, Johnny recognizes the Princess Kitana, walking with an escort of monks. She looks right through him, as he turns his head to stare. She enters the Great Hall. He approaches the judges table.

67 INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

Liu waits on a raised platform, warming up. He turns to discover he is fighting Kitana. His surprise is written on his face, but she eyes him coldly. The monk brings them to the center of the mat, where they bow, then begin to circle. She probes his defenses, but he goes easy on her, evading her, but not counterattacking. Kitana's eyes grow colder. She feints again, he evades, but does not counter punch, and she sweeps him and pins him with her powerful legs.

KITANA

(hisses quietly)
If you won't fight with all of your
heart... there is no hope!

LIU

What?

Liu is bewildered, but realizes the truth in what she says. He uses his fighting skill to throw her off. She attacks skillfully again, but with a brilliant display of kung fu and aikido, he pins her in a shoulder bar and forces her to capitulate. While he holds her down, she whispers to him.

KITANA

Next, you must use the element whose
force steel bars cannot contain. Whose
power turns granite to powder.

LIU

(puzzled; whispers)
Why do you care what happens to me?

SHANG

stands watching with a puzzled frown, from his lofty vantage point on the balcony. Kitana sees him.

WIDER

Kitana doesn't speak to Liu again, as the mute Monk approaches and gives the contest to Liu. He releases her. Kitana quickly rises and leaves the platform, sweeping under Shang's balcony. Shang bows to her with mock courtesy, then scowls and exits as well.

LIU

tries to follow Kitana through the hall, but as he passes, a banner suddenly sticks out a foot and trips him! Reptile slashes Liu once with his long claws and vanishes chameleon-like as it moves after Kitana. Liu scowls, checking the scratches on his face. Kitana has disappeared through the doors.

68 EXT. GROUNDS - SONYA - DAY

Sonya hides behind a pillar and watches another match which is about to get underway: Johnny's!

JOHNNY

warms up, keeping loose, practicing high-low kicking combinations. He senses, rather than hears his opponent enter behind him and turns to see

WIDER

a cowed figure, face in shadow... Scorpion!

JOHNNY

I remember you....

He turns, reaches into his tote bag, and brings out two long fighting daggers - sai. He turns back, grim, ready. The two opponents bow. Johnny must use all his skill to avoid Scorpion's deadly pincer claws, wielding the fighting daggers expertly and forcing the Outworld denizen to respect him. The fight seems to be a stalemate, until a claw firmly grasps one of the daggers, the second claw grabs the other. Johnny is lifted off the ground as he clutches them, but kicks savagely with both feet, right between Scorpion's strange eyes. A few brutal moves later, Johnny has won. Match over.

SONYA

breathes a sigh of relief from hiding. When she turns, she is surprised by Liu, who has been watching at least part of the match.

LIU

He's doing okay.

SONYA

Yeah, well... he'll probably just brag about it, tonight.

Nervous and uncomfortable, Sonya hustles away.

SONYA

Gotta go.

LIU

(amused)
See you.

LIU - CONTINUOUS

Liu moves on, studying his new scroll, looking for the site of his next match. Then he stops. He's found it.

69 EXT. RUINED TEMPLE - LIU'S POV - DAY

The roof of the temple has caved in several places, and the walls are pierced with jagged holes. Still, it bears a vague resemblance to the temple of the Order of Light in Liu's village. A "coolie" stoops under the weight of twin buckets, attached to a long pole carried across the shoulders. The "coolie" enters the temple.

70 INT. RUINED TEMPLE - DAY

The temple is dim in places, and blazing with sunlight which pours through the roof in others. The temple doesn't seem abandoned so much as defiled.... cluttered with debris. Only the banners of Mortal Kombat hung from the ceiling are new, swaying in the slight breeze. Several kerosene lanterns are hung from spikes. The "coolie" stops in front of the bowl-like torch which once burned with the sacred flame... extinguished now. The "coolie" puts down the yoke of water buckets, takes a ladle from one and sips. When he turns, we see it is Raiden. Raiden scowls at the blackened torch... and with a mini-bolt of electricity, he relights it! Voices from outside cause him to turn.

71 INT. RUINED TEMPLE - DAY

LIU (O.S.)

I fight here? In the temple?

Raiden disappears - volatilizes in a blaze of light -- as a mute monk shows Liu inside. Liu's eyes are drawn to the familiar flame. The monk's eyes widen in horror at it; he turns and flees.

LIU

Hey?

Liu watches the monk leave, then turns back. He moves past the darker recesses of the temple, where something - a fresco - is hidden in deep shadow behind old beams from the fallen roof. Liu finds a lantern, lights it, clears a few of the beams and planks away to study the fresco.

THE FRESCO

is faded with age, mildew and grime. But it still celebrates a famous duel. The figure of a white-clad fighting monk, Kung Lao, stands with his foot on the neck of...Shang Tsung, the sorcerer! But the face of Kung Lao has been eradicated by a black burn mark.

LIU

Kung Lao.

WIDER

Liu carries the lantern toward the center of the temple where the sacred flame once again burns, then he stops. an enormous shadow of a figure sprawls over the temple floor. Even in shadow, tendrils of mist curl around the body of the massive figure. Liu turns. Sub Zero stands backlit in the fissure of a ruined wall, watching him. Icy mist swirls around him, and his breathing is deep and sonorous, like the lowest, almost inaudible notes of a pipe organ. The temple seems to vibrate with the sound.

As Sub Zero slowly advances, Liu retreats, using the entire temple to dodge the icy breath of Sub Zero, as he closes in on him. Liu swings shut a rusty iron gate, leading into an alcove and backs away. Sub Zero laughs, and grasps the gate, chilling the metal.

Sub Zero laughs as he kicks it's brittle bars in like they were made of porcelain. Liu remembers the kerosene lantern in his hand, throws it hard. It shatters on Sub Zero's body, engulfing him and several of the fallen beams around him in a sheet of flame! Liu steps back, hopeful as the tinder dry wood roars into a red hot inferno. Liu uses a burning board to ignite the Mortal Kombat banners, which burn like fireworks around the hall. Sub Zero's flame covered form is in the center of the firestorm.

72 EXT. RUINED TEMPLE

Black smoke pours from holes in the roof. Other combatants and monks gather at the sight, and move toward the temple. Johnny is drawn to the orange glow from within the temple, as is Sonya.

73 INT. RUINED TEMPLE

Fire is everywhere, now. Sub Zero bats at the flames that cover his body. Liu takes up a piece of beam from the fallen roof, and runs at his adversary, using it like a battering ram!

LIU

(kiyai)
Aieeeyah!

The force of the blow knocks the huge figure of Sub Zero back into the debris around the fresco. Liu takes a second lantern and hurls it into the collected mass of fallen beams and roof tiles. It explodes in massive, red hot flame! Sub Zero is invisible in the heart of the fire.

NEW ANGLES - VARIOUS

Every door, window and hole in the wall is full of faces, peering in at this ferocious combat. Johnny, breathless stands in the doorway. Sonya comes up beside him. Neither speaks. The fire spreads to the roof rafters overhead.

THE FIRE

licks at the ancient fresco, rises above it. Kung Lao's figure painted onto the wall is illuminated for a moment...triumphant once again! Then, as Liu watches, the fire destroys the fresco. A cold, gray cloud rises from the heart of the fire, a freezing mist.

WIDER

It rolls along the stone floor, enveloping Liu, who winces in pain as the frigid mist turns his hair and eyebrows white with frost. He staggers back, and falls, overturning one of the water buckets near the sacred flame. The water fans out on the floor and freezes solid as the frigid mist rolls over it. Liu staggers to his feet, backing away from the rolling mist, his eyes on the fire where Sub Zero is imprisoned. But the fire is dying, chilled to extinction by Sub Zero!

SUB ZERO

stands stock still in the heart of the burning timbers, willing the tremendous biological engine inside him to lower the temperature further and further, until the flames which engulf him dim, turn blue, and flicker out. The flames around him begin to die as well, quenched by the incredible cold generated by the massive form as it once again steps forward. Sub Zero is covered in frost, his features cobalt blue, his smile glistening like polished lacquer. He takes an enormous breath and blows another icy blast.

WIDER

The flaming banners are quenched by a blast of frigid, frosty air from Sub Zero's lungs. The scorched cloth falls like panes of glass to the stone floor and shatter.

KITANA

appears in the fissure in the far wall. Liu sees her, and hears, once again, her riddle-like message.

KITANA'S TELEPATHIC VOICE

Use the element that steel bars cannot contain. That crushes granite to powder.

Liu frowns. He is standing next to the second bucket of water, still attached to the pole. Finally he realizes, and looks down at the frozen puddle of water spreading out from the overturned bucket near his feet, reflecting the red flames of the burning ceiling overhead.

LIU

Not fire. Water!

SUB ZERO

approaches slowly, moving in for the kill.

A FLAMING SECTION OF ROOF

suddenly plummets to the very center of the temple, creating a new, towering wall of flame between Sub Zero and Liu, hotter and brighter than anything so far.

SUB ZERO

lowers his body temperature still further, until the very air around him freezes and falls like crystal to the stone slabs. He begins to walk slowly through the wall of flame.

LIU

clutches the pole attached to the remaining bucket and - two handed - he begins spinning it around like an Olympian making a hammer throw, faster and faster, as Sub Zero, passes unscathed through the last wall of flame separating them.

LIU'S POV - THE TEMPLE

appears to spin faster and faster. With each revolution the faces of the onlookers become blurred streaks in the doors and windows. Sub Zero looms larger and larger, moving in for the kill.

SUB ZERO

releases another icy blast of breath.

THE BUCKET

now has so much centrifugal force, that Liu can barely hold the pole attached to it. With a fierce cry, he releases his grip. The bucket flies off in a straight trajectory IN EXTREME SLOW MOTION. It tumbles through the air, releasing its contents: water. The water separates into several smaller streams that elongate as they hurtle through the air, and one long, jagged stream that stretches out into jagged conical form just as it passes through the FRIGID BLAST OF AIR. The water freezes instantly, forming several smaller icicles and one long, heavy one.

SUB ZERO

is struck - STILL IN EXTREME SLOW MOTION - in the face by the smaller icicles. They drive in like needles, then spikes, jagged darts piercing his face. He opens his mouth to scream in pain, the SOUND SLOWED TO A STRANGE, LOW GROAN - and his hands slowly rise toward his injured face. Then, brutally, RESUME NORMAL SPEED, as the much larger icicle, now a long jagged crystal spear, transpierces Sub Zero. The sharp jagged point sticks well out his back, and the thick end of the icicle cone lodges in his chest.

LIU

stands, his mouth gaping. Even he can't believe it.

SUB ZERO

is bewildered as he stares, in no apparent pain now, down at the huge icicle sticking through him. Then, as if the frigid internal reactor inside him had reached critical mass and imploded, his own body begins to freeze to solid ice. Starting at the feet, and moving quickly upward, Sub Zero is transformed into a strange ice sculpture, dully translucent, lit as if from within by the wall of flame behind him, flickering a dull, opaque reddish orange. His hands try to yank the giant ice spear from his chest, but they freeze to immobile crystal as well. Now, only Sub Zero's head is still alive, moving, as he looks to the ceiling and bellows a lament to his own death. The head freezes. The light within the "ice statue" dims. The eyes turn frosty and opaque.

WIDER

None of the onlookers utters a sound as they stare inside the temple. Liu and the "ice statue" form a strange tableau inside a circle of burning timbers - fire and ice. Liu's own momentum has brought him to his knees in front of Sub Zero. He stares up at the frozen creature towering over him as the flames dance and reflect off the ice.

NEW ANGLE TEMPLE

From a gaping hole in the temple wall, someone else is watching the bout along with the others... Raiden. Then he turns and moves away.

74 EXT. RUINED TEMPLE - RAIDEN - DAY

Smoke rises high in the air and wafts over the grounds as Raiden moves away. He stops. Kitana stands in the distance. They exchange a glance.

75 EXT. GREAT HALL - SUNDOWN

Johnny, tired, looking concerned, walks toward the hall, but smiles when he discovers Sonya coming toward him.

JOHNNY

Hey!

They both stand, not really making eye contact, awkward.

SONYA

Hey.

JOHNNY

So... I... I hear you did okay.

SONYA

I...heard the same about you.

JOHNNY

Yeah, well.... Liu had the tough fight.

SONYA

Sure did.

They fall silent, unsure what to say next.

SONYA

Where are you going?

JOHNNY

To watch the last match of the day.
Just heard...

(concern returning)
...Goro's fighting Art Lean.

76 INT. GREAT HALL - SUNDOWN

It is the last bout of the long first day, and torches illuminate the hall. Johnny and Sonya enter through the crowd, and spot

SHANG TSUNG

sitting in a balcony in the place of honor, above the fighting arena. Shang notices Sonya and, smiles chillingly. She almost cringes.

WIDER

Johnny notices, and pushes Sonya away from the hypnotic gaze. They make their way toward the ring. Art Lean is already there, warming up, staying loose. His shadow punches and kicks are beautiful to behold. Johnny watches in admiration as he approaches Art's corner. Art sees him.

ART LEAN

Hey! How's it going?

JOHNNY

So far, so good. Thought you could use a cornerman.

ART LEAN

I might be fighting you, tomorrow.

JOHNNY

Then tomorrow I'll kick your ass.

Art grins, and continues his vigorous punch kick combinations. Then, there is a terrific roar--a sound both have heard before in the caverns: Goro.

JOHNNY AND ART

both turn at the sound and watch the far entrance.

GORO - CONTINUOUS

A retinue of surly Barakas come first, slashing at anyone in their way, clearing a path. The huge drums are beating in a slow cadence as Goro makes his appearance, in his crimson cape. There is a wave of exclamations from the hall at the sight of him. He moves majestically to the arena, and climbs up onto the platform. Then he unbuckles his cape and lets it drop, revealing the four arms. The crowd gasps. The drums beat more rapidly.

SONYA AND LIU

Liu silently joins Sonya. They exchange a glance. This is even worse than they imagined.

SHANG TSUNG

watches from his place of honor, attentive, missing nothing.

ART AND JOHNNY

study Goro. Art is amazed, but forces himself to remain calm.

ART LEAN

Any advice, Coach?

JOHNNY

Stay out of the clinches.

Art's smile is tight and crooked as he continues warming up.

WIDER

Goro turns his back on his adversary, and with two of his arms, ties his flowing mane of hair in a long pony tail, reaching down to his waist. Then he turns, with no further warm up and eyes Art Lean coldly. The mute Monk, obviously the head referee for the tournament moves solemnly to the center of the mat and holds his hand out. The two fighters advance and bow. The Monk withdraws. Art doesn't hesitate. He attacks full out, punching, kicking, landing many of his blows, but if Goro feels them, he doesn't react.

Johnny cheers wildly from the sidelines. The human contingent of the crowd joins in, while the fighters from Outworld watch silently. Art Lean feints, then leaps and lands a powerful kick, staggering Goro. Goro bellows with rage, his voice shaking the rafters, and counterattacks, his four fists flailing like windmills. Art dodges the mighty fists, but is forced to give ground.

JOHNNY

Sweep him! Sweep him!

Art dodges under Goro's legs. The muscled Shokan cannot reach behind with his arms, and twists awkwardly to grab at Art Lean, who uses this momentary imbalance to sweep the weight-bearing leg from under Goro, who falls heavily. A stunned silence from the crowd, then cheers.

SHANG

rises from his seat, his face darkening.

LIU AND SONYA

cheer wildly. But Liu immediately stops.

SONYA

What's wrong? He's winning!

LIU

Goro has five hundred years of experience. There is nothing he hasn't seen, by now.

RESUME BOUT

True to Liu's prediction, Art cannot get through the four-armed defense to follow up on his momentary triumph. Goro gets to his feet. He stalks Art cautiously, respecting him, now, studying him carefully.

JOHNNY

Make him come to you! Don't let him grab you!

But Art Lean is not a defensive fighter. He attacks, appearing to drive Goro back, but it is only a ruse. Suddenly, Goro's lower two arms snake out and grab Art.

ART LEAN

is pinned by the massive hands, and lifted off the mat. He struggles ferociously to free himself!

GORO'S EYES - ART LEAN'S REFLECTION

Art Lean's struggling form is seen in the pupil of Goro's large, dark eyes as he is lifted up, face to face. Art tries to claw the eyes, but Goro holds him at arm's length.

JOHNNY

falls silent, fearful for his newfound friend.

LIU AND SONYA

look on grimly. The crowd falls nearly silent.

GORO AND ART LEAN

are face to face. Goro studies the struggling man in his grasp.

GORO

You fought well.

SHANG

becomes enraged at this. He holds his hand up, commanding.

SHANG

Finish him!

GORO

looks up toward Shang, and a trace of fear flickers in his eyes... then something very like regret.

ART LEAN

makes one last desperate ploy to free himself, sensing the worst.

GORO'S FIST

rises high over his head. It hesitates a moment, then plunges down.

JOHNNY

turns his back, sickened.

LIU AND SONYA

cringe. Sonya cannot hide the tears which suddenly well up in her eyes.

GORO'S OTHER FIST

comes up, and strikes brutally down.

ART LEAN

hangs unconscious, like a rag doll in Goro's monstrous grip.

GORO

studies his handiwork with a little grunt. He is neither pleased, nor displeased. It was inevitable.

THE HALL - VARIOUS

is suddenly enveloped in a strange light. A mysterious wind begins to blow, causing the torches to flicker and dim. Everyone looks around, baffled... even frightened.

SHANG TSUNG

is enveloped in a glowing aura - not just light and smoke--there is just a trace of something else... some ghostlike entities swirling around him. His eyes are closed, his bony finger outstretched, pointing down at Goro.

GORO

stares up at his master. His huge head sags a moment, then he carries the limp form of Art Lean to just below Shang, and goes down on one knee. His two free hands form a gesture of offering.

SHANG

The aura is brighter now - there are glimpses of something within the aura...faces, ethereal, distorted, fleeting! And now there is a terrible sound, a mixture of moaning and shrieking, a dissonant chorus, almost musical.

77 INTERCUT WITH LIU

Who suddenly remembers something from his dream!

78 EXT. HILL TOP - SHANG - DAY

In a FLASHBACK lasting only a second or two, we see Shang, arm outstretched... wrenching Chan's spirit from his body.

79 INT. HALL - SHANG - NIGHT

Shang reaches out, his arm extending impossibly far, the hand forming a talon-like claw, which seems to reach out and wrench something from Art Lean's form.

ART LEAN'S SPIRIT

begins to stream like smoke from his mouth, pouring out, twisting, being pulled toward Shang. Johnny watches as, for a second the wispy ectoplasm forms into the features of Art Lean, contorted, anguished...damned.

SHANG

The aura receives this new spirit. Shang breathes in deeply, as if inhaling the new soul. The ectoplasm is absorbed. The aura dims, diminishes... disappears.

LIU

stands numbly, overwhelmed by the memory and this new horror.

THE HALL

Every eye is on Shang, every face shows awe and fear. Goro remains in his submissive posture, knee to the mat, Art Lean's lifeless corpse in his arms. Then, respectfully, he lays the body on the ground in front of him, contemplating it as

SHANG

sweeps his triumphant gaze over the assembly below him and, exhilarated, leaves the hall.

80 EXT. GREAT HALL - DUSK

Johnny and several other humans carry from the hall - shoulder high - Art Lean's body, now wrapped in a white shroud. A solemn, solitary drum beats a slow cadence from somewhere inside the hall. Beau Griffen stands awkwardly nearby.

GRIFFEN

Mind if I help?

JOHNNY

Come on.

Griffen falls in step as an unofficial pallbearer. They carry the corpse past Raiden, who watches stoically. Liu accosts Raiden.

LIU

You could have stopped that.

RAIDEN

I told you, I cannot interfere.

LIU

That's why I left the temple! All this mumbo jumbo about... about the power of reason and Light. But where are you when we need you? Where is that power?

RAIDEN

The power is in you. If the gods decide men's destiny, then there is no free will. No choice. In Outworld, Kahn makes every decision. You have only to obey. Is that what you want?

Liu glares at him fiercely, and Raiden, saddened, turns and walks slowly away. Liu points to the pallbearers and the corpse.

LIU

What choice did he have?

RAIDEN

(just as fierce)

He chose to fight and die a free man! If Outworld wins this Tournament, no mortal man will ever have that choice again!

It is a blistering rebuke. Raiden stands his ground, eyes blazing until Liu, frustrated and angry, stalks off. Raiden shakes his head and turns to see that Johnny Cage has left the funeral cortege, and stands studying him. He has heard everything. Raiden turns and walks away. Johnny doesn't see Sonya, who stands watching him from the garden, nearby.

81 EXT. NEAR BRIDGE - NIGHT

Sonya has changed into a simple kimono and sandals. She walks in the moonlight, lost in thought. She spies a lone figure on the bridge, performing an intricate and impressive kata - a martial arts form - with grace, speed, and power, using a three piece sectional staff. The sectional staff whistles and whirls around the figure's body. She approaches.

ON BRIDGE

The figure is silhouetted by the moon.

SONYA

Liu?

The figure stops, the staff sections folding back into his palm as if they had a life of their own--click, click. He turns, and comes toward her. It is Johnny, wearing his black gi bathed in sweat from long exertion.

SONYA

Oh. I thought....

JOHNNY

You thought only someone surrounded by teachers in his temple from the age of five...someone like Liu... could master this stuff. Right?

SONYA

That isn't it.

JOHNNY

Well, you're right. Just rehearsing a few flashy moves... for my next picture.

She doesn't respond. An awkward silence; then...

SONYA

I'm sorry about your friend.

JOHNNY

I never had time for friends. Art was just a decent guy.

(remembers)

I don't know what it's like to lose someone close, like Liu....

(remembers)

Or you. I overheard about your partner. Sorry.

She falls silent, then decides to confide.

SONYA

He was more than my partner. We were engaged to be married.

Johnny is really rocked back. He searches for words, finds none.

SONYA

He was the only man I ever trusted.

JOHNNY

What happened?

SONYA

He went into a building after Kano without waiting for backup. He was always overprotective. I guess he didn't think he could count on me.

JOHNNY

You know that wasn't it. So now, you go in alone... no backup, no overprotective guy.

She doesn't respond for a second, then tries to throw it off.

SONYA

It's been two years. Time enough get on with my life and put it behind me.

JOHNNY

But you haven't.

She shrugs, looks out over the bridge at the swirling, moonlit clouds below them in the chasm.

SONYA

Now you know what I'm doing here. What about you? Was Raiden right? Are you afraid your just a phony?

JOHNNY

(dissimulates)

I want to prove I'm the best. Is that so complicated?

SONYA

A couple million fans already think you are. But not you.

He grins slightly, isn't going to answer. Then....

JOHNNY

I grew up on the streets... couldn't afford karate lessons. Just picked it up from the movies as I went along. I'd practice moves I'd seen for hours, all by myself in front of an old broken mirror in an abandoned clothing warehouse... my very own dojo. But, deep down I knew it wasn't the same as taking courses or learning from a sensai master. I was just bluffing my way through life.

SONYA

Who'd have thought? Johnny Cage isn't a fan of Johnny Cage.

(then)

I saw you fight today.

He's surprised. Stares at her.

JOHNNY

Yeah, well, as a matter of fact--

SONYA

Just listen. You are one of the best fighters I've ever seen. And I've been out there on those same streets... where it really matters. And you know what else? I think you're needed here, Johnny.

(then)

You've just got to fight your own way. Be yourself.

Johnny is touched. He chuckles to himself.

JOHNNY

Whoever that is.

SONYA

I know who it is.

This startles Johnny into silence. He looks into her eyes and her soft features... and believes her. Then he looks away, his own face hardening.

JOHNNY

I can beat Goro.

SONYA

What?

LIU

I can take him... I was watching his moves... his tactics. And I really think I can--

Sonya's face suddenly flashes with anger. She rises, paces.

SONYA

'I, I, I!' Listen to you! you are the most egotistical, self deluded imbecile I've ever met!

JOHNNY

(growing angry, too)
You just said...!

SONYA

(flustered)
I was... I was humoring you! It's another stupid feminine reflex! When we see a man moping, we try to buck him up!

JOHNNY

Wait a minute. Hold on. You don't want me to fight Goro... because you're worried about me, aren't you?

SONYA

You're being absurd. Anyway, you can't just call out this four armed monster like he was the schoolyard bully!

JOHNNY

I can't sit around while more people die! Including some I care about....

She suddenly realizes he means her. Her face softens a little. Then, frustrated and angry, she turns and storms to the far side of the bridge, then turns and storms back.

SONYA

Don't you dare do this to protect me! You're problem is... you believe you're those stupid characters you play! The Lone Avenger! You don't need anything from anybody.

JOHNNY

No, that's your problem, remember? I do need something from you.

SONYA

(surprised; hopeful)
What?

JOHNNY

Those big rubber band things you tie your hair back with.

Infuriated, she strips the two thick rubber bands from her hair and stuff them into his hand.

SONYA

(short)
Here!

JOHNNY

(even shorter)
Thanks.

She whirls away and leaves, her silk kimono rustling.

82 INT. LIU'S PAVILION - NIGHT

Liu sits on the floor, lit by a single candle, meditating. He senses a presence outside, rises and slides open the door to the garden.

83 EXT. LITTLE GARDEN - NIGHT

Raiden sits on an ornamental rock, waiting for Liu, who joins him.

LIU

I'm sorry for what I said.

RAIDEN

I am not here for apologies. What have you learned?

LIU

I'm not sure. If you can't fight on our side... What about others?

RAIDEN

What others?

LIU

The Princess Kitana is trying to help me. I don't know why. Can I trust her?

RAIDEN

Kitana has been Kahn's ward for ten thousand years.... But... her heart is her own.

LIU

Hold it. Ten thousand years?

RAIDEN

(ignoring him)

Which explains why Shang dispatched his best spy to watch her.

LIU

Ten thousand year years?

RAIDEN

(distracted)

She's from the ancient race of Outworld. Very long lifelines.

LIU

(trying to catch up)

What spy?

RAIDEN

The one who has been annoying you... the way you're annoying me, now! Forget Kitana for a moment.

(a pep talk)

There is someone else you should trust. Someone who has been trained for this day. Someone with a sharp mind and a fierce will.

LIU

Who?

RAIDEN

(aggravated)

I was being poetic. Actually, he has a very dull mind... a blunted mind! And his will is just... just blind stubbornness!

LIU

Me?

RAIDEN

He recognizes the description. Yes, you, you dolt! Listen to what your inner voices are telling you. The voice of Kung Lao, and your grandfather and all the others. But always trust your own judgement. You carry the sacred flame in your heart....

LIU

(startled)

That's what Grandfather said, when--

RAIDEN

(annoyed again)

I know that's what he said... now listen! Let that flame illuminate the ancient teachings.... But never let it dim your own individual light. It is that one special gift that makes you different from Kung Lao and all your ancestors before you.

LIU

But... Lord Raiden.... I don't know if I have this special gift.

RAIDEN

(exasperated)

There are times I'm not so sure myself, Liu.

(then; gently explains)

You went to America because you were sceptical. You questioned everything you had been taught.

LIU

But, the teachings were true!

RAIDEN

That doesn't matter. You try to look behind things as they seem... to see them as they are. As they say in Chicago, you want to cut through the crap...! That is your gift. The gift that even Kung Lao did not possess. Use it... and you will win!

Raiden peers into Liu's eyes, looking for some glimmer of hope that he has chosen well. He thinks... just for a second... that maybe he sees that glimmer. Then he turns and walks out of the garden. Liu walks back to...

HIS PAVILION

and steps inside. His eyes go to the single candle, burning brightly there.

84 EXT. TOURNAMENT GROUNDS - SECOND DAY

In another long TRAVELLING SHOT, we see that the mood among the remaining ten competitors from Earth is very somber as they receive their new assignments from the monks, and prepare for combat.

85 EXT. GROUNDS - SONYA'S BOUT

Sonya is waiting impatiently in her fighting area. Liu approaches, her face falls.

SONYA

Am I fighting you?

LIU

No. I just wanted to wish you good luck.

SONYA

Yeah. Thanks.

(worried)

Have you seen Johnny, this morning?

LIU

No. Why?

Just then, she sees Shang approaching her. He and Liu face off. Then Shang turns to Sonya. His smile chills her anew.

SHANG

I've arranged a present for you.

SONYA

I don't want anything from you.

SHANG

That's not true. There is one thing you want very much....

He steps aside, and Sonya sees Kano approaching. Kano gives her the Death Stare with his one good eye, then turns his back and begins warming up.

SHANG

I arranged this match just for you. I know how impatient you've become. I have every confidence you'll win.

SONYA

He's your stooge.

SHANG

But of limited use as my queen and consort.

SONYA

(realizes what he means)

In your dreams.

SHANG

Nearly all of my dreams have already come true.

Shang steps back and the mute Monk comes forward to begin the bout. Kano swaggers forward.

LIU

Sonya.... Stay cool.

KANO

How ya doin', Babe? Did you miss me?

Sonya is deeply conflicted between the hate she feels for Kano, and Shang's words. The mute Monk withdraws. The two circle warily. Kano and Sonya trade blows. She batters his face with a quick series of round kicks. Kano lunges, misses, rolls, and comes up with a knife from his boot. He smiles.

KANO

Now this baby brings back memories.

SONYA

Let me guess. You used it to knife your mother in the back.

KANO

(grins)
Guess again. It put a big smile on your boyfriend... ear to ear.

Sonya's face goes white with rage. She searches for something to defend herself.

LIU

(grabs something)
Sonya!

Liu tosses her a pair of bamboo fighting sticks... escrimas... to defend herself as Kano expertly probes her defenses with the boot knife.

KANO

That's the spirit. I like 'em mean and feisty.

Sonya attacks with a flurry of blows, and the battle is on in earnest. Shang looks on with interest. The fight continues until both opponents are tired and sweating. Finally, she disarms him with the fighting sticks, and he uses his strength to break the bamboo batons. Bare handed, Kano uses his superior size and strength to gain and advantage.

LIU

Don't go head to head with him! Fight smart!

Sonya doesn't take her eyes off Kano, but she nods. When he moves in again, she uses aikido to nullify his charge.

LIU

That's it!

But Kano is a savvy street fighter. He knows aikido, too, and suddenly the table are turned. He has Sonya in a powerful hammerlock.

SHANG

becomes tense. Kano looks to him for permission to kill her, knowing it won't be granted. Shang shakes his head.

RESUME BOUT

Kano looks like he just might do it anyway. He exerts more pressure on her neck. She brings a heel crushing down on his instep. He yowls in pain as she repositions a leg, swivels her feet and throws him off of her. She kicks him twice in the face, dazing him. Then, she does a springing handstand, catches Kano's neck between her legs and throws him to the ground, squeezing tighter and tighter, strangling him.

LIU

Sonya, that's what he wants!

SHANG

beams with pleasure. The same strange aura begins to form around him, the same dissonant music of voices in anguish.

SHANG

That's right. Finish him! Pay me tribute with his death!

The aura becomes brighter, more intense. His claw hand begins to reach in to take Kano's warrior soul.

SONYA AND KANO

Sonya stares down at the struggling Kano, his face bright red, his exertions weakening. She could kill him now.

LIU

(pleading)
If you do it, he'll own you.

She realizes he's right.

SONYA

No!

She releases Kano from the death grip. He flops weakly onto the ground, defeated. Sonya stands, looks down on him, then turns and walks away. Shang, returned to his normal form, steps in front of her, barring the way.

SHANG

You disappoint me. That isn't wise.

Raiden appears. He has seen everything.

RAIDEN

She doesn't answer to you, sorcerer.

Shang's eyes flash with anger, then he bows almost mockingly.

SHANG

Quite right, Lord Raiden. But one day soon... she will.

(eyes sweep the humans
around him)

All of you will!

And Shang sweeps off. Johnny approaches Sonya

LIU

You okay?

SONYA

Yeah. Thanks. I almost lost it.

Suddenly, they hear it... a faint echo....

JOHNNY (O.S.)

Goro! Goro!

THE ISLAND

Re-echoes with the call, and the other fighters hear. The monks look curiously around.

JOHNNY (O.S.)

(echo)

Goro! Goro!

ON THE BRIDGE

Johnny falls silent and waits. Shang appears at the other end.

SHANG

What do you want?

JOHNNY

An Oscar and a film with Michelle Pfeiffer. But I'll settle for that big four-armed sonofabitch.

SHANG

(amused)

You're challenging Goro?

JOHNNY

What? I need a written invitation?
Yeah, I'm challenging him. Here. Now.

SHANG

You're very foolish.

JOHNNY

That's what people say.

Shang falls silent, pondering the consequences. Finally.

SHANG

Very well. I will grant your demand.
But as a former champion, I then reserve
the right to challenge--

JOHNNY

Yeah, yeah. The winner. You got it!

SHANG

The winner... or another of my choosing,
at the place appointed by me.... For
the final battle.

RAIDEN (O.S.)

(voice like thunder)

No!

Raiden storms onto the bridge, furious.

SHANG

The rules of challenge are quite clear,
Lord Raiden.

RAIDEN

He didn't know!
(to Johnny)
Withdraw your challenge.

SHANG

Too late, I'm afraid. How do you say
it: 'A deal's a deal?'

Shang turns and walks away, leaving Johnny on the bridge with Raiden.

RAIDEN

What have you done?

JOHNNY

(defiant)

Exercised my own free will. Made a
choice. I thought you'd be pleased. Or
was that just a crock?

RAIDEN

You twisted my meaning! There hasn't
been a challenge in Mortal Kombat for a
thousand years!

SONYA

There you go, deciding how we mere
mortals should run things.

RAIDEN

Are you mocking me?

JOHNNY

(hard edged)

No. I'm telling you to go away. Get lost! This is our Tournament, remember! Mortal Kombat! We fight it. And from now on, we make the rules!

Raiden stands mutely appraising Johnny. Behind him, the surviving humans, including Liu and Sonya have gathered. A silence. Then, slowly at first, they begin to cheer. The cheering becomes louder, more boisterously defiant, supporting Johnny as Raiden strides almost cheerfully from the bridge. The cheering echoes in the chasm, and reverberates along the cliffs. But the noise is suddenly overwhelmed by another, more terrible sound: Goro's ferocious roar! The crowd parts, cowed into silence. Prince Goro appears and moves to the end of the bridge. He raises his arms and roars his savage challenge again!

JOHNNY

You're gonna hurt yourself, doing that.

Goro stops to consider the man in front of him. He reaches for the buckle to loosen his cape.

GORO

Strange. We've just met... and already I don't like you.

JOHNNY

If you don't like me now, wait till later.

LIU

finds Raiden, who, far from being angry now, is almost beaming.

LIU

Is this a mistake?

RAIDEN

It's a choice. At last, one of you has understood!

Liu is surprised. Raiden is proud of Johnny. He moves off. Liu turns to find Kitana standing just behind him when he turns.

KITANA

Only a fool would challenge Goro. And only a fool can win.

LIU

(surprised)

You're talking to me. Aren't you worried about that spy?

KITANA

It doesn't matter, now. All things will be as they are, not what they seem.

Liu stares at her, remembering Raiden's words.

LIU

What?

Kitana's eyes are fastened on the bridge.

KITANA

Your turn will come.

LIU

You think Johnny will lose?

She turns her remarkable gaze on him, then moves away. Liu starts after her, when something on the ground - resembling a root - suddenly shoots out, tripping him. Liu lunges for the creature, but Reptile scurries away, still invisible. Sonya approaches.

SONYA

(to Liu, hopeful)

The sun's bothering Goro. He can't see well.

Liu nods. They watch the match.

LIU

Johnny planned it that way.

ON THE BRIDGE

the mute Monk stands between the two fighters. The red sun is low in the sky, behind Johnny. Goro holds up one huge hand to shield his large eyes. Johnny removes his own dark sunglasses and offers them.

JOHNNY

Want to borrow these?

GORO

(appraising)

No one is as foolhardy as you pretend to be.

JOHNNY

Stick around. I might surprise you.

The Monk lowers his arms and moves quickly from the bridge. The match has begun. Johnny takes the two long objects from the balustrade - a pair of sectional staffs, attached by chain links. He whirls them impressively.

JOHNNY

Now we both have four arms and a long reach.

As if to prove the point, when Goro reaches in to grab Johnny, he gets his knuckles badly rapped by the whirling staffs. He pulls back with a grunt of pain, then charges, windmill fists flailing.

Johnny does several quick back flips to avoid the onrush, leaps onto the railing, seems to lose his balance... and falls! The crowd reacts. Goro peers over the edge

SIDE OF BRIDGE

Johnny dangles from a rope which he has placed there. Goro snatches the rope and begins pulling it up, as Johnny swings, pendulum-like until he disappears under the bridge! The rope goes slack. Johnny is no longer on the end of it.

GORO

climbs over the railing, and, with his excellent climbing abilities, follows Johnny.

NEAR BRIDGE

Liu and Sonya watch, puzzled.

LIU

What's he doing? He knows Goro can climb after him.

UNDER BRIDGE.

Goro uses his four arms to climb upside down along the bridge. Johnny is out of sight, then swings on a second rope straight for Goro, who uses a free hand to try and grab him. One of the sectional staffs whistles through the air and wraps around Goro's wrist. Johnny uses the staff to hold the wrist in a "nutcracker" type grip and his own inertia nearly pulls Goro free of the bridge as Johnny's body swings back. It is only Goro's amazing strength that allows him to hold on with only one hand. Foiled in his plan, Johnny tightens the vice-like grip on the wrist, breaking it! Goro yanks the sectional staff from Johnny's grasp.

NEAR THE BRIDGE

The crowd is startled by Goro's hellacious roar! What is going on, down there?

ON BRIDGE

Johnny reappears on the other side, dives and rolls onto the bridge with Goro in hot pursuit. Goro holds his injured hand carefully away from Johnny, guarding it. Johnny makes his remaining sectional staff sing through the air, forcing Goro to respect the distance between them. The cheers from the crowd encourage Johnny.

GORO

That was very clever. It almost worked.

As he speaks, Goro lunges in, nearly catching Johnny off guard. Johnny dives, wraps the sectional staff around Goro's ankle, yanks hard, crushing the ankle and sending the monster sprawling face first onto the bridge.

With one of his lower arms, Goro reaches down and wrenches the second sectional staff from his ankle, hurling it over the bridge. Goro, seething with fury, rises and limps painfully toward his now unarmed opponent.

JOHNNY

I've seen you fight. Want to know what you'll do next?

Enraged, Goro corners Johnny, and a backhand fist sends him careening into the stone bannister, knocking the wind out of him. Johnny clutches his side in extreme pain and shuffles away from the slow moving Goro, who limps toward him with death in his eyes.

NEAR THE BRIDGE

Raiden watches, his face a mask. Liu and Sonya fear the worst.

LIU

Fight your own fight, Johnny! Don't fight his!

ON THE BRIDGE

Johnny takes another punch to the body, reels back, and Goro lands a punch that sends Johnny sliding half the length of the bridge. He lies there, unconscious.

SHANG

allows the gleam of pleasure come into his face. Then... the aura begins to grow around him.

NEAR THE BRIDGE

The crowd implores Johnny.

LIU

Johnny! Get up!

SONYA

Johnny! Johnny please!

ON BRIDGE

Goro scoops up Johnny's inert form with his two good lower arms. He raises his good upper fist to finish Johnny, but sees that won't be necessary. Goro knows what he must do, now. He turns and limps back toward Shang.

SHANG AND GORO

Shang's aura is now very bright, the music of the damned reaching all ears. Goro stands, war weary, before his master, not kneeling, a hint of defiance in his large black eyes. Shang sees. His talon-like hand reaches out. The aura around him is almost blinding... the dissonant clamor of the lost souls whirling invisibly within it cause Goro to turn his face away, squinting, fearful.

SHANG

Where is my tribute?

Goro goes down on one knee, holding Johnny's inert form up in offering to Shang, as his one good lower hand makes a halfhearted gesture of appeasement. Shang's visage shows his satisfaction. His hand reaches toward...

JOHNNY

who has seemed unconscious in Goro's grasp, but now suddenly comes to life. A hastily made slingshot is in his hand, the rubber sling drawn back.

WIDER

He fires a pebble into one of Goro's eyes! Goro clutches his eye and loosens his grip on Johnny in pain and amazement, roaring until the bridge shudders. Johnny grabs the long pony tail, loops it around Goro's thick neck, and stands on Goro's back between the Shokan's massive shoulders, using his own body weight and leverage to slowly strangle him. Goro's arms cannot reach back to snatch Johnny from his back. He gasps, his tongue lolling in his mouth, unable to breath or speak.

VARIOUS REACTIONS

from the Crowd and Shang, show their utter amazement at this turn of events.

SHANG

His aura evaporates. He seems about to forget himself and interfere. His long, bony fingers come up to cast some sort of spell... when a lightning bolt crashes into the ground in front of him.

INCLUDE RAIDEN

who smiles menacingly and wags his finger: "No, no, no."

GORO AND JOHNNY

Johnny increases his pressure on the strangle hold. Goro slumps to his knees. In a desperate move, he suddenly lunges backward, trying to roll over and crush Johnny under him. But Johnny leaps off, and now his attack on Goro is merciless, punch kick combinations rain down on the huge head, preventing him from getting back on his feet. Goro wheezes, trying to catch a breath, flailing with his arms at Johnny, trying to regain his footing with one broken ankle. In a last lunge, he manages to pounce, nearly landing on Johnny who side steps. Goro crashes through the balustrade and goes over the bridge. His upper hands manages to grab the edge of the bridge, but Johnny does a flip, and lands squarely on one of them with both heels, crushing it.

GORO

bellows with pain and the crushed hand releases its grip. He now hangs suspended by only his one good upper arm.

The good lower hand cannot reach up to help him regain the bridge. His own massive weight is now working toward his doom.

JOHNNY AND GORO

Johnny moves to the edge of the bridge and looks over. Below Goro, the clouds, obscure the rocky beach below. A stiff wind tousles Johnny's hair. He doesn't gloat.

JOHNNY

In five centuries you've seen everything... except a good acting performance.

WIDER

Shang strides half way out on the bridge, shocked and enraged.

SHANG

Finish him!

Goro realizes what this means. For the first time, we see his eyes dilate with fear.

GORO

No....

Johnny looks at Goro, defeated, not begging, still somehow noble....

JOHNNY

So you can steal his soul? I've won. That's enough.

Shang's face contorts with hatred.

SHANG

Then I will take your soul... when you fight me.

He is face to face with Johnny, but Johnny's calm visage shows no sign of fear. Shang turns away and peers down at Goro.

SHANG

You let this circus acrobat defeat you. And you imagined I'd ever let a stupid brute share power with me, one day.

Shang sneers, and thwarted, storms off the bridge. Johnny takes the rope attached to the balustrade and swings it to where Goro can grasp it with his lower arms.

JOHNNY

Go on. Grab hold.

GORO

(weakening)

So I can slink back to my cave and die
of old age? I am a Shokan warrior! We
die in battle!

Johnny understands. The wind blows the clouds around below Goro, who
still dangles over the chasm.

JOHNNY

You fought well.

Goro grunts. How many times has he said this, himself? Then he lets
go of the bridge! His huge body spins down, down, and plunges into
the swirling mass of clouds.

NEAR BRIDGE

Johnny approaches Raiden, who nods his approval. The wind is
stiffening. Gray clouds begin to scud overhead. Raiden sees the
abrupt change in the sky.

RAIDEN

Well done.

Just then there is a violent scream, not of fear, but anger.

SONYA (O.S.)

No! Let me go!

They turn to see

SONYA AND SHANG

Sonya is suspended in midair by some invisible force, that holds her,
as in a net.

SHANG

I hereby exercise my right of challenge!
I challenger her!

RAIDEN

rises up to his full height, his brow menacing.

RAIDEN

You're a coward, sorcerer!

SONYA AND SHANG

Sonya is spinning now, and an invisible cyclone kicks up dust and
swirls it high in the air around her. Shang bows mockingly.

SHANG

The edict of The Tournament are quite
clear, Lord Raiden. Mortal Kombat
continues.... I'm simply changing the
place!

WIDER

The whirlwind grows larger, encompasses Shang as well, then - like a tornado, it whirls itself up into the low, flat ceiling of gray clouds.

JOHNNY

Sonya!

But she is gone. He rushes to Raiden.

JOHNNY

Where has he taken her?

RAIDEN

To Kahn's palace in the wastelands of Outworld. Where I cannot follow.

LIU

But I can.

JOHNNY

Hey, I'm going, too.

Raiden nods. He turns to the other humans, all present.

RAIDEN

We must hurry! To the boat!

And, with quick strides, Raiden marches with his staff across the bridge and down the stone steps, toward the sea below. The others, confused, begin to follow.

86 EXT. ISLAND - THE BEACH - DAY

The sky, sea and the beach are all slate gray, devoid of color. The clouds sweep preternaturally low overhead. The junk rides at anchor with a last longboat full of human participants climbing aboard.

Raiden stands on the beach with Liu and Johnny.

RAIDEN

I've got to take the others back, or they'll be trapped on Outworld. The cobalt mines of Shokan are a terrible place to die. I can only come for you after the final battle is won.

JOHNNY

Raiden.... Can Sonya beat Shang?

RAIDEN

No.

LIU

Then, we've lost.

RAIDEN

There is one last rule.... Shang neglected to mention it.

JOHNNY

What?

LIU

(remembers, brightens)
She has to accept the challenge....

RAIDEN

Or there can be no final combat.

JOHNNY

But you know her.... She'll never back down. I've got to stop her! I can fight Shang! Tell me how to get to this... Outworld!

RAIDEN

(rueful)
You think you can beat Shang, but you can't even find him. Johnny Cage, you have played your part splendidly. But I have probed your soul, as Shang will. You are not the Chosen One. This battle you cannot win.

This sinks in with difficulty. Johnny sulks, then gives in.

JOHNNY

Maybe your right. Anyway, my soul can't stand a lot of poking and probing. It's a very ticklish soul.

He turns to Liu, who is smiling.

JOHNNY

But I'm still going with you. I hope you know how to get there?

LIU

(remembering)
"Things will be as they are, not as they seem?"

RAIDEN

(nods; small smile)
I have nothing further to teach you Liu Kang. You possess the knowledge to defeat Shang. All that is lacking now, is the will. Put away your doubts and your guilt.... You're the last hope... and the best. Remember your special gift.

He puts a fatherly hand on Liu's shoulders. There is a lightning bolt and Raiden has vanished. They look to the boat.

THE JUNK

has already set sail, heading into a fog bank. Raiden is at the stern, watching them. Then he turns back, takes the wheel, and steers into the fog. The junk disappears. Moments later, there is the same strange glow as before, and the fog crackles with lightning. Then... nothing.

ON THE BEACH

The clouds swoop low, enveloping Johnny and Liu in a heavy mist. The fog begins to blow away, revealing...

87 EXT. THE BEACH - OUTWORLD

The gray beach stones are the same, all else has changed. The cliffs of the island and the stone stairway are gone. The slate beach gives way to rolling countryside, vast, barren of all life, as if a tremendous inferno or lava flow had burned everything down to the bare gray rocks. Yet further down the beach, ancient trees appear to march down to the waters edge.

LONG SHOT AERIAL VIEW (MATTE SHOT)

The landscape is roughly similar to the ancient symbol of ying and yang, the dark trees of the forest curl around from the beach to a distant mountain, where a lone black tower stands. A gray, volcanic wasteland curves from the other half of the tower back down to the slate beach.

RESUME SLATE BEACH

JOHNNY

So, where are we, oh Chosen One?

LIU

Where we've always been....Outworld.
The island was there to make us feel
more at home.... The figment of a
formidable imagination.

JOHNNY

Raiden's?

LIU

Or Kahn's. Or some Invisible Being
watching over the universe. It was
created for The Tournament. Now
destroyed.

JOHNNY

(looks at gray desolation)
This is Outworld? I can see where Kahn
would want a change of scenery.

They peer at the trees and the forbidding landscape toward the black tower on the distant mountain.

LIU

It'll be dark soon. We should head for that tower.

JOHNNY

You think Kahn's there?

LIU

If you were master of all you surveyed, where would you put your castle?

JOHNNY

Good point.

They head up the beach, inland.

88 EXT. THE BLACK TOWER - SUNDOWN

Brooding and ancient, it is hard to discern where the black mountain ends and the Tower begins. A slate road winds down from the Tower gates to a desolate plain below. To one side of the mountain, the brooding forest still grows almost to its base... the only living plants to be seen.

NEW ANGLE (FROM TOWER WINDOW)

Human-like slaves of Kitana's (and Shang's) ancient race wearily haul stones and timber up the steep road, escorted by Baraka guards and a four-armed Shokan overseer, armed with sword and whip.

89 INT. TOWER - SUNSET

Sonya sits in the thick-walled window opening, illuminated by the last light of day. She wears black chains, but is otherwise unharmed. The mute Monk stands watching her. Sonya looks from the window to her chains, then at him. He stares at her placidly.

SONYA

If you can really read minds, read this, you stitch-lipped sonofabitch.

She makes a time honored gesture of derision. The Monk remains impassive, then, slowly, his eyes turn to watch

LARGE OAKEN DOORS

off the outer circular corridor, leading to some inner sanctum. The doors begin to open outward on their own. Inside... is Nothingness! A complete and utter darkness. The Void. It is an absence of light so complete and demarcated that Sonya doesn't see it, until Shang Tsung backs slowly from the chamber, bowing - one part of his body in the light, and the rest in absolute Shadow! Finally he backs from the Darkness... or rather, It releases him.

As if in gratitude, Shang goes to his knees, finally prostrates himself. Only then do the doors swing silently shut.

WIDER

Sonya, has felt the Dark Presence as well, and her mind is flooded with an unknown terror. But when the doors finally close, she comes out of the spell to notice not only Shang, but the Monk, prostrate on the floor.

SONYA

I've seen ass kissing in my time, but
you guys are world class.

Shang shakily regains his feet - and resumes his imperious demeanor.

SHANG

Your childish impertinence is beneath
the Emperor's notice. In time you will
learn respect for him... and all his
works.

SONYA

Who's going to teach me, you?

SHANG

I'm a very persuasive teacher.

SONYA

(unsettled; cracks wise)
So, the boss man wasn't thrilled with
the news, I guess. Did he chew you out,
or is he the brooding, silent type?

SHANG

The great Kahn has no need for prattle.
He conveys his messages with...
(near shudder)
absolute efficiency.

SONYA

Do you expect me to cry and beg for
mercy, now?

SHANG

No, my dear. I expect you to fight
me... and lose!

SONYA

What if I refuse?

The mute Monk shifts uncomfortably, giving an obscure hint to Sonya that she's on to something. Shang tries to mask his own discomfort at this thought.

SHANG

You...? Back down from a challenge.
When have you ever done that? It's
simply not in your nature.

SONYA

You're forgetting Johnny Cage. He beat
Goro, and he'll come for me.

SHANG

Yes, he might. If he does, I'll destroy
him. Fighting a big brute with
pretensions of...honor is one
thing.... Fighting me is something
else, again.

SONYA

I noticed.

SHANG

If you want to spare him... you will
fight me... tomorrow, at dawn. And
after I have entered the Realm of Earth
triumphantly with my Benevolent Master,
I will raise you up... my consort and my
queen.

SONYA

In which lifetime?

SHANG

Slave consort, if that's how you want
it. I'll lay the Realm of Earth at your
feet... or enough of it to keep you
occupied. We'll have fun.

SONYA

You're demented.

SHANG

Am I? My best spy is looking for your
actor friend, or anyone else stupid
enough to follow into Outworld. If they
have, the Army of Shokan will be
waiting... to avenge the defeat of their
beloved Prince Goro. Till tomorrow, my
sweet.

He starts to leave her.... Angry and desperate, she lashes out.

SONYA

You're frightened!

SHANG

Frightened? Of whom?

SONYA

Why are we here instead of the Island?
Why do you have spies and an army of
four-armed gorillas protecting you?
You're afraid of someone, Shang. If
it's not me, or Johnny, who is it?

Shang, displeased, turns and leaves.

90 EXT. OUTWORLD FOREST FRINGE - LIU - MOONRISE

A moon, five times larger than any moon ever seen in the Realm of Earth, and five times as bright, illuminates the desolate plane beyond the trees. Liu hides in the first line of giant trees, peering out.

A ROAD - LIU'S POV

The winding road is full of marching Shokan's - mere silhouettes in the moonlight - swinging one set of arms in perfect unison, carrying heavy battle axes slung behind their backs, upper arms draped over them like woodsmen. The figures are distant, but frightening.

RESUME LIU AND JOHNNY

who lies nearby, peering out.

JOHNNY

Tell me there aren't really ten Goro's
out there?

LIU

A patrol from the Shokan army. We can't
use the road. We'll cut through the
forest.

They turn to inspect the towering trees, mere silhouettes as well.

JOHNNY

In all the books... travelling through
forests at night ranks right up there
with caves. Or don't you read, either?

LIU

You have a better idea?

JOHNNY

I will... eventually.

LIU

Come on.

Unsettled, peering suspiciously at the ominous trees, Johnny follows after Liu, penetrating deeper into the forest. There is a movement... a rustling. Johnny turns, looks, sees nothing, and hurries to catch up with Liu.

91 INT. SONYA'S CELL - TOWER - NIGHT

The Monk has released Sonya from her chains. He now closes the door on her and locks it. The cell is simple, with a meal spread out on a wooden table. She walks around, frustrated. She then sits to eat, opens a kettle and reaches in with a large spoon. As two twitching antennae appear over the rim of the kettle, she slams the lid back down, and shudders.

92 EXT. OUTWORLD FOREST - NIGHT

The immense moon illuminates our intrepid pair as they make their way among the humongous tree trunks. The branches groan loudly...although there is not even a rustle of wind.

JOHNNY

is disturbed by the sound, and looks up at the moon through the thick canopy of branches. He passes an

ENORMOUS, GNARLED OAK

which has been cleft nearly in twain by some ancient lightning strike. After he passes

THE TREE'S SHADOW

begins to move. Finger-like branches sweep down, as if to grab him. Johnny senses rather than sees and spins with a loud cry!

THE OAK

is immobile. But... hasn't it moved closer?

LIU

What?

JOHNNY

Notice anything funny about these trees?
Why are they making that noise?

LIU

The wind.

JOHNNY

There isn't any wind.

The groaning stops suddenly.

JOHNNY

Now it's stopped... like they're
listening.

LIU

(tenses)
Shh!

Liu stands next to a leaf and mushroom covered knoll. Nothing seems to make a sound. Liu closes his eyes, and hears, faintly, the sound of raspy breathing. Liu's hand shoots out from his side, and without opening his eyes, he grasps Reptile by the neck and pulls him from his perfectly camouflaged position on the knoll.

LIU

Gotcha!

Reptile tries to spew acid, but Liu twists his neck around and it sprays away from him. Reptile thrashes and changes hews four, five six times... then finishes a ghastly moonlight white, red eyes staring defiantly.

LIU

Who sent you?

Reptile tries to claw Liu's eyes, squealing like a wild boar, but Liu grapples with him. The two spin and squirm across the forest floor, then Liu hurls him hard into the cleft of the ancient Oak.

THE OAK

closes like a Venus fly trap on Reptile, who tries to run back out, but is caught. His face and body are covered with rough bark, his hands reach out like branches, which then sprout leaves! Liu thinks its just another camouflage attempt.

LIU

Nice try, lizard breath!

Liu slams his fist into the hard bark covering Reptile's face.

LIU

Aaaah!

He shakes his hand and examines his scraped knuckles. Johnny approaches the bark-covered form and taps it. Then steps well back.

JOHNNY

Okay. All right. The tree ate him.

Johnny sits down, in shock. Liu, bewildered, joins him.

KITANA (O.S.)

Trees in your world do not eat other creatures?

They turn to see Kitana, in the moonlight looking luminous in her white garments.

LIU

Princess Kitana. You followed us.

KITANA

You have followed me! Come. We must hurry.

She turns and strides under the branches of the Reptile eating tree.

LIU

I sensed... something, drawing me forward. You're not afraid of the trees?

KITANA

They are old friends and wise counselors.

LIU

Raiden said you were ten thousand years old.

Johnny's face expresses his astonishment.

KITANA

They are older. Follow me. We have many leagues to travel before daybreak. Shang plans to fight your friend for the Final Combat.

JOHNNY

Sonya! Has she accepted?

KITANA

(shakes head)

Not yet. But Shang is persuasive. We must hurry.

She turns and leads the way, deeper into the forest, so that the men have to hurry after her. As they penetrate the brooding forest...

JOHNNY (O.S.)

You know, for somebody ten thousand years old, you're in great shape.

93 INT. SONYA'S CELL - NIGHT

The intense moonlight foil Sonya's attempts at sleep. She rises, paces, goes to the window.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

The desolate plain stretches out before her. In its center is a large circle. Beside it is the tree line of the Ancient Forest.

94 EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

The stump of a tree of almost unimaginable girth stands in the center of the forest. Kitana stands in the center of it, eyes closed, listening to the groaning of the trees.

LIU

What are you doing?

KITANA

Listening. The trees say two patrols of Shokan ventured into the forest, and were destroyed.

She quickly resumes the pace. Liu and Johnny hustle after her.

LIU

Why are the trees helping us?

KITANA

Shokan are their natural enemies. Kahn sends them to cut timber for his mines. They are the only living plants my guardian, the emperor has any use for. All else, he has destroyed.

JOHNNY

Wait... You talk to them? The trees, I mean?

KITANA

They taught me. The trees were here before Kahn. They can teach you many things if they like you. But they speak slowly. It takes centuries to tell a tale completely.

(then)

But, in time, they may even tell you who you are.

LIU

And they told you. Is that why you're helping us?

KITANA

Ten thousand years ago, when I was an infant, my father and mother ruled this land. They were kind and wise. It was a beautiful place.... With delicate plants of many colors, and animals that flew through the sky, and many other strange things I've never seen! At least, that is what the trees told me when I played in the forest as a child. But trees tend to exaggerate, sometimes.

Johnny and Liu exchange a glance.

JOHNNY

Yeah. They're such kidders.

LIU

(dirty look; then)

What happened?

KITANA

My father's best warriors lost ten Tournaments to Kahn's minions. He entered the Realm of Outworld, killed my parents and adopted me... to lay claim to the throne.

LIU

Why didn't the people of Outworld rise up and fight him?

KITANA

Kahn sent the Spreading Darkness over the land. It wiped out all memory of the past. The people forgot who they were.

LIU

(stunned)

I saw this... Spreading Darkness in a dream. Only it was my home.

KITANA

Raiden was right to choose you. You were given The Dream.

LIU

Tell me about Shang Tsung.

KITANA

Long ago he was a simple monk more knowledgeable in the black arts than any other. Through magic, he rose in power, second only to Kahn, enslaving my people, engineering the destruction of all that was good or beautiful. One day soon, he, too, will be a Night Maker, as The Dream has foretold. He must be stopped before that day. Or the people of Earth will be thrown into a well of Darkness, forgetting their past, losing their will to resist Kahn's Coming.

(looks around)

It will be dawn soon. We're almost there.

She leads off; the trio strides across the clearing and into the woods.

95 EXT. BLACK TOWER - DAWN

The gates to the Black Tower are thrown open, and Sonya is nearly dragged in chains down the winding road toward the plain below.

HER POV - THE PLAIN

Below her is a round arena, mandala-like in the mosaic design made from thousands of smooth, flat stones. At the center - in black onyx - is the emblem of Mortal Kombat.

TOWER GATE

Shang Tsung, dressed simply in black, is escorted by a cortege of dark-cowled monks. From the tower, a huge drum sounds a solemn cadence. Others of the ancient race of Outworld stop in their slave labor to watch the procession, until their Baraka overseers force them back to work.

96 EXT. MANDALA STONE CIRCLE - DAY

As the procession reaches the circle, three black-cowled monks await them there. Sonya's chains are removed.

SONYA

I won't fight you, Shang! I'm not playing into your game, whatever it is.

SHANG

There is no one else. The Realm of Earth will forfeit the Tournament, and its portals will open to our great emperor.

SONYA

No! I-- My friends are coming!

SHANG

Hoping against hope is such an endearing, human trait. I'm touched. Really.

(to monks)

Take her back to the Tower. The emperor will be overjoyed.

Two of the cowled monks already in the circle step forward.

SONYA

No! Wait!
(hesitates; despondent)
I'll....

SHANG

Yes?

SONYA

(firm conviction)
My friends will come.

Now one of the monks throws back his cowl. It's Johnny.

JOHNNY

They're here already.

Sonya is thrilled. Shang is surprised. Several of his escorts move forward, but Shang holds up a hand to stop them.

SHANG

Right on cue. So much like an actor.
Are you challenging me?

The second monk now throws back his cowl: Liu.

LIU

No. I am.

Shang's face falls. Liu, Johnny and Sonya see it. Shang doesn't want to fight him.

SHANG

(enraged)
Seize them!

The escort of monks once more surges forward, but the third cowed figure in the circle now reveals herself: Kitana!

KITANA

Would you interfere with The Tournament!
And betray our... benevolent emperor.
In his great wisdom, he knows that
Mortal Kombat cannot be won by
treachery!

The monks fall back before the regal presence of the princess, her face flushed with righteous anger.

KITANA

Your stupidity will lose for all time
the keys to the Realm of Earth!

NEW ANGLE - THE TOWER

At that moment the uppermost windows of the Tower are thrown open by a long, shadowy form... not quite a hand or arm, more like Night's long tendrils.. A great wind sweeps down from the mountain over the plain. The form withdraws.

IN THE CIRCLE

The monks cringe and hide their faces.

KITANA

Our Beloved Master knows I speak the
truth.

SHANG

Our Beloved Master also knows you are a
traitor! He can read your deceitful
heart!

KITANA

(solemn)
He reads what is there, but he cannot
change it.

Shang realizes he has been outwitted. Liu steps forward.

LIU

(proclaims)
I am Liu Kang, ancestor to Kung Lao! I
challenge you to Mortal Kombat! Do you
accept, or yield?

The monks quickly withdraw from the mandala. Kitana, Liu, and Sonya
draw back as well, leaving Shang and Liu alone.

SHANG

closes his eyes. His aura once again begins to glow around him.

SHANG

I accept.

WIDER

But this time, Shang's aura continues to expand, larger and larger.
Then, like a cyclone, it begins to spin as it expands to the edges of
the mandala, containing within it hundreds of warrior souls -
ethereal beings who shriek and cry with an absolutely deafening din!
The circle of stones and the combatants are surrounded by a whirling,
screeching stadium of lost souls, spectral faces horribly distorted by
pain and hatred, calling out a terrible warning to Liu in many, many
tongues. The entire effect is terrifying!

JOHNNY, SONYA, KITANA

shrink back in awe.

JOHNNY

What is that?

KITANA

A thousand years of victories. Hundreds
of warrior souls. The source of all
Shang's power.

For once, Johnny has no snappy reply as he gawks.

SHANG

stands at the center of this vortex, in the center of the mandala as
the entire Spectral maelstrom seems to once again reenter Shang and
disappear. A spectral soul inhabits his body... he transforms into

A JAPANESE SAMURAI

nearly seven feet tall, in lacquered armor and helmet, carrying a long
bladed spear.

But, although the Spectral Cyclone is now invisible, the deafening sound of a thousand dissonant voices whirls around the arena, disorienting Liu as he faces this formidable shape before him. The Samurai handles the spear with dazzling speed, twirling it, swinging it like a scythe, then lunging in.

WIDER

Liu uses a combination of Kung Fu and Aikido to dance away from the attack, then stepping gracefully aside, he lets the spear lunge past him, then neatly breaks it in two with a karate chop! The Samurai draws his formidable sword, but Liu uses the short end spear to fend off the rapid assault, parrying, then making the Samurai's helmet ring with the blows from the short spear.

THE SPECTRAL WALL

reappears for a brief moment as...

THE SAMURAI

transforms again... this time into a COSSACK, with slashing saber. The Cossack does a double back flip, and lands on

A SPECTRAL CHARGER

who materializes from the whirling, deafening ectoplasm. The Spectral Wall once more vanishes, although its sound remains. The massive black steed breathes smoke, as the Cossack spurs it on, bearing down on Liu.

WIDER

Liu grabs his fallen cloak and cowl, and like a matador, spreads it wide, throwing it over the horse's head, blinding it, then ducking under the steel-shod hooves, which throw masses of sparks off of the stones. The horse, maddened and blind begins to circle and buck. Liu leaps onto the horses back with the Cossack, and pulls a dagger from the belt. They struggle on horseback for several moments, before the steed crashes on its side... and evaporated back into

THE SPECTRAL CYCLONE

which once more briefly surrounds the two fallen fighters!

THE COSSACK

transforms, even as he falls toward the hard stones, into

A RAVEN DANCER

...a warrior shaman from an ancient tribe of the Pacific Northwest. The other Specters vanish again. Looking more bird than human, able to fly, the Raven Dancer swoops down toward Johnny. The head does indeed transform into that of an enormous black raven, although the body remains the same; the wings extend out a dozen yards, as the monstrous chimaera swoops down on Liu. The dangling feet "morph" into talons which rip at Liu's clothing as he dives and rolls away.

The half man, half bird veers around the circle, enclosed by the whirling spectral noise and comes in again, pecking and clawing, the strange, "wood chime" like call even louder than the dissonant music of the ethereal souls.

WIDER

Liu snatches up the round shield of the Samurai, and uses it to fend off the attack. The talons clutch the shield and tear it from Liu's grasp. The bird/ man circles again. Then Liu snatches up Sonya's black metal chains from the center of the arena and begins spinning them, faster and faster. As the Raven Dancer swoops, Liu releases them, enmeshing a talon and a wing, causing the giant bird-man to crash clumsily to the stones, fluttering, struggling. The shield rolls away and falls at Liu's feet.

THE SPECTRAL WALL

reappears, its dissonance now a strange harmonics.

THE RAVEN DANCER

wraps a large black wing around his body, and transforms once again... into a black-cowled MONK, his back to Liu!

JOHNNY, KITANA, SONYA

The three watch in surprise.

THE SPECTRAL CYCLONE

suddenly goes silent, voices stilled! Then it vanishes. There is only the rushing sound of the wind.

THE MONK

Turns... Shang has "morphed" into Chan! Chan smiles lovingly at his brother.

WIDER

Liu is disarmed by this unexpected apparition. Chan walks slowly toward him, the warm smile in place. Liu is as transfixed by the hypnotic eyes as the junk captain was by the giant cobra's.

CHAN

Liu. It's me. I've come to help you.

LIU

(disoriented)

No.

CHAN

Raiden sent me. Let me help you.

LIU

I won't listen!

CHAN

I've never been far. I've been watching over you.

Liu is caught in "Chan's" mesmerizing stare, listens to his soft voice.

CHAN

I'm here to protect you.

LIU

Chan. It was my fault.

CHAN

It doesn't matter, now, brother.

The invisible Specters still circle. A low, musical sound has replaced their dissonant shrieking. It adds to the hypnotic effect.

LIU

(confused)

Stay back! You're not real!

CHAN

I died for you. Let me help you.

97 INTERCUT WITH JOHNNY, KITANA, SONYA

As they register their reactions.

CHAN

Together we can win. Like old times in the village. Give me your hand. We'll defeat him together.

Chan holds out his hand toward his brother, only yards away. Liu turns his head.

CHAN

Look at me.

LIU

(fighting his inner demon)

No!

CHAN

Liu....

Liu is nearly under Shang's spell. With his last will power, he shuts his eyes tight, repeating a mantra to himself.

LIU

Give me the power to see things as they are... not as they seem!

Liu opens his eyes.

LIU'S POV SHANG/CHAN

At first, Liu sees only his brother Chan, but then, a mere shadow at first, he begins to see Shang Tsung through the illusion. Shang's image grows brighter, overwhelming the magical spell until Liu sees not his brother's hand reaching out in friendship, but the long, talon-like fingers reaching straight for Liu's chest... as if to pierce it and pull his heart out, or wrench his soul from his body.

WIDER

Liu looks up just as "Chan" lunges to pierce his chest, but Liu's hand comes up even faster and grasps the hand. With all of his determination and strength, he begins to crush it. "Chan's" kind features melt away into the pained grimace of Shang, eyes glowing malevolently, fangs bared! The sounds from the unseen Spectral Cyclone begins to rotate faster and faster, as if energizes with excitement. There is a babble of voices in many languages, hard to distinguish what is being said. The noise is deafening.

Shang manages to break Liu's grasp, but Liu is now in full counterattack, using all his phenomenal skills as a fighter to force Shang back.... until Shang is left with only his own, visage, tiring visibly with every second, losing power and strength under the rain of blows. The spectral babble of voices has now unified into one cry, from many voices. "Finish Him!" Shang staggers and falls to his knees, haggard, nearly defeated. The voices of the invisible warrior souls whisper to him. "Finish Him." They no longer whirl like a mad cyclone, but hover in needy anticipation. With a final wheel kick, Liu sends Shang sprawling to the stones and places his foot on the sorcerer's neck... as his great ancestor had done centuries before him.

LIU

Release them! Release their souls!

SHANG

You don't know what you're saying!

LIU

You enslaved them. Now free them!

SHANG

You're a fool.

LIU

Now!

The invisible Warrior Souls voices are stilled. Utter silence.

SHANG

capitulates. He exhales once, a low moaning sigh.

THE SPECTRAL CYCLONE

whirls one last time from his brow, rises, towers above the plain... then disintegrates.

Individual souls float free, rising skyward, spinning, the spectral music of their many voices forming some strange harmony now, as the ectoplasmic vision evaporates. Liu releases Shang and turns away from the sorcerer, to see

CHAN

The spectre of his brother does not smile deceitfully, as before. He hovers close.

INCLUDE LIU

Liu is moved to tears.

LIU

It's really you.

CHAN

It's really me. I can see the sacred flame, Liu. It's burning bright, inside you.

Liu reaches out to the spectre. Chan extends a hand. They cannot touch. Both smile. Liu lowers his hand first.

LIU

Go in peace, my brother.

And the spectre of Chan slowly rises, dissipating like the other spirits, rising, rising... gone.

WIDER

Shang can barely muster the strength to lift his head from the stones.

SHANG

You should have killed me. All of their power would have been yours.

LIU

I don't need their power.

Liu joins his friends, and Kitana. Johnny gives him a high five, but Kitana cuts them short.

KITANA

We must leave, now!

Kitana is looking toward the Tower. The monks, hitherto silent, have fallen prostrate, heads facing the black mountain, chanting a dirge, terrified.

NEW ANGLE - THE TOWER

The gates to the Tower suddenly burst open, and The Spreading Darkness pours out, rolling down the mountain like a slow, viscous tidal wave.

RESUME JOHNNY, KITANA, SONYA, LIU

Who stare at the awesome apparition.

JOHNNY

Great show....
(realizes the danger)
Gotta run.

The four turn and flee toward the forest.

AERIAL SHOT - THE MANDALA

We see from high above our four heroes running toward the forest. The Dark Wave pours viscously over the edges of the Mandala, as Shang tries to crawl away. As it envelops him, we hear his horrified cry:

SHANG

Aaaaaaaaaaah!

The cry echoes for a few moments... then... NOTHING.

98 EXT. NEAR BEACH - OUTWORLD - LATER

Sonya and Johnny watch side by side as the Spreading Darkness advances in the distance behind them. The mountain is no longer visible. They are both shaken, yet happy.

JOHNNY

Look, I know you think I came to rescue
you, because of some macho reflex,
but....

SONYA

I know why you came.

JOHNNY

You do?

There is a look in her eye that hasn't been there before. Johnny can't look away from it. To his amazement, she leans in and kisses him gently. After his initial reaction, he returns the kiss. Then, they hear a cry from the dunes near the beach and turn to see Liu, with Kitana, waving and hollering something. He points. Sonya and Johnny run to where they stand and look down on the beach below.

THE JUNK

is riding at anchor. At that moment, a hole forms in the clouds allowing the first ray of sunlight OutWorld has seen for eons. It bathes the junk in its radiant light.

ON THE BEACH

Raiden, stands near a longboat, smiling and waving his coolie hat.

RAIDEN
I knew you could do it!
(quietly; convincing
himself)
Never had a moment's doubt.

He decides not examine these sentiments any further, and continues waving as the others move down toward him.

DISSOLVE TO:

99 EXT. BEACH - LATER

Raiden stands impatiently nearby with Sonya and Johnny already in the longboat, as Kitana and Liu talk on the beach.

LIU
Come with me.

KITANA
I can't. My people need me.

LIU
But Kahn....

KITANA
I'll live in the forest.

NEW ANGLE

as if to accentuate this, we see hundreds of ragged figures on the dunes overlooking the beach, watching the tableau below... men and women of the ancient race of Outworld.

LIU
Then I'll stay. I'll fight Kahn with you. Free Outworld.

KITANA
Only we can do that. As only you could save your world.

LIU
I... will I see you again?

KITANA
If it is true that we make our own destinies... then we are destined to be together one day.

LIU
(smiles)
I'll take that as a yes. Good bye, Kitana.

KITANA

(sadly)

Goodbye, Liu Kang.

Her soft white hand comes up to touch his face, lingers there, combing through his tousled black hair.

RAIDEN

(calls to them)

It's time!

With regret, Liu turns and gets into the long boat, his eyes never leaving her as they put out for the junk. Kitana smiles sadly. She waves, then turns back to her people, silently lining the dunes. She raises her arms, and a ragged cheer comes from their throats.

100 EXT. JUNK - STERN - LATER

Liu gazes toward the receding shore. There are rays of sunlight on the land, now, as well, piercing the scudding gray clouds. But on the promontory, Kitana and the others stand around an immense beacon fire.

LIU

(to Raiden)

Why didn't you tell me Kitana belonged to The Order of Light?

RAIDEN

She came to it by her own path... as everyone must.

(wryly chastises)

Although some contrary mortals choose a crooked path over a straight one.

Liu smiles at the jest, then takes one last look at Kitana's brightly burning beacon: lighting the way home.... Or back!

101 EXT. FOG BANK - DAY

The junk enters the thick fog bank. Moments later a strange glow permeates it. Shafts of lightning shoot through the misty wall!

DISSOLVE TO:

102 EXT. ALTAR OF FIRE - LIU'S VILLAGE - DUSK

Liu's Grandfather stands on the crest of the hill, watching the sacred flame, a huge bonfire that towers over him. Then he turns to look out over the village.

HIS POV - THE VILLAGE

The headlights of a battered bush taxi wind their way toward the village.

03 EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

The taxi stops and Liu steps out. A moment later, Sonya and Johnny join him, gazing up at the beautiful sentinel fire on the hilltop, and the lone figure next to it, who waves!

GRANDFATHER

beams with pleasure as he waves.

IN THE VILLAGE

Liu waves back. Then he escorts his new friends toward the village. The villagers pour from their homes and swarm around the three heroes, shouting Liu's name excitedly. Liu picks up a small child and puts him on his shoulders as they make their triumphal entry. High above them on the hilltop, the sacred fire burns brightly.

THE END