

A JEAN-JACQUES ANNAUD FILM

"QUEST FOR FIRE"

Screenplay by Gerard Brach

Inspired by the Novel by Rosny Aisne

June, 1980.

1 EXT. ROCKY LANDSCAPE WINTER DAY 1

The light from a pallid winter sun softens the angular foothills and tundras of a deserted mountainous landscape.

Translucent clouds, driven by a fierce wind, tear across this barren scenery. Stunted birch trees, moss, fungus and tangled weeds fill the patches of dark soil where the snow has melted. Huge rocks, scattered haphazardly by time in unfamiliar patterns, add a feeling of veiled anguish.

MAIN TITLES

Now and then, the wind dies down and we hear the far-off howls of wild animals. Birds fly across the sky.

2 EXT. ROCKY LANDSCAPE WINTER EVENING 2

A few crimson clouds still light up the sky above the rocky landscape.

In the far distance, a wolf pack howls.

CONTINUE MAIN TITLES

3 EXT. ROCKY LANDSCAPE WINTER NIGHTFALL 3

Night is falling over the cliffs and rocks. The immense vault of heaven is already riddled with twinkling stars. A full quarter moon, like a stark Cyclops' eye, watches over the earth and bathes it in her deceptive light.

Suddenly, at the shadowy edge of a rock wall, a red glow begins to throb and then swell.

The crackling sounds from a fire soon break the silence of the night and the flickering flames light up a small spot in the dark emptiness.

We move slowly towards this spot.

An upright shadow crosses in front of the fire and is briefly silhouetted before melting back into the darkness.

END OF MAIN TITLES

4 EXT. STONE PLATFORM CAVE ENTRANCE NIGHT 4

The fire crackles on a stone platform at the entrance to a cave. Its dark opening dominates the nocturnal landscape.

We HEAR human SNORES accentuated by the echoing cave. Now and then this bass RUMBLE is punctuated by an INFANT's high-pitched WAIL.

The damp firewood creates an acrid curl of smoke. Through it, the back of a motionless squatting man can be SEEN. Large moths fly around the hearth and its store of branches. With a sudden gesture the watchman snatches a moth in mid-flight and eats it. We get a CLOSER LOOK at this being: the prominent arches of his eyebrows shield closely-set eyes. His piercing gaze remains fixed on the flames as he chews on the moth. His heavy jaws and undeveloped occiput tell of his animal nature. But the fact that fire instills no fear in him heralds the triumphant future of his species. He is Homo Sapiens. On his stocky, hairy body, he wears a piece of fur so filthy and worn that it is hard to tell what animal it came from. Nearby, on a boulder, is a hatchet fashioned from stone with a smooth wooden handle polished from long use.

5 INT. CAVE NIGHT 5

The flickering light of the protective fire lights up a large cave. Inside, we come across a prehistoric tribe, the ULAM, dressed in animal skins of varying quality, men, women and children. There are about thirty lying intertwined on a bedding of dried foliage and grasses, huddling together round a second fire of glowing embers. The distended bellies of two pregnant females are closest to this source of welcome warmth, and their little ones - one of whom is whimpering - are curled up between their mothers' thighs. We also notice twin brothers, aged about twenty: NAM and GAW - who are sleeping back to back, stuck together like two Siamese twins.

Outside, the watchman stokes up the fire and the sleepers' heavy features are revealed by the firelight.

O.S. Howling of wolves.

Three particularly forbidding males sleep apart from the other members of the group. They are brothers: HOURK, MODOC and AGHOO. Even asleep they are frightening and none of the other ULAM would dare place himself too close to this trio.

AGHOO, whose right arm is swollen from a recent wound, sleeps with his head cushioned on the bloody carcass of a half-eaten reindeer. He snores loudly against his curious pillow.

O.S. Howling of wolves.

6 EXT. STONE PLATFORM NIGHT 6

O.S. Howling of wolves.

The howling of wolves seems closer. The watchman selects a lighted branch from the fire and walks over to the edge of the stone platform. He throws the branch and watches as it lands on a rock in a shower of sparks. Dark forms retreat furtively into the night.

AMOUKAR, the watchman, grunts contemptuously and returns to his place by the fire.

7 INT. CAVE NIGHT 7

Occasionally one of the surrounding sleepers coughs or scratches himself vigorously. Others grunt as they toss and turn, searching for more comfortable positions. One senses that their fur coverings, matted with dry blood and grease, are crawling with vermin. Not all the members of the tribe are asleep, however.

Repeated GASPS can be HEARD from a raised area of the cave: In the dim light LAKAR a thin and nervous Ulam, is copulating from behind with a woman of ample proportions, three times his weight. The coupling is suggested rather than seen. To get more leverage, LAKAR places his foot against a large rock.

The rock is loose and, under the pressure of LAKAR's foot, it rolls down and collides with Aghoo's back. The giant wakes up with a start. Seeing the guilty party, he picks up a thigh bone from a nearby pile of bones, and throws it at the couple.

The bone hits LAKAR on the skull. He lets out a shrill scream. Without dismounting from his unconcerned partner, LAKAR turns around in fury. When he realizes who he is confronted with, and his eyes meet Aghoo's bloodshot eyes, he ceases his coital action. Detaching himself from the female, he steps furtively toward the dimly-lit opening of an adjacent gallery.

8 INT. GALLERY WITH DEAD END NIGHT 8

LAKAR enters the gallery which ends in a cul-de-sac. Two young warriors, NAOH and TSOR, armed with wooden staves, are blocking the narrow entrance with their sleeping bodies. NAOH, who has fair hair and light-blue eyes, is finer-featured and more slender than the rest of his race.

In this, the most sheltered spot in the cave, high on a cairn of stones, sits a fire cage. The cage is made of

woven twigs and leaves which protect a platform of flat stones on which red embers glow.

A third ULAM is lying stretched out on his belly on the ground. It is ROUKA, of indeterminate age, with the expression of a simpleton. His completely bald head gives him an endless forehead which contrasts with the low forehead of the other tribe members. His idiotic state apparently confers on him certain magical powers. He stares, fascinated, at the glowing coals, with his bulbous, expressionless eyes.

LAKAR sits and rubs the bump on his head. He grunts, then slowly begins to speak haltingly in a hoarse, curiously endearing voice.

LAKAR

a: ju agwk sla: x mne

After a long silence, NAOH questions him in the same tone:

NAOH

Fa: la: xi?

LAKAR

Fa: la: xa

TSOR snickers briefly, making a harsh, gravelly sound. (The ULAM don't yet know how to laugh in the modern sense of the word). NAOH gestures at ROUKA, giving him an order.

NAOH

atra

The idiot brings his face close to the cage and, with tender respect, blows on the embers which begin to glow anew. NAOH, using a hand with filthy fingernails, picks out dry twigs and charcoal from a carefully built-up store. He puts a few pieces of tinder onto the fire. The simpleton puts his hands straight into the flames to re-arrange the pieces of tinder and pokes about at length amongst the embers until the fire cage draws properly. The fire, which is burning brightly now, lights up his ecstatic expression.

As dawn appears on the horizon, the fire begins to die out. The watchman yawns and scratches his chest. Suddenly he stiffens. A worried expression crosses his obtuse features. His beady eyes scan the still dark landscape.

9 Continued

9

He seizes his hatchet and steps to the tip of the platform. His large nostrils twitch nervously, catching an unfamiliar scent in the wind. Hearing a sound, he spins around.

NAOH has just come out of the cave. He makes his way towards a spot at a lower level than the platform where we can make out an accumulation of domestic refuse of all sorts. There NAOH squats to satisfy a natural need.

The watchman starts to scan the stretches of tundra once again.

After a while, NAOH joins him. The watchman grunts.

AMOUKAR

v: agabu: i

Members of the tribe start to come out of the cave. Still groggy, many yawn and scratch themselves as they greet the new day. Some head towards the fire and replenish it with wood, others join NAOH and AMOUKAR. Soon five or six peer at the mournful landscape that is slowly being bathed in sunlight. NAM and GAW, the twins, MIKR and MORAH are amongst them. AGHOO is last to emerge, the reindeer thigh in his hand. MIKR gives him a wide berth.

The group's vigilant eyes fail to notice anything suspicious and the tension slackens.

But NAOH is insistent.

NAOH

U: ag-abu: u: ag - abu:

But AGHOO, after taking several deep breaths, nostrils flared, shakes his head and confirms:

AGHOO

naka...

ū: ag-abu: naka

NAOH shoots him a wary look from his intense blue eyes. We sense a mute rivalry between these two males.

But suddenly the worry among the members dissipates. There is a constant need for precaution, but it was a false alarm. The group disperses to attend to the pressing needs of daily survival in the paleolithic age.

10 EXT. BOULDERS MORNING

10

A few hundred feet from the cave, a dozen Neanderthals, hidden by large boulders, stare savagely in the Ulam's direction. Brute force emanates from their heavy, hairy bodies covered with tattered animal skins. They are armed with spears and clubs made of gnarled branches and awkwardly-hewn stones. Mucus glazes their faces. They are cold: Icicles have formed here and there amongst their body hair. Some dance from foot to foot, while others breathe on their numbed hands in an attempt to warm themselves.

11 EXT. STONE PLATFORM CAVE DAY

11

Men and women cluster around the reindeer's carcass of which AGHOO has appropriated the thigh. They cut away the remaining flesh with flint knives.

The fire blazes once again. Some of the members of the tribe roast pieces of meat on the hot stones which they remove from under the embers.

AGHOO and his two brothers share the thigh, tearing pieces from it with bloodstained hands. The behaviour of the three brutes contrasts with the gentleness, the calm, the economy of movement and the taste for warm promiscuity which is characteristic of relationships within the rest of the group.

A woman sits at the cave's entrance nursing a baby. Three children play noisily. They roll on the ground and chase each other like carefree puppies.

The twin, NAM, is busy cutting with his teeth the few beard hairs which are growing on his brother, GAW's chin. His task completed, it is NAM's turn to put his head back on GAW's shoulder and offer his skin to the work of his brother's incisors.

Sitting on a rock, with his legs wide apart, FAUM, the tribal chief, noisily gulps the marrow of a broken femur. Around his neck he is wearing a necklace which has in it a broad pebble with a hole in it on which we notice the fossilised impression of a shell. Bear's teeth sewn onto his skins complete the decoration which sets him apart from the other men in the tribe.

A pregnant woman stands directly behind him. She meticulously searches his scalp for lice and whenever she finds one in his abundant, greasy hair, she pops it into her mouth.

11 Continued

11

Some members of the group are in poor physical condition: fingers are missing, many have bald spots and sores. A man has only one eye, a woman has a pronounced limp. Only one of the ULAMS is very old: white hair distinguishes him from the rest. He is prone to coughing fits. Sweating, he gasps for breath, his toothless mouth agape.

ROUKA, the idiot, crawls on all fours, sniffing the garbage. He grunts as he explores the waste, nibbling on a dubious morsel with delight.

Despite his simple nature, ROUKA has an acute sense of hearing. He is the only one to notice an alien sound. He raises his head and sees:

12 EXT. ROCKY OUTCROP OVERHANGING PLATFORM DAY

12

The silhouette of a Neanderthal momentarily appears against the sky before disappearing between two boulders.

13 EXT. STONE PLATFORM CAVE DAY

13

Terror shows on ROUKA's face. Pursing his lips, he points, trembling, to the spot uttering a terrible hoarse scream.

ROUKA

ua:::g....a:::bu:::....ua:::g...

Nobody pays attention to his bellowing. ROUKA suddenly sniffs an appetizing odor and forgets his terror. He concentrates on the scraps of refuse. He picks up an oddly-shaped bone and heads for the cave's mouth.

AGHOO squats with his brothers, chewing savagely on a scrap of meat. With a swift back-hander to the shoulder he pushes aside his brother MODOC who was stretching out his hand with the intention of taking a second helping. MODOC falls backwards but gets up immediately and attacks his elder brother.

A short, savage battle ensues, like animals vying for prey. When it is over, AGHOO goes off to one side with the remainder of the reindeer's thigh. Things return to normal on this quiet day where there is no need to hunt for food. But it is still winter: most of the ULAM huddle around their precious fire.

14 INT. CAVE FIRE CAGE GALLERY DAY 14

ROUKA contemplates the fire cage. Sucking his thumb, he stares rapturously at the embers that flicker like fireflies.

At the entrance to the gallery, two robust adults, MORAH and JAMOUR are posted, their staves within easy reach.

15 EXT. STONE PLATFORM DAY 15

Around the fire, men are chiselling flints which they have heated to make them chip more easily, or hardening the tips of their wooden staves in the flames.

AGHOO has eaten his fill and belches beside the remains of his reindeer thigh. Women are thinning animal skins with scraping tools made of flint. With the help of a sort of awl made from the antler bud of a young stag, one of them is piercing holes in a fur so that she can stitch it to another one. Her child is crying between her legs:

CHILD

ma ma

NAOH and his hunting partner, TSOR, head down a footpath leading to the plain. Each is armed with two spears and a barbed harpoon.

16 EXT. ROCKS OVERHANGING THE STONE PLATFORM DAY 16

Two Neanderthals hide behind some boulders and look down upon the HOMO SAPIENS who are oblivious of the attack being prepared. The dancing flames of the ULAM's fire are reflected in their little eyes which glow with greed.

Several other Neanderthals scramble up the sharp incline and join the two scouts. They are still some distance away.

17 EXT. STREAM - LAKE - BIRCHWOOD DAY 17

A waterfall tumbles noisily into a small lake. Its shores are bordered with pebbles and surrounded by a forest of birch trees.

Crouched at the water's edge, NAOH and TSOR are drinking, tossing quantities of water into their wide open mouths with their cupped hands.

17 Continued

17

Four women of ample proportions approach from the footpath leading to the lake. They carry two bison skulls made watertight with clay and animal skins.

One of the women is carrying her baby on their shoulders, firmly clutching onto its mother's furs.

One of these water bearers is GAMMLA, FAUM's daughter. Her generous build is typical of the adult females of the tribe.

A young male, LAKAR, appears as the women quench their thirst, before filling the improvised water jugs. He creeps forward, looking lustily at the posterior of one of the females. She is leaning slightly forward.

18 EXT. BIRCHWOOD - LAKE DAY

18

Three Neanderthals advance in silence. Now and then they run on their arms and legs, much like Rhesus monkeys. To the left, through the trees in the distance, they see NAOH and TSOR plunging harpoons in the lake's shining water. RASPY PANTING can be HEARD.

The intriguing SOUND comes from behind a mossy hillock. The three hunched brutes head cautiously in this direction. Through the ferns they see:

19 EXT. DIP IN THE GROUND DAY

19

LAKAR, on all fours, coupling with the female he had his eye on. The lacy screen of ferns partly hides their bodies. In the b.g. the other females gather water, paying no attention to the mating scene although they are in full view of it.

20 EXT. LAKESHORE DAY

20

At the very instant NAOH spears a fish:
O.S. A yell from LAKAR briefly drowns out the perpetual rumble of the waterfall.

LAKAR runs from the wood holding his face in his hands. He dashes toward the women, his three aggressors in pursuit.

Yapping of women cowering against each other, terrified, except for GAMMLA.

NAOH doesn't bother to remove the fish from his spear. He dashes forward with LAKAR. They are swifter than the Neanderthals. But the latter are closer to the women and LAKAR.

21 EXT. GROUP OF WOMEN DAY

21

Blood gushes from LAKAR's forehead. He tries to use the women, whose backs face the lake, as a shield. The women imitate GAMMLA and start to throw stones at the Neanderthals which makes them hesitate before charging.

One of them is hit in the mouth by a stone. Blood spurts from his split lips. Mad with rage, he rushes at a woman and rips open her belly with his stave.

(Whirring sound)

A spear pierces the brute's neck. He falls heavily to the ground near his victim.

O.S. NAOH & TSOR

(shouting)

dza? an itu!

The two remaining aggressors ready themselves for the Ulams' counterattack.

From the rear, LAKAR beats a kneeling Neanderthal repeatedly with a large stone.

One of the brutes snaps NAOH's harpoon - to which the fish is still attached - with a back hand swing of his club.

Five new Neanderthals emerge from the birchwood. NAOH orders his people toward the footpath.

NAOH

dza? an eftmeta!

vitraS:::vitraS!

The Ulam race in this direction with LAKAR outrunning the rest. He dashes up the narrow path and disappears around the bend.

22- EXT. STONE PLATFORM CAVE DAY

22-

23-

23-

24 The monotonous activities of the ULAM by the cave continue:

24

Three boys "play" hunting, running after imaginary wild game, brandishing and throwing spear-like twigs.

A mother pulls out with her teeth a thorn stuck in her offspring's buttock.

With a sharpened flint the elderly tribesman chisels a reindeer antler to a point, his tongue poking out.

22- Continued
23-
24

22-
23-
24

LAKAR (OFF)

u:ag abou:...u:ag-abu:...

Breathless, LAKAR surges from the footpath, blood streaming from his forehead. Trembling, he makes quick signals with his hands and, between pants, repeats:

LAKAR

u:ag abu:...u.ag-abu:
tan tan

His words create chaos. The females gather the children. The men grab their weapons. Faum's booming voice gives out an order:

FAUM

slaxataka! slaxataka!
vir me:g ss atra ss atra
virku: ss a'na:ga ent verp petra

The men form a barrier to protect the fire and the entrance to the cave.

FAUM questions LAKAR:

FAUM

Ku:an tikam nikimjisi?

LAKAR puts out his two hands, showing them all ten fingers.

LAKAR

Tan tan

O.S. screams are heard coming from the footpath.

Soon the two surviving women appear: GAMMLA and the woman with the baby - still firmly clutching onto the skins, followed by GAW and NAOH. They turn and face their pursuers. The Neanderthals are hampered by the narrowness of the footpath.

Suddenly ... the ULAM are stricken with terror. Rocks and boulders tumble from the overhang with a deafening ROAR. The massive stones pulverize limbs, crush breasts and skulls, and spread panic among the tribe. A rock shatters the hearth in a shower of sparks, and pins the elderly ULAM to the ground. He struggles in vain and coughs violently. The deadly avalanche is followed by the Neanderthals' attack. They want the fire. They rush towards the remains of the fire, protected by the survivors, beating them with spears, clubs and stones.

22- Continued

23-

24

The dull thud of blows landing on bodies, battle cries, wails of pain, dying gasps, cries for help fill the air with a tragic resonance.

Some of the ULAM try and escape the massacre, fleeing desperately. The bravest are engaged in pitiless combat which we SHOW in QUICK CUTS.

- A FAUM and NAOH are fighting fiercely. They are doing their best to protect a group of women and children.
- B AGHOO is swinging a huge club. Two attackers lie at his feet. He slays a Neanderthal who was making off with a burning ember.
- C Some women have caught an injured enemy. They are helping GAMMLA to push him over the edge. He tries desperately to hang on while they bash his hands with stones.
- D NAM and GAW, the twins, are fighting side by side, or rather buttock to buttock, with incredible ferocity. We note that they possess a quite exceptional agility, aided by GOUR they prevent anyone from approaching the precious fire.
- E MODOC and HOURK are rolling about on the ground, locked in battle with a giant NEANDERTHAL. The giant is strangling HOURK with his huge hands. MODOC throws himself onto the giant's back and bites him in the nape of the neck. The giant sits up with a roar and shakes himself violently. MODOC manages to hang on.
- F Some NEANDERTHALS pick up some smoking embers from the scattered fire which was half-extinguished by the rock. They are blowing on it desperately, hoping to revive it.
- G TSOR, hiding behind the reindeer carcass, just manages to escape as a stave tears through his animal skins. He runs away, stark naked.
- H AGHOO breaks the giant's legs - the brute has not succeeded in throwing off MODOC who still clings to his back, his teeth planted in the nape of his neck.
- I FAUM has a wound in his forearm. NAOH's nose is bleeding. The ULAMS are close to final defeat.
- J A mother defends her new-born child like a tigress.
- K AGHOO sees a NEANDERTHAL who is about to attack fair-haired NAOH from behind. He says nothing, a cruel glint of pleasure in his eyes.

22-

23-

24

22- Continued

22-

23-

23-

24 L The NEANDERTHAL steps on a burning ember. He roars with pain. NAOH spins round, thrusts a spear into the enemy's gaping mouth. The tip appears on the other side, through the nape of the brute's neck.

24

25 INT. CAVE FIRE CAGE GALLERY DAY

25

O.S. SHOUTS and other SOUNDS, amplified by the cave's acoustics.

Curled up like a fetus, ROUKA moans feebly and shakes. He cowers covering his head with his arms.

JAMOUK enters the gallery, stepping backwards. Suddenly he falls backwards, his chest ripped open by a spear.

O.S. SOUNDS of the final battle at the gallery's entrance.

The frail ROUKA overcomes his panic and crawls toward the fire cage. He grasps it in his hand and carries it into a deep crevice in the rock wall, where he takes refuge.

O.S. enraged shouts of Neanderthals as they discover that the fire cage is missing.

ROUKA holds the fire cage near his face. The embers radiate a reddish glow which is reflected in his wide, terror-stricken eyes.

ROUKA backs into the crevice until he melts into the background.

26 EXT. STONE PLATFORM DAY

26

Now only the dead and the injured still lie on the stone platform. The injured seem oddly oblivious to their pain. Some of their limbs twitch uncontrollably.

The victorious Neanderthals ignore them, intent on a single objective: fire. Crouched over a final glowing ember, they blow on it in the hope of igniting a handful of dried moss. In vain, the ember flickers and dies beneath their gaze and the brutes are filled with consternation.

27 EXT. MARSHLAND TWILIGHT

27

The mountain ridges are lost in heavy, ominous, grey clouds.

Terrified, the surviving members of the tribe take flight into this hostile landscape in the feeble light of dying sun. They cross a sandy wasteland, scattered with murky

27 Continued

27

lakes, treacherous marshes studded with tall reeds shivering in the cold wind from the mountains.

O.S. A wolf pack howls in the distance.

GAW's legs are running with the blood of NAM his gored brother whom he is carrying on his back. Suddenly he notices that GAW's hands are stiffening in a last convulsion. He puts his dead brother down on the ground. He crouches beside him and moans gently, putting a finger into his mouth and gnawing the nail. Then his gaze is lost on the horizon.

28 EXT. HIGH GROUND TWILIGHT

28

The sombre outlines of the ULAM can be seen on a patch of high ground. They walk with difficulty, some helping the others along. The pathetic group of men and women are too far away to be recognised, with the exception of FAUM.

The defeated leader stops in order to send out a long rallying cry.

FAUM

U:::::wa!

The mournful call rumbles across the land. A frightened white heron flies out of the marsh.

29 EXT. EDGE OF MARSHLAND NIGHTFALL

29

It is raining. The fugitives, covered in slimy mud, lie prostrate on the ground. They are weak from injuries, and overcome by fatigue. Among them: MODOC, HOURK, TSOR, MORAH and GOUR. GOUR, seriously wounded, moans softly. His head is like a bloodied mop. Women who have lost their children in the marshland wail like she-wolves. Those who saved their children raise them towards the dark sky. FAUM's eyes show terrible weariness. Now and then, he sucks the wound on his forearm. The rain falls harder. Suddenly FAUM straightens up. Did he hear a call through the noise of the storm? He peers into the night and sends out a loud call.

FAUM

u:::::wa!

A feeble answer is heard.

VOICE (O.S.)

u:::::wa!

FAUM

u:wa..... u:::::wa!

Those amongst the ULAM who still have some strength, straighten themselves up. Wild-eyed, they stare intently into the night. Finally, they hear a rustle in the reeds. Other survivors appear out of the dark: first AGHOO, badly wounded in the thigh, carrying his fearful club on his shoulder. He is followed by MIKR and NAOH who support TSOR and another wounded man, and by three females among them GAMMLA, with a little girl in her arms.

The arrival of these staggering, pitiful fugitives somehow cheers up the ULAM. AGHOO's brothers shake their heads and grunt in savage expressions of joy. FAUM squeezes the nape of his daughter's neck with his huge hand. He presses her against him and sniffs her rain-soaked hair.

Suddenly, NAOH brandishes his last spear. He turns towards the territory where the tribe was attacked and screams out in a burst of hatred.

NAOH

ri-margiom

His murderous anger spreads to the others. Insulting the enemy, challenging the dark, the slow harsh voices of the defeated warriors roar out together:

ULAMS

rimargiom ... rimargiom ... rimargiom ...

As if in answer to the decimated tribe, a clap of thunder resounds in the vast darkness. The horizon is lit up momentarily by stripes of lightning.

O.S. mar...rimargiom ...

Entangled in a treacherous maze of reeds, buried to his waist in the mire of the nauseating marshland, ROUKA gasps from exhaustion. Rain streams down his face. Despite his fear and his desperate situation, ROUKA keeps a firm grip on the fire cage: held high above the dark water, the coals still glow.

He starts off again, heading for the point from which the Ulam shouts seem to be emanating, borne by the wind. The rain is gradually dying down.

31 EXT. MARSHLAND NIGHTFALL

31

Huddled tightly together, the survivors try to keep warm. Thunder and lightning make them cringe. Most sit hunched over, covering their faces, moaning plaintively. Their lament swells like a chant.

32 EXT. MARSHLAND NIGHTFALL

32

Exhausted, Rouka's progress is painfully slow. He has cramps from holding up the fire cage. Suddenly, during a flash of lightning, he sees the other Ulams not far off, beyond the reeds.

Rouka looks up at the angry sky and lets out a triumphant yell.

ROUKA

u:::::wa....

33 EXT. EDGE OF MARSHES NIGHTFALL

33

The bizarre cry shakes the ULAM out of their lethargy. Within seconds, despair turns to celebration. The wounded, even the dying, seem to be revived by the new development.

ROUKA is led, pulled and pushed up onto solid ground. FAUM carries him like a child.

FAUM

otim rouka
rouka otim vir

Women lick his hands and nibble at his ears.

WOMEN

otim rouka
rouka otim vir

The sight of the fire cage and its tremulous coals causes a surge of wild hope in the tribe. Everyone sets out to look for tinder.

ALL

dondr...dondr...micr
kwelo doudre

Alas, their homo sapiens minds are confronted with a harsh reality: how to keep the fire burning in this land of mud and water? With what?

33 Continued

33

NAOH cuts off a lock of his hair with the point of a lance. He rubs it vigorously between his hands to dry it out, then puts it on the fire. It sizzles and chars without burning.

The coals fade away. In silence, the ULAM make a circle around the cage as the last glowing particle goes out. The fire is dead!

ALL

a:tra ma::di!

34 EXT. SAME PLACE DAWN

34

Snowflakes fall lightly in the grey light of dawn. The Ulam have deserted their refuge. The only traces of the night of terror are the dead bodies of GOUR, NAM and a woman. Their corpses lie face upwards. A few hurriedly piled stones scarcely mask their rigid faces.

A thin layer of late winter snow barely whitens the ground and the abandoned bodies.

A wolf crosses the river and comes to sniff at the corpses.

35 EXT. ROCK SHELTER (SEVERAL DAYS LATER) DAY

35

The shelter lies at the bottom of a hollow, an enormous basin with an horizon of jagged rocks. Their sharp edges stand out harshly against the bright sky.

The pale winter sun finishes its course and casts pale oblique rays.

The ULAM have resettled as best they can in this precarious spot. But they are haunted by obsessive memories of their cave and the fire they lost.

FAUM, a pitiful symbol of past defeat and hardships to come, shivers with fever. His teeth chatter. Now and then, GAMMLA licks the purplish wound on her father's arm.

ROUKA blows passionately on the dead fire inside. No one pays attention to the idiot's vain attempts.

AGHOO, wild-eyed, limps badly. Physically weakened, he has grown more belligerent. The others avoid him, and his thigh wound looks wretched. Suddenly ROUKA raises his head and growls like a watchdog. Worried faces turn to look: figures gradually appear against the sky. Four able-bodied men return from the hunt.

MODOC and HOURK, the two brothers of AGHOO, TSOR and KWEL
FAUM calls to them from a distance:

FAUM

Esa'tSai::?

TSOR

nak'Esa'tSai

But they are empty-handed: nothing to eat. Hoarse shouts and grumbles greet them. Women squeal, and the children cry.

COMPLAINTS

nak Esa'tSai
nak Esa'tSai

AGHOO cracks his huge jaws, insults his brothers, and knocks MODOC down with a single blow on the head.

FAUM

'nakg 'aguk ... 'nakg s'ulam

In spite of his weakness, FAUM rises to give a sharp command. AGHOO glowers at him and, trying to save face, pretends to look for fleas. FAUM interrogates the empty-handed hunters sternly.

FAUM

kur 'fragdat nakatir?
kur nak 'Esa'tSai?

The hunters reply with quite a complicated and energetic tale told in gestures. They evoke the tracking; then the flight of a reindeer with antlers "this big" - a huge beast who could have fed the tribe for at least a week.

TSOR

(with comments from
MIKR, then HOURK &
MODOC)

ogosi dua meg tir dondr. ssdjøn ss
djø::: nsdjøn eftmeta. margion
margiom vErp 'slaxtaka.

The rays of the setting sun cast their shadows in silhouette against the rock wall screen of the shelter creating an unintentional pantomime.

TSOR goes on explaining, constantly corrected by MIKR, and backed-up by the two brutes, HOURK and MODOC, who are content to simply repeat the tail end of his phrases.

35 Continued

35

TSOR

(with more additions
from MIKR, then HOURK
& MODOC)

satu vragda sss
korro pa:u kdua eftmeta
eftmeta. korro's dondr dondr, snak (a)
ogozl. la.

They trot back and forth, demonstrating the course of the sun, stabbing into the empty air with their staves, hurling their spears and then picking them up again beneath the black looks of the women. Their fellow tribesmen are at last convinced and hunch their backs, falling once more into the misery of starvation.

ROUKA swallows a pebble.

36 EXT. TUNDRA NIGHT

36

A thin moon shines with metallic brilliance on the velvet night. A lone wolf at the top of a mound howls at the universe. From FAR AWAY, its CALL is answered.

37 EXT. ROCKY SHELTER NIGHT

37

The WIND WAILS in long, mournful laments. The ULAM sleep tightly together to protect themselves from the cold. Plaintive moans of irritable grunts come from the pile of bodies, barely visible in the dim light.

In front of the shelter, TSOR and MIKR lie curled up and half-asleep, keeping watch from behind rocks that cut the wind's icy sting. Fire used to help them overcome their fear of the night and now these simple men are terrified without it. Suddenly, their instinct warns them of danger. Both men grasp their weapons and look towards the top of the hollow.

An indefinite shadow stands out and moves against the night sky. The shadow grows slowly into the figure of a gigantic bear.

In a moment, the guards are inside the rock shelter. The tribe awakens in unison and in utter silence, as if warned by some vibration. Without knowing what danger threatens them, they all realize silence is a condition of survival. Within seconds, they are armed with lances and spears and form a barricade. Axes and clubs are raised; eyes shine ferociously.

37 Continued

37

Outside, the beast raises itself onto its hind legs. Its height is quite staggering, unreal. The whole tribe holds its breath. The bear, moving its head carefully from side to side, sniffs the breeze but it is down-wind and cannot scent the nearby humans. Dropping back onto all fours, the bear moves off, majestically slow, then disappears.

Not a word has been spoken. Life - and the night - must go on. The sleepers lie down again and the watchmen take up their posts once more. The slender outline of the useless fire cage can be seen atop the boulder.

38 EXT. TUNDRA NIGHT

38

Long wisps of whitish mist float over the tundra. The lone wolf, immobile on top of his mound, is like another tireless sentry. His glowing eyes stare at the endless night towards the cries of other wolves, his brothers.

39 EXT. ROCK SHELTER DAY

39

A thin white layer of snowflakes is slowly covering the top of the fire cage.

The tribe, all huddled together, look out at the approach of yet another endurance test with resignation.

Tiny icicles bloom in the facial hair, making them look like WAGABOUS.

A woman takes a new born child from her breast and gets up - the child she defended with such ferocity during the attack. With animal indifference, she lays its cold, dead body at her feet. The ULAMS have remained silent. Wearing a vacant look, they huddle together to protect themselves from the icy wind.

Then the old chief FAUM gets up, grabs the fire cage and comes and sets it down in front of NAOH.

40 EXT. PLATFORM IN FRONT OF SHELTER DAY

40

The copper disc of the sun glows feebly through the fog.

Huddled together in a circle, the ULAMS utter a collective lament, deep and rugged, which fills the air with a primitive rumbling sound.

CHORUS

u:lam ripren-nj a::tra
u:lam ripren-nj a::tra

40 Continued

40

With the help of a flint axe TSOR chops off two fingers of ROUKA's right hand. The radiant idiot offers no resistance, his mouth wide open. With his abundantly flowing blood he immediately sprays the fire cage.

The warriors then come to touch the cage with the points of their lances.

The scene is bathed in a strange light diffused by the fog, a light which deprives men, objects and the scenery of any shadow.

A little to one side, AGHOO, MODOC and HOURK, the three huge brothers, await their turn, sullenly.

Suddenly AGHOO goes towards the cage and grabs it roughly. With blood-shot eyes he gets up, helped by his two brothers, emitting awful gasping noises. Then he brandishes the cage all around, pointing to HOURK, MODOC and himself, and casting a look of hatred at NAOH, he proclaims in his raucous voice, made deeper still by his anger:

AGHOO

Ekje a:g?wk ripren-nj a::tra

The brute's outrageous defiance causes a momentary incredulity. Out of the silence, FAUM rises up and orders in a voice which brooks no argument:

FAUM

'nao: ripren.nj a:tra

Repeating their leader's words, a rumble of approval rises from the group of women, which is soon echoed by the men.

ALL

'nao: ripren.nj 'a:tra

ROUKA delightedly licks the blood which is dripping down his arm.

41 EXT. PLATFORM IN FRONT OF THE SHELTER AND SLOPE DAY

41

The fire cage, covered with the blood of the clan, is in NAOH's hands. Followed by GAW and AMOUKAR, he descends the slope leading to the valley.

From the top of the platform, FAUM and the silent ULAMS watch the three young men make off into the distance, bearers of the hopes of the entire tribe.

42 EXT. ROCKY OVERHANG EVENING

42

A rocky overhang dominates the immediate landscape. AGHOO appears, limping: his brothers are behind him and he has to lean on his club for support.

Reaching the top of the overhang, he sees the silhouettes of the three companions receding in the distance, lost in the monotonous stretches of the tundra.

AGHOO

'ag? uk ripren-nj 'atra!

He shakes his club at them angrily, which only aggravates his injury. He emits a dull moan of pain and sits down, panting and full of hatred.

43 EXT. LANDSCAPE LAKE DAWN

43

The calm surface of an icy lake reflects a clear sky, dotted with wispy, pink clouds. The three tiny figures walk along the edge of the huge body of water. Patches of the lake sparkle in the rising sun.

44 EXT. ROCKY PLATEAU RAIN DAWN

44

It is hard to distinguish anything but a chaotic mass of rocks in the rain-drenched night. Moving towards a large rock, which seems no different from the others, we discover it is in fact our three warriors, crouched back to back, dripping with water, clutching their weapons. Uneasy and on their guard, they strain their eyes to scrutinise the dangers of the night.

Not far from them, we see two round stones placed side by side on a flat pebble.

45 EXT. DESERT OF PEBBLES DAY

45

Under a bleak sky, the trio make their way through a vast stretch of pebbly desert. The ULAMS are marching in fan formation, each some distance apart. They strike against the rocks with their staves and make loud noises in the hope of disturbing some prey. Their keen eyes hunt for some sign of life in this desolate landscape.

AMOUKAR, perhaps the hungriest of all, reveals his hunger by making strange little clacking sounds with his jaws. He seems to be chewing on thin air.

46 EXT. CANYON DAY

46

The three companions have reached the bottom of a canyon where a loud rushing torrent rumbles and churns. GAW jumps from rock to rock like a mountain goat. NAOH lifts his head and stops, cuing the others to follow suit. A large form, set into sunlit relief, juts out over the trail, resembling a sort of horrific immobile beast. The distance between the Ulam and the strange form makes it impossible to determine whether or not it is actually a rock formation. Irregardless, the form seems to possess a pair of fixed and glaring eyes. A moment goes by, the Ulam motionless. Then they begin to walk, carefully diverting their eyes from the menacing form.

47/
48 DELETED47/
48

49 EXT. MOSSY GROUND DAY

49

Some way off the ULAMS are running about haphazardly on some mossy ground beneath a rocky overhang. Now and then, one of them cries out and points in a new direction and they all rush off towards it.

ULAMS

'Eto! Eto!

They are in fact trying to catch a hare by encircling it and then trying to tire it by outrunning it. But then AMOUKAR loses his balance as he steps on a particularly crumbly piece of rock. Missing the prey by inches, he slides down to the bottom of the slope on his bare backside. The hare takes his chance and hides under a pile of rocks, thus finally outwitting his pursuers who set off on their way again, more desperately hungry than ever.

50 EXT. SANDY STRETCH DAY

50

The three ULAMS continue on their way beneath the pallid morning sunshine. AMOUKAR, his stomach rumbling, makes munching movements with his jaws as he stares all around him. GAW, who is bringing up the rear with the fire cage, suddenly spreads his legs. A zigzag trickle of liquid leaves a trail across the sandy ground.

51 EXT. VALLEY FLOOR DAY

51

The three ULAMS go on their way across a valley floor. Suddenly, apparently for no reason, nor any apparent sound, GAW stops still. He turns back, sniffs all round him, listens intently. AMOUKAR, who is in front of him, does the same, followed by NAOH.

51 Continued 51

Reassured, GAW moves on again. The others do likewise.

52 EXT. MOSSY GROUND DAY 52

In front of the pile of mossy rocks where the hare found refuge from its human pursuers, two sabre-toothed tigers are now taking a turn at flushing out the survivor.

53 EXT. BIRCHWOOD DAY 53

The ULAM stop once again, turning round edgily, their nostrils flared. GAW's hand shakes as if he had burned his fingers.

Suddenly they go rigid and without exchanging the slightest signal, they flee for their lives.

54 EXT. SANDY STRETCH DAY 54

At the foot of the cliff which the three ULAMS have just passed, the two tigers sniff at GAW's damp stains.

55 EXT. BIRCHWOOD DAY 55

The two tigers are moving along, their muzzles to the ground. They are following the scent of the men and their pace quickens.

56 EXT. ALLUVIAL VALLEY DAY 56

The three hunted men run to the bottom of a narrow valley which ends in a river. The level of the water is low and their fleeing footprints can be seen over a huge area of mud flats.

When they reach the water's edge the ULAMS - with an equal terror of wild beasts and water - try several times to scale the steep slopes at each side of this dead end.

NAOH

korro s(a) mne! Ente keo aga!

NAOH, forced to give in, decides to make his escape along the river itself. He is the first to plunge in up to his calves and the other two follow suit.

They all walk downstream as fast as they can. GAW hangs on to one of AMOUKAR's fur skins.

56 Continued

56

The intricate patterns of their hesitant progress lie criss-crossing over the mud-flats.

57 EXT. SECTION OF RIVER DAY

57

The rushing river has carved a deep passage between two narrow outcrops of rock.

Chest-deep in the water, the terrified ULAMS hardly dare to go on. They cling tightly to each other. NAOH, in the lead, trips and is almost swallowed deeper.

58 EXT. ALLUVIAL VALLEY DAY

58

On the floor of the alluvial valley, tiger tracks are now mixed with the criss-cross of human footprints.

After exploring in their turn the valley slopes, the wild cats lie in wait in case their vertical prey should happen to return.

59 EXT. SANDBANK NIGHTFALL

59

A few clouds still glow crimson in the lowering sky as several rain drops start to fall.

The river now meanders, shallow and curling, in a wide valley.

The exhausted ULAMS have taken shelter on a sandbank which is sticking out of the river bed. Protected by the flowing river on all sides, they are settling down for the night in the shelter of a huge, stranded tree trunk.

Under the tangle of the bleached roots of the tree stump which form a deep shelter, GAW turns over before curling up for the night. He falls asleep, gnawing his fingernails while AMOUKAR is hunting in vain for grubs in a rotten part of the wood.

NAOH comes out of the refuge on all fours, to have a last look at his surroundings. A violent blast of wind, which ruffles the lichens and roots, whips him in the face. He returns to the warmth of their makeshift burrow, while the rumbling of a distant storm can be heard.

At the entrance to the shelter, two round pebbles have been placed side by side on top of a large stone.

60 EXT. SANDBACK NIGHT

60

The raindrops have become a torrential downpour. The river, swollen by the storm, has almost completely covered the sandbank on which the ULAM lie peacefully asleep in the shelter of their tree trunk, soothed by the sound of pattering raindrops.

The water licks at NAOH's feet and his toes wiggle at this unexpected caress. The fair-haired warrior half opens a bleary eye.

61 EXT. RIVER BED DAY

61

The river now completely covers the valley floor and its muddy waters are flowing fast and strong. The sandbank has disappeared, only the upper side of the tree trunk is still visible and it is here that the ULAMS have sought refuge.

Standing on the trunk, they are thrashing about in the water with their spears and wooden staves, hoping to drive it back.

Suddenly, the trunk shudders for a moment, lifted by the current. Thrown off-balance, NAOH and his companions trip up and grab hold of the branches as best they can. The tree, which is on the verge of floating now, shakes dangerously, plunges forward a few feet, then gets stuck once more.

62 EXT. GORGE DAY

62

Carried along by the raging current, the tree trunk rushes headlong through a canyon. The horrified ULAMS cling desperately to the branches. GAW's grip tightens on the fire cage.

63 EXT. RIVER DAY

63

Protruding rocks make deep whirlpools in the current. After a dull thud which makes the unwilling sailors slip, the tree trunk describes a half-turn and rushes on, leaving the ULAMS to face the current back-to-front.

64 EXT. RIVER DAY

64

The ULAMS continue on their way, still backwards against the stream. The craft disappears round a bend in the river. Again the heavy thud of the trunk as it hits a rock can be heard.

65 EXT. RIVER DAY

65

Through the space between two boulders on the nearside riverbank we see the three ULAMS appear and disappear across the frame. They are facing the right way now but the tree trunk has made a quarter turn on its axis. GAW hangs on as best he can, his head down, his backside in the air. He holds the fire cage between his teeth. AMOUKAR, half his body submerged, cranes his neck to breathe above the water line.

66 EXT. RAPIDS DAY

66

The flow of the stream accelerates once more. There are more and more rocks sticking out. The trunk bounces from one rock to another. The ULAMS hang on for dear life at each collision. One particularly violent shock almost causes GAW to lose his grip and he lets go of the fire cage; the cage rushes along with the current. At the same time the trunk becomes dislodged and takes the same direction. AMOUKAR, furthest ahead, reaches out desperately to get back the fire cage. Just as he is about to snatch it back, a last barrier of rock finally brings the trunk to a standstill. The ULAMS, horrified and impotent, watch helplessly as the cage disappears.

67 EXT. WATERFALL DAY

67

Just beyond the bend, an enormous waterfall shatters the river's flow. The cage arrives at great speed, spinning like a top. After an imperceptible pause, when the fragile sacred cage seems to hesitate momentarily between the sky and the water, it plunges into the churning foam below.

68 EXT. RIVER BANK DAY

68

The dripping wet ULAMS reach the river bank. They are in a pitiable state, rigid with the cold, their teeth are chattering. GAW's nose and scalp are bleeding profusely. AMOUKAR, crawling on all fours, is vomiting up all the river water he has swallowed. NAOH licks the blood pouring from his elbow. He cannot control the shudders which make his whole body heave.

69 EXT. RIVER BANK DUSK

69

It is nightfall.

"Smoke" is rising from a dark shape a little way from the river bank. It is the ULAMS who are huddling together

69 Continued

69

to keep warm. Copious steam rises from their drenched furs. NAOH sneezes twice.

70 EXT. EDGE OF A MOUNTAIN DAWN

70

The ominous outline of a mountain obscures the horizon. NAOH is heading towards it. Several paces behind, the others are following with little enthusiasm. Their feeble gait contrasts with NAOH's resolute steps.

71 EXT. FOREST HALFWAY UP MOUNTAIN DAY

71

The ULAMS have halted at the uppermost limit of a forest on a rocky overhang halfway up the mountain which dominates a vast plain.

Five freshly-manufactured spears are set out on the ground next to a clumsy contraption which is a rough imitation of the fire cage which was lost during the shipwreck.

The three ULAMS are standing up, quivering with excitement, as they stare intently, saliva dripping from their mouths, at a distant spot on the tundra. They cannot seem to control the instinctive impulses of the hunter which set their arms waving and their bodies a-shiver. For there, in the distance, is a herd of reindeer, peacefully moving off across the vast plain.

NAOH overcomes his predator's instinct and goes back to crouch by the spears. Taking a striking tool, he prepares a selection of sharp-edged flints to make up the store of weapons which are vital to the continuation of their mission.

72 DELETED

72

73 EXT. MOUNTAIN PATH DAY

73

A narrow mountain path overhangs a dark and vertiginous ravine.

The three ULAMS make their way along the path, NAOH bringing up the rear. He carries the fire cage which is a cock-eyed and clumsy imitation of the original.

AMOUKAR and GAW walk on with a sure step and reach a platform which marks the start of the opposite slope.

73 Continued

73

Behind them, NAOH happens to glance down below. The sight Of the drop suddenly paralyzes him. His eyes widen, in irrepressible terror, his legs give way under him.

AMOUKAR and GAW turn around before starting on the descent and notice NAOH stuck, facing the wall, clinging to the rock with his arms and legs. They wait for a while, staring at him, unable to understand what is happening and eventually they sit down. AMOUKAR notices a pebble in which a small fossil is embedded. He picks it up, inspects it with interest before stowing it away beneath his furs.

NAOH's face is bathed in sweat. He breathes with difficulty. The cage trembles in his hand.

AMOUKAR, perceiving that NAOH is ill, gets up.

He retraces his steps to grab the fair-haired warrior's hair and guides his leader to the platform.

74 EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGES DAY

74

The three ULAMS have begun the ascent of the hostile mountain. NAOH is carrying the half-finished fire cage which he has started to build. It is cock-eyed and is a clumsy imitation of the original.

The distance between the fair-haired warrior and the others has further increased.

Suddenly the air is filled with a deep and savage roar which comes from far away.

The ULAMS stop moving.

NAOH has proudly recovered his composure, he brandishes his stave in defiance, swelling his chest to emit a powerful cry. He turns back to face his companions. He points in the direction of the noise and says:

NAOH

tir - me::g!

He sets off boldly once more.

75 EXT. A MOUNTAIN LAKE DAY

75

Half-wallowing in the mud of a mountain lake, the three ULAMS extract water-lily roots from the mire, munching on them with relish.

75 Continued

75

Pulling out the roots is a real fight. Sometimes they have to set about it two at a time to rip out these tasty aquatic plants.

AMOUKAR stuffs as many as he can away under his animal furs.

In the distance, a herd of wild horses is crossing the plain, fleeing from some unknown danger in a desperate stampede.

76 EXT. A RAVAGED VALLEY DAY

76

The ULAMS are now going down through a small valley. It is strangely ravaged. Trees have been knocked down, bushes uprooted, fragments of rock litter the ground. In the cleft of a rock they discover a huge tuft of red hairs. They sniff it and inspect it anxiously.

GAW stops to consider with amazement the sight of his two feet inside one of the enormous, circular footprints which cover the ground. NAOH confirms:

NAOH

tir -me:::g! tan tir-me:::g

A little further on, AMOUKAR anxiously examines a vast area soaked in a bloody mess. It looks like a crimson carpet- Fragments of hide, horns which have been torn out and mangled ribs are scattered all about.

NAOH's attention is caught by a strange gleam: an enormous viscous eyeball seems to stare at them, as if from the centre of the earth.

The trio moves off without further ado.

77 EXT. GORGE EVENING

77

NAOH and his companions carry on along the bottom of a gorge, skirting a pile of erratic boulders at the foot of the rock face.

They are trying to find out where a dull rumble is coming from. To give each other courage, they take up aggressive poses and thrash about with their spears. Although GAW and AMOUKAR's free hands which are moving as if their fingers are being burnt, betray their anxiety.

A terrifying roar, this time from very close, roots them to the spot. Panic-stricken, AMOUKAR and GAW run to take shelter under one of the piles of rock. AMOUKAR, encumbered by his furs, has the greatest difficulty to get through the very narrow entrance.

77 Continued

77

NAOH, left alone, sees a gigantic shadow advancing towards him, cast up against the cliff by the rays of the setting sun. He is transfixed by an unfathomable emotion before breaking into a run to join his companions in the shelter.

78 INT. ROCK SHELTER EVENING

78

Huddled together in their narrow shelter, the three men try to identify the danger which threatens them by peering through the narrow gaps between the blocks.

79 EXT. GORGE (OUTSIDE THE SHELTER) EVENING

79

Through the crevices they see a herd of huge beasts enter the canyon, their footfalls make the walls of the shelter tremble. They are mammoths.

GAW mutters, shivering:

GAW
ti:rmeg ti:rmeg

Dust and rubble fall down onto the heads of the sheltering men like sand in an hour-glass.

80 EXT. CANYON EVENING

80

The mammoths unhurriedly advance and are about to walk past the shelter. Then a baby mammoth breaks away from the herd and playfully comes to sniff at the pile of rocks. His small trunk roots between the blocks of stone.

81 INT. ROCKY SHELTER EVENING

81

Three ULAMS are aghast to see this trunk wedge itself under the rocks and edge towards their feet, sniffing. Then another trunk, this time huge, intrudes in its turn from the top of the shelter, slightly dislodging the rocks which act as a shield. Just as the trunk is about to touch GAW's chest, he lifts his stake to spear it. With a swift gesture, NAOH cuts short his movement.

82 EXT. GORGE EVENING

82

Several mammoths now converge on the rocky shelter. Trying to root out the strange creatures, they buffet with their heads and tusks the natural edifice.

83 INT. ROCKY SHELTER EVENING

83

Under the agonized gaze of the men who are weak at the knees, the rocks are lifted up a few inches in response to the tremendous thrust.

Fortunately the rocks are too heavy however, and fall back again with a booming noise. Only piles of dust shower on the ULAMS. AMOUKAR urinates in terror. GAW hides his head under his skins like an ostrich.

Then other trunks enter through the gaps. Two or three start to explore NAOH behind whom the others have taken refuge. The trunks poke under ULAM's furs. He cannot refrain from emitting raucous sounds and twisting his face convulsively. It is the closest this ticklish warrior can come to making a sound that resembles a laugh.

The searching trunks pull out from beneath the furs the water-lily roots that the mammoths seem to find very tasty.

Running short of supplies, NAOH stretches out his hand behind him. One after the other, AMOUKAR and GAW unload their water-lily roots which NAOH then feeds by hand to the beasts.

84 EXT. OUTSIDE THE ROCKY SHELTER EVENING

84

The mammoths, gathered round the jumble of rocks, feed off the ULAMS' provisions.

85 INT. ROCKY SHELTER EVENING

85

Having given away all their rations, the ULAMS look at each other anxiously.

AMOUKAR pulls out a salamander from the depths of his furs and gives it to NAOH. Trembling, he in turn hands it over to the expectant trunk in front of him.

After poking and sniffing at it dubiously, the trunk snorts out a great blast of air and sends the salamander spinning. The power of the gust fluffs up the men's furs and sets up a real dust storm inside the shelter.

86 EXT. GORGE EVENING

86

In a huge swaying movement, the mammoths start on their way again by the last rays of the setting sun.

86 Continued

86

In the foreground, from inside their shelter, we can hear the three ULAMS coughing their guts out.

Covered in dust, NAOH comes out first and shakes himself with a big shudder as horses do. Then he climbs onto the rock shelter and gives a proud shout of victory.

NAOH

Ba:::iii!

The others poke their heads gingerly through the openings between the rocks and cautiously survey the outside world.

87 EXT. FOREST/UNDERGROWTH NIGHT

87

NAOH and GAW sleep huddled under some bushes, protected by a pile of thorny branches. Blue rays of moonlight filter through the treetops.

Beside two little round pebbles placed on a flat stone, AMOUKAR stands guard. He starts fearfully at the crisp noise of a leaf falling off a branch. His fear subsides. He dozes.

Suddenly a large, amazing butterfly flies around him. Each wing is as broad as a hand and covered in stunning phosphorescent colours.

AMOUKAR tries in vain to catch the appetising specimen, but it flies off in unpredictable zig-zags. AMOUKAR chases after it, leaving his sentry post.

88 EXT. A CLEARING NIGHT

88

Rotting tree stumps covered with moss stand in a small clearing under the star-studded sky. The butterfly performs graceful arabesques. AMOUKAR, stalking it, is instinctively drawn to the tree stumps. Tearing off sheets of spongy bark, he exposes some fat, pale grubs. He stuffs them delightedly into his mouth. His next find, delicate mushrooms growing in the compost, become yet another gourmet delicacy. He picks one and, after a cautious sniff, downs it with a grub. Sticky juice dribbles down his chin.

89 EXT. UNDERGROWTH NIGHT

89

NAOH (O.S.)

'amu:kar 'amu:kar

NAOH and GAW have just noticed their companion is missing. They look for him, following his tracks: broken branches, footprints, etc ...

90 EXT. CLEARING NIGHT

90

Surrounded by a host of butterflies who seem to be performing an aerial ballet for him alone, AMOUKAR is acting strangely. Straddling a tree stump, rocking back and forth, he pops grubs and mushrooms in his mouth, smiling blissfully at the stars.

He barely notices NAOH and GAW emerging anxiously from the forest. NAOH and GAW exchange looks. They don't understand AMOUKAR's behaviour; something weird is going on. They approach him with caution. NAOH touches AMOUKAR's shoulder with his fingertips as if he were afraid of getting burned.

NAOH

ku:r sito? ku:r amu:kar?
'Smerdolor amu: kar Fragda?

AMOUKAR keeps up his routine and still fails to notice his companions. NAOH makes angry gestures and raises his voice.

NAOH

dekta mu:kar! dEkta!
mor sito! dEkta!
Ku:r 'ga:rsn (a) dEkta!

No answer. NAOH pushes AMOUKAR violently to the ground. He lies there motionless, beatifically watching the butterflies with his dilated eyes.

Giving up on him, GAW and NAOH eat what is left of the grubs.

91 EXT. HIGH REGION DAY

91

It's hot. The three ULAMS have sunburnt noses and forearms. They are moving slowly through a high region of alternating prairies and forests.

The file is drifting further and further apart, GAW is trailing behind, limping. He stops to look at the sole of his painfully swollen foot.

AMOUKAR lethargically leading the party, reaches the top of a cliff which ends in a precipice, thus irrevocably blocking their way.

NAOH joins AMOUKAR. With resignation he takes the fire cage from AMOUKAR's grasp and turns round to go back the way they have come. He passes GAW, who takes no notice. He is still busy sucking his foot and extracting something from the sole with his teeth.

91 Continued

91

On his way, NAOH steps on a scorpion, squashing it, without being aware of anything.

AMOUKAR sits down and looks out into the distance, his eye weary. One of the numerous scorpions which infest the area, undertakes an ascent of his big toe.

92 EXT. MOUNTAIN PRAIRIE DAY

92

The three ULAMS are wandering in the middle of a mountain prairie.

On their way they arouse a partridge which flies off noisily. GAW and AMOUKAR rush towards the nest where the bird was sitting on her eggs and find five eggs over which they fight viciously. We sense that they are both in an irritable mood. Suddenly GAW rushes at AMOUKAR with incredible violence and savagery.

Rolling on the ground, the two form a yelling, gesticulating ball which starts to roll down the hill.

NAOH runs up to them. Using a stick, he unleashes a vigorous blow on GAW, who has sunk his teeth into AMOUKAR's ear, to make him let go.

NAOH

'nak(a) gavbrat

'nak(a) mu:kar

mor vi-tras

'u:lam nak(a) sla:t 'u:lam.

GAW finally gives up. On all fours lowering his head he rubs his nose in the dirt in a display of submissiveness.

93 EXT. JOUR MOSSY TREE DAY

93

The heat is oppressive.

The ULAMS are feeling drowsy. They have flopped down on the mossy branches of a great tree. Each of them has chosen a safe nook in which to curl up for a snooze. GAW is biting his fingernails. From time to time, AMOUKAR lazily chases the myriads of flies which come to rest around his eyes.

Impressionist before its time, the peaceful picture is bathed in a shimmer of light.

Suddenly, NAOH's nostrils wrinkle. He half opens his eyes. He sits up a bit and stares intently at the horizon. From afar, something electrifies him. He stares at one particular spot with incredible intensity and then, suddenly cries out.

93 Continued

93

NAOH

'atra!

His companions, with newfound vigour, join him hurriedly; swinging from branch to branch with the agility of apes. Their eyes also grow wide and burn with a savage joy. We see what they have seen.

94 SAVANNA

94

Far away, in the gap between two hills, a plume of smoke rises into the still sky.

95 SAVANNA

95

The three ULAMS are racing across the savanna.

They disturb a dark shape in the undergrowth ... a wild boar runs away, grunting. But so intent are they on their goal that they take no notice of this bit of unexpected game.

96 EXT. FOREST/CLEARING DAY

96

The ULAMS, bending down, are moving cautiously through a huge clearing. Fascinated, they come across a big ring of whitish ashes and charred branches in the midst of the tall grasses which have been trampled flat by a large tribe of men. The three crouch down and feel the still-warm ashes of the fire - they do so gently, timidly, as if to make sure they aren't dreaming.

Grabbing a blackened branch, NAOH takes in deep breaths of the acrid odour. Suddenly, in a kind of delirious frenzy, the three men roll about in the remains of the fire like dogs rolling and rubbing their backs with all four limbs in the air. They smother themselves in the strong smell, plaster their hands, their faces, their breasts and arms with the stuff. They whisper and splutter in ecstasy: " 'a:tra 'a:tra 'a:tra ". AMOUKAR is the first to stop. There are bones lying about in the fireplace and he picks one up which still has meat on it. He starts to gnaw at it voraciously and grunts with pleasure as he tastes cooked meat again.

NAOH has just noticed something intriguing in the mound of ashes. He digs about and uncovers a skull which still has some meat on. He blows off the ashes and gradually the object looks more and more like a human skull. He shows it to GAW who has come to have a look:

96 Continued

96

NAOH

viri?

GAW nods in agreement, making a face.

GAW

vira

AMOUKAR comes to have a look too, curious. Then he realises. He grimaces and regretfully throws away the meaty bone he had been enjoying so much.

97 EXT. HILL DAY

97

The ULAMS arrive at the top of a hill where a strong breeze bends the grass. They make their way cautiously hidden amongst the bushes. They stand still, quite silent, their faces light up. NAOH says:

NAOH

ksam!

98 EXT. RIDGE OF THE HILL DAY

98

On the far side of the valley, silhouetted on the skyline, stretches a long line of stocky figures. These are the man-eaters, the KZAMMS, which the ULAMS are tracking relentlessly.

Even from this far away, we can see that the figures are males and that they are carrying heavy clubs. Two of them are loaded with pieces of game which, lit from behind, have a strange grey-blue colour.

The KZAMMS at the back of the column turn round towards the hill where the ULAMS are hidden and sniff the breeze, suddenly suspicious.

The three ULAMS duck down immediately and disappear into the bushes.

99 EXT. FOREST/UNDERGROWTH NIGHT

99

The night is very dark. As usual, the ULAMS have built a barrier of bushes around themselves. GAW has fallen asleep at his watchpost.

NAOH is having a nightmare and is tossing and turning. He is muttering something and the word "a:tra" keeps recurring. There is a slight rustle amongst the foliage.

99 Continued

99

Gradually we can make out a huge silhouette. A branch snaps. The sleepers wake with a start and immediately take up their defensive positions, huddled close together with their staves at the ready.

The massive hairy form comes closer. The three ULAMS tense up. Hands with great black fingers thick as bananas gently part the leaves to reveal the terrifying visage of a solitary gorilla.

The three men, quite petrified, watch the animal. The huge ape stands there staring at these creatures which look like him, with his small, inquisitive eyes. He sits down. For a long moment, men and beast stare at each other through the curtain of thorns, as if conscious of some distant kinship.

Their eyes glint like cat's eyes in the darkness.

GAW scratches himself under his furs in a curiously monkey-like fashion. The ape watches him.

This intense tête-a-tête is lit by the metallic gleam of moon beams.

100 EXT. EDGE OF FOREST DAY

100

The ULAM have picked up the tracks of the tribe of man-eaters. They reach the edge of a forest which opens up onto a hilly savanna.

NAOH, GAW and AMOUKAR put down their weapons so that they can scramble easily up a tree.

101 DELETED

101

102 EXT. SAVANNA DAY

102

Vultures can be seen tearing at some carrion.

When the ULAMS approach, the birds of prey fly off in fright. On the spot where they were clustered we see the remains of a jackal. In spite of the putrid stench, NAOH tears off the skin with both hands. But one particularly daring vulture tries to fight with him over the carcass. It pursues NAOH obstinately, pecking him on the calves.

103 EXT. HILL/SAVANNA NIGHT

103

A clear night. A throbbing fiery glow comes from behind the hill towards which NAOH and his companions creep in silence. Reaching the top, hidden by the thick grass, the Ulam pause, spellbound. Torn between joy and fear, they see the sacred fire, giver of life, and the terrifying man-eaters who are its present owners.

The fire burns on a plain dotted with shrubs and bushes. Its reddish glow is reflected in a nearby pond.

The KZAMMS are asleep. They are extraordinarily hairy, covered in long red hairs from head to toes. Their clubs no staves are scattered round them over the grassland. Two warriors are keeping watch over their companions. They are all males and have obviously returned from a war-party - some, indeed, are wounded.

104 EXT. SAVANNA/KZAMM CAMP NIGHT

104

One of the sentries sits astride the supply of dry wood. His shoulders are covered with a goat skin, and he holds a wooden stave. His entire face is covered with red hairs. Enormous lips protrude from beneath a flat nose with round nostrils. His arms are long and cumbersome.

The second sentry stealthily paces around the fire. He stops intermittently, straining his ears. His twitching nostrils sniff at the damp air. The flickering fire is reflected in his reddened ferret's eyes. Like the rest of his tribesmen, his heavy body with its short, bandy legs, reveals enormous strength but he appears less fleet of foot than the Ulam.

On the ground, near the fire, more human remains can be SEEN. On the move again the sentry leads up to a shadowed part of the camp where two prisoners are being held: an elderly man and a young girl. They are hung upside down, their ankles bound with vine, to a forked branch of a tree. Their appearance is striking. Both are smeared head to toe with bluish mud. Even their hair is covered with the mixture, so that it forms a kind of shell. The young girl is awake, her frightened eyes gleaming in the darkness.

The wind blows across the savanna. The sentry turns and looks at the hill where the Ulam are hiding, and walks off suspiciously in their direction.

105 EXT. HILL/SAVANNA DAY

105

NAOH spreads out the putrid jackal skin to dupe the sentry's sharp nostrils. The trick works. Having scanned the darkness, the KZAMM sentry slowly retraces his steps.

The ULAM make their way down the hill. They are whispering a few words amongst themselves before separating, when a bloodcurdling howl nails them to the spot.

NAOH deploying a flanking movement crawls off through the tall grass, carrying two spears, a club and the stinking jackal hide.

106 EXT. KZAMM CAMP DAWN

106

Dawn breaks as the sun rises beyond the horizon. Most of the KZAMMS are still asleep, though a few are already going lazily about their activities.

Beside the pond there are two fire-brands made from lianas resting on some stones which are burning slowly beneath a thin layer of protective slivers of bark. These rough contraptions fulfil the function of the ULAM fire-cage.

A warrior urinates into the pond. Two others are crouching by the fire. The smallest one is greedily tearing strips of flesh from a fore-arm broken off at the elbow, on which traces of blue mud can be seen. The movements which the eater makes, while chewing noisily, give the cooked, clenched hand a sinister semblance of life.

With the coming of day, the two sentries relax their vigilance. One warms his hands at the fire.

Suddenly the silhouette of GAW appears out of the tall grass. The second sentry sees him and yells a hoarse warning.

SECOND SENTRY

r(a) EF

The sleeping KZAMMS are instantly on their feet, weapons in hand.

GAW vanishes into the tall grass after letting out a defiant battle cry. The obtuse KZAMMS are stunned. What mysterious enemy would dare provoke them in this way? Is he powerful? Did he act alone?

GAW reappears. This time AMOUKAR, a hundred yards to his left, joins him in the same defiant routine. The two ULAM shake their weapons. Savage screams greet their gestural hostility. The KZAMMS rush at them like an untidy herd of raging bulls.

106 Continued

106

They scatter over the plain as fast as their short legs can carry them. GAW and AMOUKAR take off swiftly in different directions.

107 EXT. SAVANNA DAWN

107

GAW slackens his pace, letting his pursuers think they can catch up with him. The quickest pair lead the chase. GAW abruptly turns around and throws a spear at close range. One KZAMM falls down, pierced through the thigh. GAW lets out a triumphant shout and starts running again, increasing and slackening his pace at will.

108 EXT. KZAMM CAMP DAWN

108

THREE KZAMMS have stayed at the camp. One, a colossus, looks particularly dangerous, the size of his knotted club by itself an indication of his strength. Another KZAMM, wounded, has difficulty remaining upright. The third looks to be a weakling. Wild-eyed, they stare across the savanna: in the distance, according to variations in the terrain, the chase is to be intermittently DISCERNED.

We note that the largest KZAMM is cross-eyed. A little way off, the old prisoner, still hanging by one leg, has had his arm cut off during the night and his elbow is now a bloody stump. With what little strength he has left, he is trying to draw the KZAMMS' attention from the acrobatic feats of IKA, the young girl, who is bent in two and trying desperately to gnaw away the thongs which bind her ankles. Without trying to find out what's happening, the two blue-daubed captives are simply making the best use of this miraculous attack.

NAOH, emerging abruptly from behind a bush at the back of the camp, lets out his most blood-curdling yell. Taken by surprise, the KZAMMS are motionless. NAOH leaps, slips and almost falls, then manages to reach the fire. He grabs a branch from the fire and retreats, his laughter mocking, emitting a hoarse, defiant, crackle.

Seconds later, NAOH stops. In his haste, he has taken a charred, but fireless, branch. The KZAMMS have regained a deadly poise. This time, NAOH cannot avoid a fight. Spears fly out ineffectually. NAOH rushes towards the cross-eyed giant, waving his club. The giant delivers a blow that could crush a bison's skull. He misses NAOH, but has swung so vigorously that his club implants itself in the soil. Striking with the back of his weapon, NAOH crushes the giant's jaw. There is a SNAP of fractured bone. The giant succumbs instantly, falling into the fire, his goat skin sizzling.

Convinced of victory, NAOH yells triumphantly in an attempt to frighten his two remaining adversaries, the weakling and the wounded man. But he has underestimated the weakling, who lunges at him like a vicious animal. His club is small, but he wields it deftly. Swinging his club, he forces NAOH to back away. NAOH retreats past the wounded man, who promptly grabs one of his ankles. NAOH braces himself to avoid falling. Striking with his club, NAOH disarms his opponent, whose weapon falls away just out of reach. But NAOH's equilibrium is upset by the wounded man's grip. He falls to the ground. The weakling, unarmed, tackles NAOH, whose weapon is useless in hand-to-hand combat. The two fighters fall heavily to the ground, grappling, trying to find any small advantage. Teeth bared, the weakling lunges and sinks his incisors into NAOH's testicles.

NAOH

Aharrrrrr ... aaahhaarr

His wail of agony is so intense that it echoes to the far reaches of the savanna, bathed now in the glorious rays of the dawning sun. Nearby, hyenas mock in call and response. NAOH's hand gropes for, finds a stone. A final act before unconsciousness: he brings down the granite and splits open the weakling's skull.

IKA, during this time, has managed to loosen her bonds. Working feverishly she manages to free the old man with the amputated arm.

The latter, grabbing a spear, wishes to finish off the wounded KZAMM who is desperately trying to escape on all fours through the tall grass. In spite of the young girl's calls, the old man drags himself in pursuit of his mortal enemy and disappears into the vegetation which sways momentarily. A shout is heard then all is still again.

109/ EXT. SAME PLACE (LATER) DAY

110

O.S. Close by, hyenas cackle.

109/
110

NAOH regains consciousness. Apart from two KZAMM corpses - already attracting hyenas, he is alone. He straightens up, face bathed in sweat, and groans with pain. He wavers, then takes a few steps. His legs are apart, testicles supported in cupped hands. He breathes deeply and coughs, winces. He spots the two fire brands near the pool of water. He forgets his pain.

O.S. Faraway cries of KZAMMS:

109/ Continued
110

109/
110

KZAMMS

r(a)EF, r(a)EF!
pmak (a)t k(a)eb'og!

NAOH sees at a glance the outlines of some KZAMMS as they come back to their camp.

He rushes to the fire-brands, chooses one and throws the other into the pond where it sizzles briefly. He picks up his club and scatters and stamps out the KZAMMS' fire. He reduces the embers into tiny fragments so that they will not keep burning long enough to last until the warriors return, then he limps off as fast as he can.

111 EXT. ROCKY CREVICE DAY

111

GAW and AMOUKAR burst panting into a rock crevice on a hill top - crowned by a curious little grove of cactus bushes. Inside, NAOH is lying back against the rock wall, grimacing with pain. Next to him the flames are dancing in the ULAM fire-cage. GAW and AMOUKAR fall down onto their knees, their faces as close to the flame as possible in an act of ecstatic worship.

GAW & AMOUKAR

a:tra 'i:duup ...bail!

In his excitement, GAW gathers up pieces of tinder lying about on the ground so that he can immediately get a fire going. Just as he is about to set the wood alight, NAOH interrupts him with an urgent command:

NAOH

ogobi ksam
nak 'a:tra

112 EXT. EXTERIOR OF ROCK CREVICE DAY

112

After exploring the surroundings very carefully, GAW and AMOUKAR help NAOH, who is still carrying the fire cage, to leave their hide-out. Just as they are about to set off, a sound makes them jump: out of a pile of rocks springs a slender blue figure. It is IKA, the KZAMMS' captive. She is still looking terrified and the prospect of a very uncertain future wracks her body with long, anguished shudders.

After a while the ULAMS are reassured and throw a few stones in her direction to make her go away before beginning their escape.

112 Continued

112

ULAMS

pa:uu pa:uu!
'dza?an pa:uu!

113 EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY DAY

113

The trio continues on its way as fast as the men are able in view of NAOH's physical condition. The little blue figure is still following about a hundred paces behind them. Every now and then, one of the ULAMS turns back and shouts out an insult to her, trying to dissuade her from following. But after pausing for a while, the little figure, nimble as a gazelle, starts off after them again. She knows instinctively that she should throw in her lot with the men who have fought the man-eaters.

114 EXT. DIP IN THE GROUND EVENING

114

The ULAMS set up their camp in a hollow.

AMOUKAR gathers up two smooth pebbles, rubs them carefully under his armpits to impregnate them with his smell, then lays them side by side on a flat ledge of rock. Then he goes back to join GAW who is busy building up a barrier of branches for the night.

NAOH, his face bathed in sweat, is sitting back against a tree trunk, gazing mournfully at his companions' preparations through half-closed eyes.

IKA, still torn between her fear and her overriding need for protection, is watching the ULAMS from some way off. She is squatting down, still and humble, at a respectful distance from them.

115 EXT. DIP IN THE GROUND EVENING

115

It is evening. NAOH, his face contorted with pain, has stayed behind in the camp. He is watching IKA through the prickly branches as she grinds some herbs between two stones some little way off. She collects the greenish, scummy mixture in both hands and walks warily towards the injured warrior.

NAOH makes a threatening grunt. He covers the fire cage with his hand. IKA stands still ... then starts to speak:

IKA

tho na me giz nos o tha tho na
tho na me giz pau na bri lu pau na

115 Continued

115

Astonished to discover that the little blue thing makes sounds with her mouth the way he does, and, under the spell of the flow of unknown words which trip lightly and rapidly off her tongue, NAOH lets her come closer.

IKA

tho ma bro na me tiz me giz pu
ba nya. me giz ge ra poss. tho na
me giz nos o tha bra vro na ta
to me giz na ta.

IKA, talking non-stop, climbs over the barrier and crouches down in front of him, stretching out her cupped hands before him. NAOH sniffs at the mixture suspiciously. IKA makes him understand that the remedy is not to be swallowed and approaches his groin with it. NAOH jerks away. But, captivated by her constant stream of words, NAOH allows her to treat him.

IKA

pu yang na min la. it baik baik penya
kitmet la pru pru an. me giz la zaik
zaik penya penya ku. ku ba-n- sak'me
giz rang rang penya baik zot thaz ga.

Alarmed by the peculiar babbling sound, GAW and AMOUKAR come hurriedly back to the camp site, carrying a supply of barks. From the rim of the depression they can just see the little figure carefully licking the wound clean with her saliva before spreading the green mixture on the sadly diminished virility of the great male.

Thanks to the poultice, NAOH's expression, once wracked with pain, relaxes into an expression of intense relief. His blue-eyed gaze drifts, filled with ineffable sweetness. A deep sigh slips from the breast of the great warrior.

GAW and AMOUKAR observe this scene with some puzzlement.

116 EXT. DIP IN THE GROUND NIGHTFALL

116

The embers glow feebly inside the fire cage.

The ULAMS squat as they crunch the barks with their strong jaws. IKA has been allowed into the camp site but she is not sharing in the feast. Crouched opposite NAOH, she seems transfixed by the tall stranger's blue eyes. GAW, and later AMOUKAR, look at her, puzzled by her behaviour. They start to stare at NAOH themselves, trying to discover what is so fascinating about him. Soon NAOH, vaguely worried by all this staring, stares back at the other three in his turn.

117 EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM DAY

117

IKA is walking in the middle of the group as they climb the slopes in a valley which has been carved out by a mountain stream. NAOH, who is carrying the fire cage, follows several paces behind them. He stumbles, then has difficulty getting up again. The others stop and wait for him.

118 EXT. ROCKY PROMONTORY SUNSET

118

Standing on a rocky promontory, NAOH, his face bathed in sweat, stares fixedly at the wide open space they have just crossed. Re-assured, he painfully catches up again with the others.

119 EXT. VALLEY FLOOR NIGHTFALL

119

Close by a pool which is covered in water-lilies, the ULAMS find an ideal spot for the night: an uprooted oak tree. They have gathered a pile of dry twigs and leaves. NAOH carefully takes an ember from the fire cage and, under the burning gaze of his companions, solemnly places it on a ball of dried moss in the middle of the fireplace. He blows on it gently, bowing down until his head almost touches the ground.

Then the flames leap up, bright and joyful.

The three ULAMS are transfixed, their faces glowing with an immense happiness. NAOH lays his hand on GAW's shoulder in a gesture of brotherly feeling. AMOUKAR looks proudly at IKA. Shivering, the girl moves closer to the fire to warm herself, apparently unmoved.

GAW plucks a tuft of dry grass and throws it onto the fire. The flame grows brightly and lights up their ecstatic faces.

120 DELETED

120

121 EXT. VALLEY FLOOR NIGHT

121

The dead oak, under which the ULAMS have built their fire, has caught alight forming an illuminated tree. Brightly burning sparks leap up into the sky.

The heat and the crackling of the flames makes the ULAMS grunt with pleasure.

ULAM

otim a:tra!

122 EXT. VALLEY LANDSCAPE NIGHT

122

Far, far away the ULAMS' fire makes a bright scarlet spot in the darkness.

A stocky shadow appears in the foreground.

123 EXT. VALLEY FLOOR (BRAZIER) NIGHT

123

GAW is roasting water-lily roots beside the brazier while NAOH is lying on the ground, his eyes burning with fever. He watches AMOUKAR as he refills the fire cage with dry wood. Once he has finished this task, AMOUKAR turns to IKA who is crouching close by. He grabs her with his powerful arm and pulls her up against him. He begins to sniff her, curious at first, then more and more interested. NAOH, glowering, raises himself up on one elbow with great difficulty to get a better look.

AMOUKAR who is aroused now, pushes IKA backwards underneath him. A flaming branch hits him on the head in a burst of sparks. NAOH stands upright in front of him, swaying from side to side, and growls menacingly. AMOUKAR crawls away hurriedly on all fours, whimpering. There is a long, bare furrow on his head where he has been burnt to the scalp.

Without a glance at IKA, NAOH falls back onto the ground. He only just manages to hold back a groan of pain.

124 EXT. ROCKY OUTCROP NEAR WATERHOLE DAWN

124

At the first light of dawn, two hairy shapes advance in silence towards the ULAMS' campsite. Two KZAMMS stop dead and crouch behind some rocks. They spy on the sleeping ULAMS with blood-shot eyes. Behind them, a dozen of their kind come up to join them.

125 EXT. WATERHOLE DAWN

125

The three ULAMS and IKA are curled up asleep beside the dead fire. NAOH's sleep is broken by feverish moans.

126 EXT. CLOSE TO ROCKY OUTCROP WATERHOLE DAWN

126

Still in total silence, the KZAMMS are getting closer to the sleeping camp site in leaps and bounds. They take up their positions.

Suddenly the air seems to vibrate with a distant rumble.

127 EXT. A WATERHOLE DAWN

127

The birds floating on the pool noisily take to the air. GAW jumps up in a hurry. Anxiously, he sniffs the breeze in every direction. He wakes up his companions with a grunt. NAOH sits up with difficulty, sniffs in his turn and shivers.

NAOH

ksam!

Immediately, GAW and AMOUKAR help NAOH to stand and hand him his spear. Weapons pointed, the three ULAMS take up defensive positions. IKA, without quite knowing what is happening, comes to take shelter between them.

IKA

o:ta da oo:ta? di ga di ga
koo rang na? ko rang na
di pu li?

A deep silence sets in.

Then a KZAMM appears, leaping from the fallen rocks in a single bound. Then others start to emerge and begin to close in, heavy and threatening.

Reaching the level of the highest rocks, the brutes halt. They make loud cries and stamp their feet. First advancing, then retreating, they lay claim to the battleground and try to intimidate their enemies.

KZAMMS

uit s (th) Ed! uito (th) Ed!

NAOH, gathering his strength together, tries to make a stand but sways from side to side. GAW and AMOUKAR instinctively come and stand up against him. They prop up their weakened leader with their shoulders.

At this point, the KZAMMS' aggressivity seems curiously to diminish. Their stamping slows down, their shouts grow weaker. The ULAMS begin to take heart. AMOUKAR even risks a defiant shout and a vague spear threat. Without quite knowing why, the ULAMS watch the KZAMMS slowly retreating towards the rocks. Then IKA's voluble speech makes NAOH look round.

IKA

o ker go! ker go! vin vin ker go!
bin bin tang thar thar! ve ni go! da
gro bre bre vola! tha vo la tha!
ker go....!

She points to some shapes beyond the fallen tree trunk which are moving out on the far side of the valley: mammoths.

127 Continued

127

The KZAMMS beat a retreat into the mountain. The ULAMS, cornered, look alternately from one danger to the other.

The herd of mammoths is closer now. NAOH and his companions are on the point of fleeing, when NAOH, staggering, realises the futility of the attempt and stops short. The others do the same, looking at him questioningly. Then NAOH hands the fire cage to GAW, turns round and steps into the pool.

The mammoths are now just a few steps away. Watched dumbly by his companions, NAOH rips up some water lily roots. Then, his face contorted with pain, he extricates himself from the mud and advances purposefully towards the herd. A weak, limping and pitiful upright figure outlined against the huge forms, he holds out the roots as an offering to the first of the mammoths. The colossus stops, swinging his hairy trunk grumpily between his enormous tusks. He observes the tiny creature standing beneath him. NAOH tries not to show his fear and edges forward, speaking softly as he does so.

NAOH

'esatSai.....'esatSai nao:
'imjizi tirme:g nao; otim!
ulam nak(a) garsn(a)! esatSai
tirme:g...esatSai!

The animal flaps his membrane ears. He sniffs NAOH with his prehensile trunk before taking the proffered stems and slowly, meditatively eating them.

GAW, AMOUKAR and IKA, their heads cowered, hardly dare to breathe or look at the fantastic animals, whereas NAOH puffs out his chest.

128 EXT. ROCK FALL NEAR WATERHOLE DAWN

128

Still lying in wait, the KZAMMS watch this extraordinary scene in disbelief: their enemies forming an alliance with these awe-inspiring beasts!

129 WATERHOLE FIRST LIGHT OF DAWN

129

A few mammoths hang back, still drinking, though the rest of the herd is making its way across the valley. The ULAMS and IKA proudly advance in their midst. The herd makes straight towards the rocks where the KZAMMS are sheltering. Swelling with pride, NAOH brandishes his spear and shouts defiantly as he walks forward.

NAOH

Ulam kras!
kzamms micr - micr!
nao me::g!

IKA walks beside him. His two companions, mistrustful, brave some threatening gestures but refrain from shouting.

130 ROCKFALL NEAR WATERHOLE FIRST RAYS OF SUN 130

The KZAMMS, struck by supernatural terror, appear to freeze for a while. One of them suddenly turns round and flees, horrified, which leads to a frantic flight by the whole band, who scatter in all directions in the first rays of the rising sun.

Some drop their weapons in order to run more quickly.

KZAMMS
nooo(z)! nooo(z)!

131 EXT. FIRST RAYS OF SUN/WATERHOLE 131

GAW pretends to follow them for a few feet, then stops, triumphant.

Gradually heartened, NAOH vigorously strikes his shoulder twice, with the flat of his hand.

NAOH
bai::: !

132 EXT. CLIFFTOP DAY 132

A grassy plateau, ending in a vertical cliff, dominates the great plain where the mammoths are grazing alongside a ribbon of wide river which sparkles silver in the sunlight.

A chamois pursued by AMOUKAR, runs forward in leaps and bounds. Suddenly GAW stands up on its path and utters a cry. The animal is surprised and flees in the opposite direction. Now it is NAOH's turn to leap out. The three men close in on the animal and drive it towards the cliff edge. Apparently NAOH's wound has healed for he has got back all his speed. The animal blindly dashes forward towards the precipice, frightened by the cries of his pursuers. It plunges into the abyss and lands several hundred feet below. The three ULAMS lean over the edge to see where their prey has fallen and let out little chuckles of victory.

133 EXT. GRASSY PLAIN DAY 133

The sun sets on the grassy plain where the mammoths are scattered, grazing peacefully. The ULAMS have built a fire a little way away and NAOH, GAW and AMOUKAR have nearly finished tearing away pieces of cooked chamois. Crouched beside NAOH, IKA is watching them, salivating as she does so.

133 Continued

133

GAW, repleat, belches loudly, a sign of contented digestion. Having torn off the last strip of flesh, NAOH drops the bone to the ground and draws IKA to his side, unconcerned that she herself is busy devouring her meat.

AMOUKAR is curling up to sleep and watches indifferently as NAOH starts to sniff IKA. He licks the girl's arm, removing with his primitive sensuality the blue paint which covers her soft skin. He rolls her over with one strong movement of his arm, buries her under him in his furs and mounts her. The dark shape of their two bodies jolts violently.

A mammoth stops chewing for a moment then starts to graze once more. The great fair-haired warrior is still again. His powerful chest resumes its rhythmic breathing.

IKA, trapped by NAOH's inert weight, gropes about in the ashes with her hand, trying to dig out a little half-charred bone. Staring with wide eyes at the heavens above, IKA begins to eat at last. The night is still, save for the snores of the sleeping men.

134 EXT. ROCKFACE DAY

134

Pausing to rest, the three ULAMS are sitting with their backs to the rockface. IKA is busy hunting for fleas on NAOH, who seems content to let her do so as he stares out in front of him. GAW is stoking up the fire cage with dry moss. AMOUKAR is going through his furs, looking for maggots which he chews with relish.

A stone breaks loose from the rockface high above and bounces down against the rocks, landing up on AMOUKAR's head. But he is thick-skulled and just goes on munching the maggots without reacting. IKA bursts out laughing.

This melodious, crystalline sound, which she makes while baring her teeth and which is accompanied by little shudders of her shoulders, attracts anxious stares from the ULAM, and this only makes her laugh more. NAOH and the two others stare at this alien creature in amazement: the sound of laughter, a sign of evolutionary progress, is unknown to the puzzled ULAMS.

135 EXT. RIVER BANKS DUSK

135

The rays of the setting sun throw a rosy glow over the landscape. The herd of mammoths is dotted over the plain while the old bull mammoth comes over towards the ULAMS, gathered round their fire. The animal stops a short way

135 Continued

135

off and lets out a gentle trumpeting sound. NAOH makes a few sounds in reply. The mammoth comes still closer and looks at the fire. The firelight is reflected in his brown eye like a wicked sparkle and he crinkles up his eyelids as if he were laughing. NAOH gets up and moves forward to meet him. Then the huge beast gently wraps his trunk around NAOH who is overwhelmed with pride, and lifts him up a little way before gently putting him back on the ground again.

NAOH's companions and IKA hold their breath in suspense at this unbelievable sight.

136 EXT. RIVER BANK DAWN

136

Day breaks at the river bank. A few coals still glow in the fire. The ULAMS are asleep. Nearby the herd of mammoths is grazing. A flight of migrating birds flies across the still morning sky. Buried under NAOH's fur skins, IKA watches intently as they fly past.

137 EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING A VALLEY DAY

137

A ridge overlooks the narrow valley which has been carved out by the river. The ULAMS and IKA watch from the crest above as the herd, lead by the big bull, continues on its way along the river bank.

NAOH lets out a long farewell cry.

NAOH

E::hju:::!

A trumpeting sound answers back from the valley below.

138 DELETED

138

139 EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE DAY

139

The four of them now walk along the ridge of the mountain. To one side, a vast expanse of desert region, to the other, forests and glaciers.

Migrating birds fly across the sky towards the desert plains. Once again, IKA's gaze follows them. Then, without warning she takes off at a run down the slope, fleet-footed and nimble.

It takes a few seconds for the ULAMS to realise that she is running away. NAOH instinctively rushes forward.

139 Continued

139

Then gives up after a few steps. He lets out an angry roar and throws a spear out after the little female.

NAOH

ga:rsn(a)!

140 EXT. FOREST DUSK

140

The setting sun casts its last glimmer over the canopy of trees.

Seated round the fire, the three weary ULAMS are chewing on some stringy roots which they have brought out from under their furs. AMOUKAR belches. NAOH suddenly catches sight of some streaks of blue daub on his hand. Instinctively, he turns round to look for his mate. It takes him a while to realise that she is missing. Sadness clouds his eyes. Tender memories of the little female fill his frustrated heart.

He starts to rock to and fro, as if nursing his pain. A little moan escapes from his breast. The longing he feels but cannot put a name to is called love. His companions watch him, unable to comprehend this sudden sickness which has drained their leader.

141 EXT. RIVER TREE TRUNK DAY

141

The sky is grey. The ULAMS come to a torrent which is straddled by the enormous trunk of a fallen tree. GAW and AMOUKAR take advantage of this natural gangway to cross the obstacle. NAOH, having chanced a few steps out over the void, decides to cross on foot through the water. He jumps from rock to rock with great caution.

When he reaches his companions on the other bank, they start off again. But NAOH stops still. He stands there silently, an absent look on his face. He rocks gently to and fro.

GAW and AMOUKAR come back towards him, not knowing what to do. After a few moments of this silent tête-a-tête, NAOH sighs deeply and then turns round and goes back across the river.

Bewildered the others follow him.

142 DELETED

142

143 EXT. SUMMIT OF THE MOUNTAIN RIDGE DAY 143

The ULAMS are back on the ridge at the spot where IKA escaped.

NAOH takes off without hesitation down the hill towards the vast expanse of desert region.

GAW and AMOUKAR hang back. NAOH has to call them to persuade them to follow him reluctantly.

NAOH
eftmeta! eftmeta m-ne!

144 EXT. FOREST SHELTER OF BRANCHES NIGHT 144

The breeze blows through the forest. The sighing of a million leaves rises and falls like some nocturnal breathing, broken only by the cries of wild animals.

The ULAMS have made themselves a shelter of branches. NAOH is asleep.

AMOUKAR is sitting keeping watch near the fire cage which glows in the darkness. GAW, who is lying down, sits up to listen, then comes to join AMOUKAR. The two ULAMS look at their sleeping companion and then, quickly and silently, they pick up their weapons and the two protective stones. GAW takes the fire cage and they swiftly leave the shelter.

145 EXT. SKY NIGHT 145

Heavy, slow and black, the clouds drift across the moon which slowly reveals its golden orb.

146 EXT. FOREST NIGHT 146

There are fewer trees in this section of the forest. The moonlight creates a tangled mass of disquieting shadows. GAW and AMOUKAR, in silhouette, cross this mysterious landscape.

GAW stops suddenly. In their path, a huge spider's web catches the light from the fire cage. A giant spider, larger than a fist, sits at the centre of the maze. GAW stares at the repulsive insect with loathing and fear. AMOUKAR kills it with a quick, clean jab of his spear. At the very same moment, as though provoked by his gesture, a violent FLAPPING of WINGS is HEARD overhead. Deep layers of dried leaves begin to crackle. Strange WAILS ECHO through the forest and are answered by PIERCING SHRIEKS. Our two fugitives shake with fear. After all, they've stolen the Sacred Fire! A sinister rumbling of THUNDER is HEARD overhead: the two ULAMS exchange terrified looks.

147 EXT. FOREST SHELTER OF BRANCHES NIGHT 147

NAOH is still asleep in the same position under the shelter made of branches. Two shadows and the bright spot of the fire cage appear in the forest undergrowth.

GAW and AMOUKAR creep furtively back into their places after replacing the two protective stones on the flat stone.

148 EXT. ROLLING SAVANNA WITH BUSHES DAY 148

The three ULAMS are dripping with sweat. Their thick layers of furs and skins are ill-suited to the overpowering heat of the savannas and their smell is attracting myriads of flies which accompany them in a buzzing swarm.

NAOH and his friends have stopped and are taking stock, staring out over the bush-scattered plains which stretch endlessly out before them.

Their attention is drawn to a motionless, dark shape in the far distance which is standing in a more open area.

149 EXT. BUSHY SAVANNA/EDGE OF CLEARING DAY 149

NAOH and his companions are crawling along cautiously. They stop from time to time and look up over the bushes towards the dark mass. They can make it out better now and see it is oval in shape and covered in a greyish shell.

AMOUKAR throws a spear at it with all his strength. It lands close to the immobile form but there is no reaction whatsoever.

150 EXT. BUSHY SAVANNA/CLEARING DAY 150

The unknown form is actually a hut. Two rows of stakes planted in the earth meet at the top and form a rough, dilapidated shelter, shaped like a rib-cage. The framework is daubed with dry mud.

Out of the nearby bushes the three intrepid warriors appear in a series of leaps and bounds. GAW out in front and NAOH and AMOUKAR at each side, the ULAMS surround their find. They move towards it, staves drawn, uttering fierce shouts:

ULAMS

ga:rsn(a) - ga:rsn(a)!

The hut's persistent immobility offers them some encouragement. They stop short, then rush it again, hoping to get some reaction.

150 Continued

150

NAOH, the bravest, comes at it from behind and stabs at the framework with his stave. Part of the hut collapses in a noisy heap. The three ULAMS leap backwards. Silence once more. They are reassured and come closer again. NAOH walks all round it and, after much hesitation, goes inside.

151 INT. HUT DAY

151

The rays of light through the hut wall cast a striped shadow over NAOH, who looks around apprehensively. He is joined by AMOUKAR and GAW who are ashen-faced with fear. In the middle of the hut is an old hearth, surrounded by stones and numerous bones.

NAOH picks up a kind of calabash from amongst the whitish remains. It is magnificently carved and decorated with plaited thongs. He contemplates this object in silent admiration and it is passed from hand to hand. The ULAMS cannot believe their eyes: everything challenges their primitive logic.

NAOH sniffs his find, balances it on his head and finally ties it round his neck and wears it with pride on his chest.

152 DELETED

152

153 EXT. CLIFF OVERLOOKING MARSHES DAY

153

The three ULAMS reach the summit of a hill which ends abruptly in a cliff. From this promontory, they see stretching out at their feet a vast, watery marsh region which sparkles in the sun.

A grunt from GAW attracts NAOH's attention:

GAW
(pointing with his
lips)
virku! virku!

In the distance, across the silvery surface, three slim upright figures are walking, single file, and they disturb a flock of pink flamingoes who take flight. We recognize the flight pattern: it is those same migratory birds which IKA had watched so keenly.

154 EXT. MARSHLAND DAY

154

The Ulam penetrate slowly and carefully into the marshland. The monotonous expanse is relieved only by reeds, stagnant puddles of water and clumps of razor-sharp blades of grass. NAOH is the one most determined to forge ahead into the marshland, and it is he who carries the fire cage. His companions follow at a short distance, but with less enthusiasm. Periodically, each one tests the solidity of the ground ahead of him with the point of his spear.

155 EXT. MARSHLAND DAY

155

Small paths of spongy earth, which can support a man's weight, need to be sought out to avert entrapment.

The ULAM soon encounter grisly proof of this: an assortment of human skeletons is visible in the mud and slime. Some skeletons are almost totally submerged, so that only the tops of bleached skulls are visible. Others have been regurgitated by the slime to the level of the ribcage. A moss-like lichen has attached itself insidiously to the bones: fluttering in the wind, the vegetation imparts a kind of grotesque animation to the skeletons, some of which are frozen into ghastly parodies of the victims' death-throes, brittle fingers stretched imploringly up at the sky.

Terror-stricken, the ULAM flee. Moments later the inevitable occurs: they sink to the level of their calves in voracious slime. Their frantic efforts to escape only consolidate the slime's hold on them.

NAOH's innate reflex is to save the fire cage: he carefully sets it atop a small mound of solid earth close by. Then he turns to help GAW. Trying to gain some leverage, GAW grasps at AMOUKAR, who only sinks further into the slime. The situation soon deteriorates into a set of individual struggles, every man for himself. Hoarse grunts punctuate futile writhings: the slime has already reached the level of their waists.

156 EXT. SKY DAY

156

P.O.V. of the sky.

A scorching sun nears its zenith. Vultures describe leisurely arcs in a cloudless sky.

157 EXT. MARSHES DAY

157

Several hours have passed. Only the heads of the three trapped men remain unclaimed by the slime. NAOH's chest gourd has risen to a level beneath his chin. The fire cage remains on the mound of solid earth where NAOH put it earlier. The ULAM periodically shoot glances at it, as though it were a shrine. The men's faces are pitiful to see: bloated mosquitoes gorge themselves, a slimy toad croaks under their noses and a water-snake slithers through quivering reeds. Vultures swoop over their heads, casting fugitive shadows.

158 EXT. SKY

158

The sun has begun its downward course.

159 EXT. MARSHLAND DAY

159

Borne by the wind, strange sounds begin to reach the trapped men's ears - sounds such as they have never heard before. Dull, buzzing sounds which are repeated, over and over again, the like of which they have never heard before.

160 EXT. MARSHES DAY

160

Shadows lengthen as the afternoon wears on. Two vultures beat their wings and gambol near the fire cage.

O.S. Distant shouts in the marshland, shouts which gradually get closer.

A frightened vulture beats its wings heavily and flies away. Through the tangled confusion of reeds, the ULAM see a number of upright figures converging on them in Indian file, following the maze of winding pathways to the spot where now a second vulture takes to the air.

Shortly, the impotent ULAMS see strange people springing up all round them - people daubed with blue mud from head to toe like IKA. The males wear a gourd over their genitals like the one NAOH found. Without exception they are small in stature, with dark skins and brown eyes. The groups of visitors are made up of warriors, women and a few children. The men are armed with long bows and arrows.

The IVAKA have come to examine the latest in a long line of victims to be trapped in the bog.

IVAKA

van da. van da. ker go diz pauk.
diz van van auk o:t o:t da!
ker pal di lam lam otS tha la pa!

Under the approving eye of the adults, the children amuse themselves by using the ULAMS' skulls for target practice. Their stones often hit home with cruel precision. The ULAMS' wretched appearance makes the IVAKA burst into cruel laughter, uttering that curious sound, accompanied by little shudders of their shoulders, which the ULAMS first heard IKA make.

Another game begins. Drawing their bows, the warriors fire arrows with the aim of brushing as close as possible past the heads of the ULAMS who roll their eyes in terror in the midst of this hail of unfamiliar weapons.

IVAKAS

pu pu
drant da na! bar a na
di na! posh vo nod a a bro no
gu. a ni di ma!

A moment later, other IVAKAS join those who came first. We recognize IKA among the newcomers, smeared with a fresh coat of blue mud. A dignified and majestic looking warrior stands at the head of the pack. It is TAVAHA, the tribal chief. IKA, without any outward betrayal of emotion, recognizes the ULAM. She turns to TAVAHA and speaks quickly. The chief then utters a command.

TAVAHA

ga no! ga no da! da no
griS da! fro mi gi
trox! mi gi tro:x!

The IVAKAS stop firing arrows. TAVAHA explains.

TAVAHA

i.ka di'ga sa kom
komfra - ok zra, ok
zra da.

An incomprehensible excitement surges through the assembled IVAKA. TAVAHA and the warriors approach as closely as possible to NAOH and scrutinize him intently. Shouts blend with exclamations of incredulity then a majority of the IVAKA race after TAVAHA. A handful of warriors and IKA remain. IKA crouches several feet away from the trapped ULAM. NAOH watches her, but she treats him with complete indifference and merely observes him, chewing on a blade of grass she has picked from a nearby cluster.

In a show of contempt for her, NAOH manages to grasp a rotten branch and twist himself away from the girl, and turn his back to her.

161 EXT. SAME TIME DAY

161

TAVAHA returns, accompanied by the tribe's sorcerer: OTA OTAROK. The sorcerer wears a deer's skin, and the gourd covering his genitals is larger than those of the other males in the tribe. Several tribesmen carry bunches of twigs, others trunks of freshly cut saplings. The group sets noisily to work.

Stepping close to the trapped ULAM, the group carefully spreads the twigs across the surface of the slime, enabling OTA OTAROK to crawl out beside NAOH. The sorcerer lowers his head and examines NAOH's blue irises, his face filled with envious surprise. Unable to bring himself to believe what he sees, OTA OTAROK purses his lips and blows forcefully into NAOH's eyes.

Immensely gratified by the results of this experiment, the sorcerer lifts his head and emits a series of triumphant yells, taken up immediately and amplified by the assembled warriors.

162 SC DELETED

162

163 EXT. VILLAGE DUSK

163

NAOH, AMOUKAR and GAW are bound by their ankles and wrists to a tree trunk which is suspended between the shoulders of the blue men. Four blue men carry each ULAM. The slim figures of the IVAKAS strain under the weight of the sturdy aliens, made even heavier by their mud drenched furs. The three unfortunate captives are in a pitiful state: rather than human, they appear to be sculptured in mud and slime.

They stare out vacantly from their horizontal position at the empty shells of a huge village of huts - huts built to the same design as the one they discovered in the clearing, but which have now been abandoned to sink inexorably into the marshes. TAVAHA shouts out an order:

TAVAHA

na do, na do. tal leg
 krek da, fre fre no
 dek ka. buk ka.

The procession stops in the middle of the ruins. Two IVAKA slice the bonds which hold GAW and AMOUKAR, whose bodies fall heavily with a spongy thud like two heaps on the ground, they are left alone, a matter of complete indifference to everyone.

As the procession continues on in the direction of some inhabited huts which make up the living branch of the dying settlement IKA appears with the fire cage in her hand, she goes towards the two deserted ULAMS.

164 EXT. HILLS BEHIND THE MARSHES DUSK

164

The procession around the ULAM suspended from the pole, crosses the inhabited village, passes a large hut which stands in its centre and moves away towards the hill which overlooks the marsh.

165 EXT. NIGHTFALL

165

There is an enormous natural fault in the hillside and in this depression a micro-climate has given rise to unexpected and luxuriant vegetation.

The procession penetrates into this jungle. At the bottom of the depression is the entrance to a gallery running horizontally through the hillside. The IVAKAS stop outside. The porters deposit the great ULAM with care and help him to his feet where he stands unsteadily. OTA OTAROK comes towards him, carrying a sharpened flint. He stares with a hallucinatory gaze at his prisoner's throat and with a swift movement, slices through the gut fastening holding up NAOH's furs. The skins fall to the ground, one by one, and the great warrior stands revealed in his grimy nakedness staring about him in bewilderment.

166 EXT. IVAKA VILLAGE DAY

166

The IVAKA village is baking in the throbbing heat. Some women and dried-up old men, a few warriors hanging about in the shade of the huts, snigger out of toothless gums.

IVAKAS

nja vo pro pa pa 'buat
vo pre ga 'na! vo na
'u sja. na 'usja!.

In front of them, near the rubbish dump on the edge of the ruined village, GAW and AMOUKAR, with their backsides ridiculously exposed, sweating under their armour of skins and dried mud, are just garnishing their precious fire cage with dry moss and twigs. They blow lovingly on the tiny fire. This ritual, unleashes a volley of laughter from the IVAKAS.

167 SC. DELETED

167

168 INT ROCK CATHEDRAL DAY

168

Through an opening in the roof of the grotto, a shaft of light illumines a natural rock cathedral. Daylight shows up the interior and walls of a huge chamber decorated with animal frescos: buffaloes, gazelle goats, waders, unfold in a symphony of ochre, black red and yellow. Certain areas of the walls bear abstract engravings.

TAVAHA is at the back of the vaulted chamber with the warriors. They are whipping the air with flexible switches and this is the humming noise which we heard earlier in the marshes. In the centre stands the sorcerer, OTA OTAROK, and he is slowly turning on the spot. His face is masked by an animal skin of dubious origin. Sometimes he stops turning, shouts hoarsely, then starts his gyrations again. We track across the magic paintings once again.

NAOH is lead in. He is unrecognizable. He has been daubed with blue mud in the IVAKA style: He wears a calabash penis sheath. He is dazzled by the unbelievable sight of the animal cave drawings which unravel before his stupefied eyes. Suddenly, in a shrill voice, OTA OTAROK declaims;

OTA OTAROK
gra: ivak'usia. usia'vak
gra uuu!

VOICES CRY
gra: i'vak 'usja. usia
'vak gra uuu!

Then two of the sorcerer's aides lead NAOH forward and press his hand against the wall of the cave. The ULAM submits to these rituals uncomprehendingly, completely subdued by the impact of his first artistic emotion.

OVA, a cave painter, blows a halo of red paint onto NAOH's hand. Pulling his hand away from the wall, a negative imprint of NAOH's hand is visible, ringed by red paint on the rock wall. He remains motionless, completely awe struck. While behind him the warriors resume sluicing their switches through the air.

169 INT. GROTTA ROCKY CATHEDRAL EVENING

169

The edges of the cave opening glow rosy in the rays of the setting sun. The thin crescent of a new moon shines in the emerald-coloured sky.

OTA OTAROK, TAVAHA and his men are busy gathering comestibles, smoked meats, dried fish, roots and fruit.

A big wood fire has been carefully prepared and is now ready to be lit.

NAOH crouching in the middle of a skin, is looking at a group of warriors engaged in removing the tender leaves from a plant with a long fibrous stem. Well treated, he makes no attempt to understand what is happening. He senses that he is important to IVAKAS and submits passively to their gentle will.

169 Continued

169

But suddenly a succession of events profoundly affects NAOH: A warrior crouches over a flat piece of wood on which moss and twigs have been placed. Holding it still with his foot, he places a stick on it and twirls the stick rapidly between both hands.

NAOH looks on, absorbed by what the warrior is doing. Seconds pass, then NAOH witnesses the greatest of wonders. He sees Man create fire. The wisps of smoke that rise from the kindling bring tears to his eyes. NAOH actually weeps.

170 INT. CAVE (A LITTLE LATER) EVENING

170

The fire crackles in front of NAOH, who is captivated by the tall flames mysteriously created by man.

In turn, the IVAKAS come and take burning branches which they pull from the fire and, surrounding NAOH, they lead him towards a deep, dark gallery which opens out in the cave.

In the glimmer of the torches, the group disappears, plunging into the bowels of the earth.

171 INT. GROTTO DEEP CHAMBERS NIGHT

171

The group reaches an oblong chamber which brings the gallery to a dead end.

By torchlight, we see a thick bed of dried grasses in the middle of the crypt upon which NAOH now settles himself down.

The IVAKA build a new fire out of the flaming branches and sit themselves down beside it while food is laid out beside the ULAM. OTA OTAROK then seizes a handful of the tender leaves which the warriors have stripped off and puts them on the fire. The leaves give off a thick white smoke which the sorcerer, soon followed by the others, comes to sniff ecstatically.

The operation being repeated several times, the crypt is soon filled with smoke.

Although the acrid smokes makes NAOH cough, he starts to devour the tasty morsels which surround him. At this point, in answer to a call from OTA OTAROK, a generously proportioned woman, like a fertility goddess, appears in the flickering firelight, specially adorned, her body decorated with polychromatic paintings.

She comes slowly towards the bed and lays herself down beside the handsome ULAM. With her legs open, she offers herself to him.

171 Continued

171

The blue men stand up and beat the air rhythmically with their switches.

NAOH takes a look at the woman but then goes on eating his piece of meat, totally oblivious.

The beating of the switches slows down, then stops. There is some confusion. OTA OTAROK decides to intervene. He suggests to the woman:

OTA OTAROK
Su ve tandr tandro
su ve tandr tandro

the woman turns round and presents her rump. This time the ULAM gets the message. He slows down his chewing and looks alternatively at the proffered rump and the row of silent males, a wierd, threatening look in the twenty pairs of staring eyes.

172 SC. DELETED

172

173 INT. CAVE DEEP CHAMBER NIGHT

173

With a vacant gaze, NAOH, lying on his side stares at the fire on which OTA OTAROK comes and places another handful of tender leaves.

In answer to an order from the sorcerer, a second heavily built woman, decorated like the first, appears and lies down beside NAOH and immediately offers him her rump.

The relentless switches start to whip the air again.

174 INT. CAVE ALCOVE NIGHT

174

In a corner of the gallery reached by the distant sound of the switches, which echoes against the walls of the cave, three more women, adorned and painted like the other two, are crouched, awaiting their turn.

Suddenly the throbbing ceases.

One of the women gets up.

175 INT. DEEP CHAMBER NIGHT

175

NAOH has closed his eyes.

He half opens his eyelids to notice the next woman settling herself in for action. The switches take up their rhythmic whipping action.

176 INT. CAVE DEEP CHAMBER NIGHT

176

All the food has been eaten and the remains are scattered here and there on the floor of the crypt where the air has become unbreatheable. Weighted down by their full stomachs and drunk with the smoke, most of the IVAKAS have slumped into a slumber. A few remain awake, in a strange state, their heads bowed and their staring eyes curiously glassy.

NAOH, drained of energy and exhausted, is snoring. Hardly visible in the pale glimmer of the dying fire, a slim silhouette slides along the wall. It is IKA, who has not been entitled to the multi-coloured decoration of the women destined for the handsome stranger's seed. Taking advantage of the general drowsiness, she sets off across the chamber towards NAOH.

O.S. OTA OTAROK

Pro va do. Nja vo da!

OTA OTAROK's shrill voice roots her to the spot. The sorcerer is on his feet, choking with anger, his eyes bulging. As if she were a bitch on heat, he pelts her with stones to chase her away, this impious female who was about to commit an act of profanity during the sacred ceremonial.

Trying to avoid the hail of missiles which fall all around her, IKA makes her escape under a volley of abuse from the warriors who have suddenly awoken from their stupor and who are filled with a drugged fury.

177 EXT. IVAKA VILLAGE DAY

177

A hot vertical sun beats down on the village. GAW and AMOUKAR have erected on the rubbish dump a ridiculous shelter with a few rotten branches and are occupied once more in filling their fire cage with tinder. Resting and watching from under the shade of the trees along the edge of the bog, the IVAKAS burst into laughter at the ceremony, which has become their favourite distraction.

178 SC. DELETED

178

179 SC. DELETED

179

180 EXT. MAIN HUT DAY

180

The inhabited part of the village is deserted in the hot afternoon sun. IKA silently glides between the dwellings up to the back of the main hut which stands alone in the centre of the village. She crouches up against the widely-spaced pales which form the hut wall. On the other side, almost touching her face. NAOH's head is resting against the wooden stakes.

181 INT. BIG HUT DAY

181

Installed in the biggest building in the village, surrounded by all sorts of foods, NAOH is strangely motionless on his bed of fresh grass.

Vaguely aware of a presence, he slowly turns his head and with glazed eyes, stares beatifically at the young girl's face. She passes her hand through one of the gaps in the hut wall. NAOH, attracted by the familiar smell, grabs the outstretched palm and sniffs deeply. Great sadness can be detected in IKA's eyes.

In the centre of the hut a little fire is smoking between some blackened stones.

182 EXT. EDGE OF MARSH DUSK

182

Two dark shapes lit up by the last red rays of the daylight are reflected in the still water of the marsh. Squatting in the midst of the refuse and ruins which have become their home, GAW and AMOUKAR are plucking little red worms out of the slime and chewing them slowly.

From far, far away, borne by the wind, comes the faint echo of wolves' howls.

The two ULAMS sit up and listen, motionless, to this call from the wild; their eyes filled with a nostalgic longing.

183 EXT. VILLAGE DAY

183

Many days have passed. GAW and AMOUKAR's once-temporary shelter has had time to gain accretions, then to fall into wrack and ruin while the two outcasts, covered with lice, have become, quite literally, human scarecrows. GAW is squatting beside AMOUKAR and trimming the few hairs of his beard in a brotherly fashion, using his teeth as he used to for NAM, his twin brother who was killed in battle.

With their rheumy eyes, the two "untouchables" suddenly witness an event which they have been waiting for for a long time: the handsome NAOH, adorned like a God, has come out of the main hut and is walking towards them, but his gait is ethereal, other-worldly.

In a burst of hope, GAW gets up, followed by AMOUKAR and he seizes the fire cage.

Soon the two ULAMS are wading through the mud and slime which separates them from the inhabited area of the village. NAOH stares at them with a distant, almost scornful expression. Then he turns round and goes back inside his sumptuous hut with a dreamy, casual step.

- 183 Continued 183
- Angry and humiliated, the two ULAMS return to wallow in their mud bath.
- 184 INT. CENTRE HUT DAY 184
- Gifts of all sorts embellish the now luxurious interior of the depraved stud's palace. Ripe fruit, fresh roots and dried fish are spread out on ferns within easy reach.
- NAOH goes back to his bed and collapses onto it limply. With an automatic movement of the hand, he picks up a few of the tender leaves which have been gathered for his personal use and he puts them on the fire in the centre of his hut. He inhales deeply on the white smoke which rises from it and drifts into a hazy contemplation of an arrangement of multi-coloured feathers which are shimmering in a ray of sunshine.
- 185 EXT. MARSHES FULL MOON NIGHT 185
- The full moon floods the stagnant marshes with its pale glimmer. The village is asleep. Its silhouette stands out against the dark night.
- Somewhere in the vast open spaces a pack of wolves utter long mournful howls.
- 186 INT. RUIN OF ABANDONED VILLAGE NIGHT 186
- The howls reach the rubbish dump which suddenly comes to life. GAW and AMOUKAR sit up and turn their heads in the direction of the wolves.
- 187 INT. BIG HUT NIGHT 187
- In the big hut NAOH is snoring, his mouth squashed and distorted against his bedding.
- His primitive senses have been dulled and his sleep is undisturbed by the distant wolf howls. Then, as one particularly mournful howl is heard, his snoring breaks off, as if suspended by some subconscious impulse.
- 188 EXT. EDGE OF MARSH AND IVAKA VILLAGE NIGHT 188
- Suction noises disturb the silence of the night. A reddish patch of light is getting nearer: GAW and AMOUKAR cross over the little marsh which separates them from the IVAKA village. With heavy yet cautious steps they make their way towards the inhabited huts.

189 EXT. IKA'S HUT NIGHT

189

The two ULAMS cross through the middle of the sleeping village.

On their way they bump into a warrior slumped against the partition of his hut, the cocky native lets out a burst of derisive laughter as he recognises them. His sonorous laugh is cut short by a sinister crack from AMOUKAR's club.

190 EXT. IKA'S HUT NIGHT

190

Woken by the noise, a shape is moving inside a hut.

A face approaches the loosely assembled hut wall. It is IKA.

She sees the two ULAMS take possession of the murdered warrior's bow and arrows, and head stealthily in the direction of the big main hut.

191 EXT. CENTRAL HUT NIGHT

191

At the entrance to the big hut the IVAKA on sentry duty half opens a bleary eye.

Suddenly, his head splits open like a coconut.

AMOUKAR, takes his club, seizes his victim's weapons and goes with GAW into NAOH's palace.

192 EXT. MARSHES NIGHT

192

In the middle of the treacherous marshes, shimmering in the moonlight, GAW with the fire cage in his hand, advances cautiously. He is heavily laden with a booty of bows, arrows and spear, which AMOUKAR had gathered on their way through the middle of the village.

Behind him, AMOUKAR is following with difficulty, carrying the blue and disjointed body of NAOH on his shoulders.

GAW is taking his bearings from the foot prints which show the way through the dangerous moving terrain.

193 EXT. MARSHES, FURTHER ON NIGHT

193

The three fleeing men pass close by the swampy grave which has claimed so many victims. Their skeletal, mummified corpses are ghastly in the half-light. GAW hesitates more and more as to which route to take. Suddenly GAW feels the ground slipping away from under him. With a tremendous effort, he tears himself away from the suction which is already imprisoning him. The retreating AMOUKAR feels himself being

193 Continued.

193

sucked down too. The two terrified ULAMS are rooted to the spot.

A noise behind them makes them turn around. They recognise the delicate silhouette of IKA. She signals to them inviting them to follow her in another direction.

IKA

kwi d(z)a. nag d(z)a kwo,
'kwi d(z)a. me ne si.kw.

The group gets further and further away, making complicated loops in the direction of the cliff at the edge of the marshes.

194 EXT. A CLEARING IN BUSHY SAVANNA MORNING

194

The sun comes up on the horizon. In the middle of a clearing, NAOH is asleep, curled up on his side. He half opens his dark-rimmed eyes. In front of him GAW and AMOUKAR beam with pleasure to see him waking up. NAOH, still semi-conscious, notices the fire cage beside him. He gives a little grunt and closes his eyes again. A few seconds later he leaps up and looks around him. IKA is there a few feet away, crouching submissively. NAOH grunts a second time, lies down again, stretched out on his back, breathing deeply.

195 SC. DELETED

195

196 EXT. DRY SAVANNA DAY

196

The ULAMS and IKA are advancing under an inky black sky. They are on edge. GAW's hair and eyebrows are standing on end as if charged with static electricity. A whirlwind whips up the dry savanna. A tremendous rumble shakes the landscape.

Before their eyes, lightning flashes through the stifling air with a shattering crack. Blinded by the brilliant light, the ULAMS remain rivetted to the spot for a few seconds. IKA takes refuge behind NAOH. Another flash of lightning strikes some dry bushes a few hundred feet away, which ignite like torches.

The crazed ULAMS turn and flee.

197 EXT. DRY SAVANNA DEAD TREE DAY

197

Another flash of lightning strikes a dead tree. The trunk bursts in two in a shower of sparks. Once again the savanna catches fire around them.

197 Continued

197

Faced with this new wall of fire, the terrified fugitives head off in another direction.

198 EXT. FLAMING SAVANNA DAY

198

The three men and the girl are cut off on three sides by the raging fire which is closing in on them with a great roar. AMOUKAR buries his head under his furs so as not to see.

Assaulted from all sides by the primeval fire, NAOH clutches to his breast the precious fire cage with its tiny, flickering flame so dearly won from its human owners. To save those few burning embers which have cost him so dearly, NAOH hurls himself headlong through the inferno.

NAOH

'ma:rgiom ss mne!

Answering his call, the other three follow him. Their feet sizzle on the burning turf, the smoke chokes them, then blinds them, their furs singe in the rushing inferno.

On the verge of asphyxia, the four humans reach the blackened cinders of a prairie which has already burned to the ground. They stop. Coughing and with streaming eyes they turn back, fascinated, to stare at the incredible spectacle in front of them. Then NAOH brandishes the fire cage and utters a chant of victory: of man's victory against the fury of the elements.

NAOH

vir'ulam kras!

nao'ulam me::g!

The other two ULAMS hurl insults at the blazing savanna with drunken pride.

GAW & AMOUKAR

ulam kras! ulam me::g!

IKA, being more practical, takes advantage of a charred stump to sit down - then leaps up again a few seconds later.

199 EXT. TREE IN THE MOUNTAINS DAY

199

The sun is high in the sky and is casting a shimmering light through the branches. The heat is stifling. With half-closed eyes, NAOH is looking tenderly at IKA who is busily crushing blue flowers for her make-up. A few yards away GAW is dozing at the foot of a tree.

Up the same tree, well supported between two main branches, AMOUKAR is staring at GAW underneath him. He stealthily takes a sizeable stone from his skins. He holds it for a moment in his two hands, directly above his companion's skull, carefully measuring its course. Then he parts his hands.

The stone strikes GAW on the head with a thud. GAW crumples slightly and loses consciousness.

In his tree AMOUKAR lets out a raucous, gravelly sound, while NAOH and IKA look on in amazement. Clumsily imitating the laugh he heard when he was with the IVAKAS, the mischievous ULAM has just discovered the practical joke.

200 EXT. HILLS DAY

200

Torrents of rain are beating down on the hills. The men must now protect their fire from the sky's water. The ULAMS and IKA huddle round to shelter the fire cage as best they can.

The girl's blue colouring is running in places.

201 EXT. CREVASSE DAY

201

The ULAMS and IKA are making their way, with their feet in the water, along the bottom of a very narrow crevasse. The high moist walls nearly meet at the top, letting in a meagre amount of light.

IKA's appearance has changed. Even although she has kept her face blue, the frail silhouette is now disappearing under an accumulation of skins in ULAM style. On the other hand, AMOUKAR has taken to painting his body: he has coated his forehead and cheeks with mud in IVAKA fashion.

NAOH, also influenced by his stay with the blue men, tries, as he walks, to imitate the singing he heard in the cave. Alas we learn that he does not have an ear for music.

Suddenly the men are confronted by a dark shape whose colossal form is obstructing the crevasse - it is a giant bear.

Frozen with terror, the four humans beat a hasty retreat.

202 EXT. EXIT TO GORGE DAY

202

The four hunted companions are fleeing from the narrow gorge as fast as their legs will carry them. They reach a rocky slope and crawl up to the top on all fours.

203 EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE DAY

203

At the top of the slope, the dark entrance to a cave can be seen in the rock.

The four reach it just as the gigantic bear is also approaching the slope.

NAOH, assisted by the other two ULAMS attempts to move the big boulders to block the cave entrance as quickly as he can.

204 INT. CAVE DAY

204

The ULAMS are still rolling boulders when two outraged bear cubs loom out of the shadows, growling.

A few seconds later, the huge wild animal appears at the entrance which the men have not had time to fill. Its eyes are bloodshot. With its powerful paws, it starts to scatter the boulders. Its unbearable roars echoing round the cave flush out some terrified bats which fly off. However, it is afraid to attack the vertical being who has had the audacity to take over its lair.

GAW (OFF)

vitrash eto! ...
eftmeta mne ! vitrash !

At the back of the cave, the flickering glow of the fire cage can be seen. Taking advantage of the bear's hesitation NAOH hurls himself in this direction.

205 INT. BACK OF CAVE CREVICE DAY

205

There is a fissure at the back of the cave which NAOH's three companions have already slipped through. NAOH does the same before the bear, in hot pursuit, can reach him.

GAW, AMOUKAR and IKA are in a corridor at the end of which we see a patch of fading light.

NAOH, because he is bigger, is not able to get himself through the fissure. He is stuck. His companions start to pull him, while the breathing and the furious scratching of the bear can be heard, trying to get at him from the other side. NAOH spurs on his rescuers in strangled tones.

NAOH

kras ! 'kras !

205 Continued

205

IKA joins forces with GAW and AMOUKAR. There is a ridiculous sound of clothes tearing and NAOH is pulled through the corridor like a common parcel.

NAOH, angry at having been made a fool of, especially in front of this woman, regains his composure surprisingly. He starts to insult the bear, whose ferocious growling, from the other side of the fissure, is amplified by the echo,

NAOH

nao vir me::g me ::g
'tirorsa tir micr micr!
' prr!.

Judging his dignity to be restored, NAOH pounds his chest and, followed by his companions, starts to walk towards the patch of light which grows bigger with each step.

206/ SCENES DELETED
207

206/
207

208 EXT. PASS EVENING

208

The ULAM reach a pass opening out onto a different landscape: stunted birch trees, hills, tundra, lakes, a new countryside glows beneath the red rays of the setting sun.

NAOH points out the panorama to IKA pouting his lips and swaying his head from side to side.

NAOH

ulam nya keo
nya keo mne.

The young girl looks sad. We sense that she is overcome with nostalgia at the idea of leaving her former territory for ever.

209 EXT. NIGHTFALL

209

There is no moon in the sky. A large fire lights up the rocky ledge where the ULAM have set up their camp. It is only accessible from one side and is several feet off the ground. A pond studded with reeds gleams in the distance.

The remains of a deer reveal that the group has eaten its fill. The three men laze and loll about in a languid mood. IKA sits next to NAOH, her dark eyes reflecting the fire. Howling wolves are heard in the distance.

The ULAM listens attentively. The familiar sound makes them happy ; it means they are close to their tribal lands. One wolf answers another, then a whole chorus joins in. NAOH gestures toward the sound of the wolf pack and speaks to IKA.

NAOH

'lwu 'ftur

The girl copies him...

IKA

'lwu 'ftur

GAW sticks out his neck and lifts his head, imitating a wolf. He sends out a howl toward the starless sky.

GAW

Aaaouououou ...

IKA snuggles against NAOH. She laughs, revealing her sparkling teeth, and says :

IKA

'lwuftur ! 'lwuftur
'lwuftur!

Her laughter proves contagious to GAW and AMOUKAR. Their still imperfect versions of laughter make IKA laugh still more. NAOH hugs her and caresses her cheek with the back of his fingers. Gently the girl turns his hand over to help him discover the sensitivity of his palm.

AMOUKAR has been sucking a bone. He suddenly leaps up and looks into the surrounding darkness. The wind carries a new scent and he sniffs at it. NAOH brushes IKA aside roughly and searches for signs of danger. GAW joins them.

NAOH

wag abou?

AMOUKAR

nak(a) ... ulam

NAOH and GAW are stunned.

GAW

ulam?

AMOUKAR

siyeda, ulam.

209 Continued

209

NAOH takes a flaming branch from the fire and raises it over his head. The three men look for a presence in the dark brush and boulders around them. NAOH shouts.

NAOH

ulam eto?

Nothing stirs. NAOH throws the burning brand. It traces an arc in the night and bounces onto the ground in a shower of sparks. The brief illumination gives them a glimpse of a heavyset shadow lumbering off.

210 EXT. LANDSCAPE NIGHT

210

On the rocky ledge, the ULAM's fire burns in the distance. The night is silent except for the mournful HOOT of an OWL.

211 EXT. ROCKY OVERHANG DAWN

211

The ULAM are ready to leave. GAW checks the fire cage, while NAOH and AMOUKAR extinguish the campfire.

A few snowflakes flutter in the windless air.

212 EXT. POND . DAWN

212

IKA has come to quench her thirst at the pond near the rocky overhang. Near her, are two round, black pebbles set upon a flat stone, which she has not noticed.

Suddenly, in the reflexion of the water, she sees the outline of a grotesque character.

213 EXT. ROCKY OVERHANG DAWN

213

O.S. IKA cries in terror.

Standing on the ledge, the three ULAMS see IKA racing toward them. She outruns her pursuers -- AGHOO and his brother, HOURK.

NAOH, GAW and AMOUKAR brandish their weapons and let out a war cry. The two surprised brothers stop, then shout back, raising their weapons. After a further exchange of battle cries, everyone is silent. GAW coughs.

AGHOO steps forward and says in his cavernous voice:

AGHOO

atra ... atra

213 Continued:

213

The three companions look at each other in astonishment. Then they stare at AGHOO as NAOH raises the fire cage and pounds his chest.

NAOH
atra nyamne, nao!

AGHOO's eyes shine with greed. He claps his palms together to show that he wants the fire. His voice booms angrily.

AGHOO
atra ... d.oo.e.atra mne

NAOH bursts out laughing -- the laughter he learned from the IVAKA. GAW and AMOUKAR imitate him. AGHOO senses he is being insulted. Blind with rage, he hurls a spear. Despite his strength, the spear falls short of the overhang and shatters on a rock. NAOH readies his spear-thrower and casts the spear with great accuracy. It lands near HOURK, despite the fact that he was standing well back. The two brothers are dumb-founded and jerk away. What is this trick which enables NAOH to aim his spear from such a distance? With what seems to be a superstitious gesture AGHOO takes the necklet with the pierced fossil stone from his chest - the necklet once worn by FAUM, the leader of the tribe.

214 EXT BACK OF OVERHANG DAWN

214

MODOC the third brother, has climbed a rock and looks down at the ledge from the other side. The three ULAM are in front of him, their backs turned. MODOC throws a spear which brushes GAW's skull and nicks his ear. The counterattack is lightning swift.

The use of the spear-thrower has given them an enormous advantage and their spears whizz through the air. A missile despatched by NAOH sinks into MODOC's thigh and he falls off the rock where he was standing. His body makes a dull thud as it hits the ground. He manages, however, to get up and escapes, limping, to join his two brothers who are screaming vengeance.

NAOH speaks to GAW who picks up the fire cage and climbs down the steep face from the ledge. Reaching the ground, he dashes halfway to the pool and sets down the fire cage. Then he rejoins his companions on the ledge.

215 EXT. POOL DAWN

215

This strange operation intrigues the three slow witted brothers. They grunt and exchange looks -- hoping one of them will come up with an explanation. No such luck. They are as if

215 Continued

215

hypnotized by the soft glow coming from the fire cage. Could it be that NAOH has recognized their superiority, and is offering them the fire cage? AGHOO takes the initiative and tip-toes towards it, followed by his brothers. Seeing there is no sign of their rivals, they approach the fire cage confidently. AGHOO thumps his chest: he thinks he is already the winner.

AGHOO

ag?uk ulam meg!

ag?uk ulam meg!

ag?uk ulam meg!

216 EXT. ROCKY OVERHANG DAWN

216

Hidden behind rocks, the three ULAMS draw their bows. Below the three brothers still advance confidently. They feel protected because of the distance between themselves and the ledge.

The first three arrows WHISTLE through the air. AGHOO is hit twice, while a third pierces MODOC's throat. Seconds later, they are struck by three more arrows and lie dying without understanding the mysterious powers of the new weapon.

217 EXT. FIRE CAGE DAWN

217

Four arrows protrude from AGHOO's blood-streaked body. He crawls, arm extended, toward the precious fire, the safeguard for his tomorrows. The fire's holy gleam fades before him as he dies.

218 EXT. ROCKY GORGE ENDING IN CUL DE SAC DAY

218

A gorge formed by volcanic rocks. One side is bathed in warm sunlight, the other in cold, violet shadows. Two partly dismembered human skeletons lie on the ground among other sun-bleached bones.

On the shadowed side, thorn bushes topped with yellow flowers sprout between the rocks, leading down to a platform. Several caves, like huge, empty eye-sockets, are indented in the overhanging marble cliff.

219 EXT. PLATFORM DAY

219

Two frightened creatures cower at the edge of the platform. They are TSOR and GAMMLA, barely recognizable now, their sad faces filled with despair. They are emaciated and pitiful in their tattered fur skins.

220 INT. CAVE DAY

220

The rest of the tribe cowers in the dark, damp cave. The ULAMS are reduced to the level of a race condemned to extinction. Babies cry, adults cough, their eyes glazed with fever. ROUKA sucks his thumb, curled up on the ground in a foetal position.

At the back of the stinking cave, a trickle of water leaks down the wall and forms a muddy pool on the ground. An adolescent on all fours is lapping up water like an animal.

A corpse, barely covered with branches, lies nearby. We recognize FAUM, felled by a spear wound in his chest.

221 EXT. PLATFORM GORGE DAY

221

O.S.
Aoooooooooooooh!

A human shout reaches them from the opposite slope of the gorge. TSOR gets up suspiciously. Through squinting eyes he sees four silhouettes outlined against the blue sky! There is another shout.

Aoooooooooooooh!

GAMMLA gets up too, mumbling.

GAMMLA
Naoh!

TSOR walks to and fro, shouting as loud as his feeble strength allows, gesticulating hysterically.

TSOR
nao'rimargiom ! 'seto !
'ogosi'seto nao'rimargiom!

Haggard and bewildered, the ULAMS start to emerge from their cave.

And the news is passed on, shouted, chanted by the tribe which gathers together to watch its saviours.

ULAMS
nao'rimargiom!
atra ! ...
atra ! ...
atra ! ...

222 EXT. GORGE PATH ROCKS DAY

222

NAOH, the agile fair-haired warrior leads the way wearing the necklace which AGHOO had taken from FAUM. IKA and GAW, who bears the fire cage follow behind and last comes AMOUKAR, loaded with the rest of the deer.

In order to reach the platform, the foursome has to negotiate a difficult stretch. The stronger ULAMS run towards them to help them across.

ROUKA, roused from his daze, is the first to reach the new arrivals. He bows down in front of the fire cage. Already, with his mutilated fingers, he kneads the embers, re-discovering their exquisite bite. A group gathers round the three heroes, everyone wants to rub shoulders with them, to welcome them with a display of tactile togetherness. The word "atra" is taken up by everyone and reverberates round the walls of the gorge.

ROUKA, overjoyed, grabs the cage and runs towards the cave to show everyone the re-discovered fire.

As he crosses the difficult ridge section, a stone crumbles under his weight. The poor wretch stumbles, tries to regain his balance, flaps his arms about and ... finally has to let go of the fire cage.

The fire cage bounces against the rocks as it goes down, scattering the embers as it does so until it finally ends up at the bottom of the gorge in a little puff of smoke. A collective cry of terror is emitted by the tribe, as if from a single breast.

ULAMS

nak (a) ' ' atra madi

From above, all eyes stare at ROUKA in mortal loathing. The innocent trembles all over. A few seconds go by and then with a cry, he throws himself over the edge and goes to join the dead embers at the foot of the precipice. Amidst a chorus of howls, ROUKA's death rattle marks the passing of a prehistoric simpleton.

223/ EXT. PLATFORM DAY

223/

224/

224/

225 NAOH, IKA GAW and AMOUKAR climb onto the ledge. A great wail, a chorus of sad laments, break out amongst the tribe as they once again succumb to total despair. The heroes' return means very little without the longed-for fire. GAW and AMOUKAR are overwhelmed by the enormity of the disaster.

225

223/ Continued

224/

225 But now IKA - whom nobody has noticed - whispers into NAOH's ear. The great fair-haired warrior's face takes on a strange, rather worrying expression. He shouts out roughly to his kinsmen.

223/

224/

225

NAOH

veda nak (a) paur. nao kras.
remargiom ss ulam. ulam
kras ss nao !

Roused from the gloom of a vanquished tribe, the ULAMS stare at NAOH. He takes off the necklace made from the fossil which he took from AGHOO and brandishes it about with inspired rage.

NAOH

jek (a) mǽrd ag uk
ss brat kras u: rk
ss brat kras modok
jek (a) mǽrd '

He climbs onto a rock. Then, with the veins on his neck bulging with the effort, he makes a long, hoarse speech:

NAOH

'jeka d (z) a an pa : : u d (z) øn s d (z) øn s
d(z) ø ;..n 'jEk (a) jimi s tir meg. 'jEk (a)
moo rd Esa't Sai vir s prE-nj
atra -ivaka s-slaxtaka jeke
gnos jEk (a) nak (a) pavr nak (a) pavr
tir ll:rza pavr d-oo-.e s tir dont meg

Then taking out a wooden stick from under his furs and a flat piece of wood like the one which the IVAKAS use to make their miracle of fire, he announces, weighing each word carefully :

NAOH

sss ...'jek(a) gros atra
s-'nak 'atra. mor eto .
s nak(a) pavr

The crowd murmurs in astonishment. A little girl apparently alone, begins to cry. IKA takes the child in her arms. NAOH winds up his speech and jumps from his stone pulpit and, watched by everybody, crouches in front of the disk. Slowly, carefully he pins it under his foot. He is trembling with extreme emotion. Frightened of failing, and seeking confusedly a magical union he gets up and turns around as he has seen OTA OTAROK do. Then he sets to work: the stick twirls between his joined hands. Very soon he is sweating, with no result. He makes an extreme effort, pokes out his tongue; mops his brow with the back of his arm, speed up; slows down. No luck, nothing.

223/ Continued

224/ He begins again, choking with emotion, short of breath.
 225 Disbelief begins to overtake the tribe, who are quick to fall back into despair.

223/

224/

225

(off)

naoh ... naoh ...

NAOH jumps as IKA comes towards him. Without a word, he stands back, letting her take his place, for he realises that's what she means and that's the way it should be. NAOH's attempts seem grotesque compared to IKA's dexterity. The miracle soon happens: A thin trail of smoke rises from the small plaque on the ground. NAOH bends down and blows gently on the widening red dot.

A shiver runs through the rows of ULAMS. It seems like the reaction of one body, one mind.

NAOH grabs a dry branch, sets fire to it and carries it outstretched. Subdued, struck dumb with awe, the tribe throw themselves on the ground before him.

226 EXT. PLATFORM NIGHT

226

The meat sizzles over the fire, its fat dripping onto the coals. Warmed at last, the ULAM chew slowly, filling their empty bellies.

The sacred fire is reflected in their eyes. The past is forgotten now and the present seems radiant. Their simple minds can't even consider the future -- they are happy to be alive.

To a group of men gathered around them, GAW and AMOUKAR proudly explain how to use a bow and arrows.

The women cast furtive glances at IKA. This fragile female with short hair intrigues them. The pensive young woman still holds the little girl in her arms. The sleeping child breathes softly.

Sitting on a rock, his legs wide apart, NAOH noisily gulps the marrow from a cracked bone. Juice trickles down his chin. GAMMLA stands behind him, looking for lice in his blond hair. Whenever she finds one she pops it into her mouth.

227 EXT PLATFORM GORGE (LATER) NIGHT

227

The fire has lost some of its intensity. The ULAM lie scattered on the ground, asleep. A group surrounds TSOR who, holding the stick and the flat piece of wood, is taking a turn at creating the miracle of fire.

227 Continued

227

A wolf HOWLS in the distance and is soon answered by another. NAOH sits on a rock. His silhouette is outlined near the edge of the platform.

He stares at the silvery moon, high in the sky above the gorge.

Hearing a faint sound behind him, he turns. IKA comes and sits by his side. After a moment NAOH gestures to the moon.

NAOH

wuu:b

IKA smiles. Her pearly teeth glisten in the dim light. She raises her head and repeats gently:

IKA

wuu:b

Under the captivated eyes of his fellow tribesmen, TSOR continues to twirl the little stick between his joined hands. Soon a curl of smoke rises from the flat piece of wood. LAKAR leans forward, blows gently on the red spot which grows bigger. He ignites a tuft of dry grass; then some twigs. A gust of wind makes the flame crackle and the scent of the fire of all our futures drifts through the warm night air.

NAOH flares his nostrils and leans on IKA. He buries his face in her dark hair, grunting tenderly. The girl puts her arms around his waist. They lie down together on the ground, coupling face to face, their bodies joined to form a single body in the soft moonlight.

228 EXT. GORGE SKY NIGHT

228

The immense vault of heaven is riddled with stars. The moon seems to observe the earth philosophically.

In the distance, at the very centre of the dark mass of marble cliffs, the fire can be SEEN throbbing, a powerful, yet fragile force.

WOLVES HOWL in the immense landscape.