

FADE IN:

EXT. GREAT PYRAMID - EGYPT - DAWN

Super: "Egypt, Three Thousand Five Hundred Years Ago"

The sounds of MARCHING FEET echo in the distance as the sun crests over the horizon, glistening off the white limestone sides of the newly completed Great Pyramid.

Dozens of pairs of sandaled, muscular male feet march in unison across the stoned paved street.

INT. TEMPLE OF THOTH- EGYPT- DAWN

The morning sun casts a warm glow on the cool marble of the vast, rich temple. Walls are adorned with symbols and paintings of the moon, baboons, and a large stone statue of the ibis-headed Egyptian God, Thoth.

KAHOTEP (30s) the tall, muscular, High Priest of the temple, playfully chases SAKMET (20s) a sensuous, dark-haired, green-eyed beauty, through the spacious temple hallway.

TEMPLE PRIESTS and SLAVES look away discreetly as the giggling couple race past.

Kahotep makes a play for Sakmet, his hands catching the edge of the flowing fabric of her sheer gown. He pulls her close and the two disappear behind a marble column.

EXT. GREAT PYRAMID - EGYPT - DAWN

Led by the staff-wielding CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD, a well-disciplined squad of EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS march briskly past the base of the pyramid.

Stray camels BLEAT as street vendors and pedestrians scurry to get out of their way.

INT. BED CHAMBER - TEMPLE OF THOTH - EGYPT- DAY

Kahotep and Sakmet kiss passionately as they enter the ornate bed chamber.

Running his hands through Sakmet's well coiffed hair, Kahotep removes her amber encased butterfly hair comb, causing her dark trusses to fall sensually to her shoulders.

She bites her bottom lip as Kahotep clasps her comb in his cupped hands.

His amulet, the sacred red scarab Amulet of Thoth, glows eerily on his chest as he gently blows on the amber encased butterfly comb. He speaks softly in Egyptian with English subtitles.

KAHOTEP

<Melt.>

The amber magically melts in his hands, revealing the motionless butterfly inside.

KAHOTEP

<Live.>

Another breath and the long-dead butterfly flutters to life, encircling the amused Sakmet before disappearing deep into the chamber.

SAKMET

<Your parlor tricks may woo your  
hand maidens, but my needs are more  
demanding.>

As the pair hastily disrobe, Sakmet reveals an intricate drawing of twin green-eyed black cats tattooed on her backside.

She removes a jeweled necklace from her bare breasts and looks down at Kahotep's amulet. He hesitates, then lets the amulet drop delicately to the floor.

EXT. STREETS OF CAIRO - EGYPT- DAY

The Egyptian Soldiers continue their brisk march, upturning vendor carts, spilling goods and trampling any who get in their way. The STOMPING sound of their march melds with...

INT. BED CHAMBER - TEMPLE OF THOTH - DAY

...the THRUSTING sounds of Kahotep and Sakmet in the heated throes of passion. Their naked, sweaty bodies are barely covered by the billowing curtains that circle the bed.

Sakmet's tattooed cats move with a sensuous, supernatural life of their own, appearing to intertwine each other.

EXT. TEMPLE OF THOTH - DAY

The Soldiers reach the Temple and storm the gates. Several Temple Priests try to stop them and are quickly beaten or killed.

A few frightened red-arsed baboons scurry and SHRIEK. Sacred ibis birds flutter and flee.

Another Temple Priest runs for a large gong, but SPLAT! a spear impales him in mid-stride.

INT. BED CHAMBER - TEMPLE OF THOTH - DAY

Egyptian Soldiers race inside, startling Kahotep, his glistening naked body still entwined with Sakmet. He rushes to reach his amulet, but several Soldiers block his way, slamming him to the ground with their staffs and spears.

Despite his fury, the guards quickly chain and shackle him, then roughly gag him with a leather muzzle.

As Sakmet gathers her clothing, the Captain of the Guard discreetly hands her some golden coins.

The action does not escape Kahotep, who glares at her with obvious betrayal. Sakmet turns her head in shame.

Kahotep struggles with renewed intensity. His rage makes his pupils BLAZE a fiery red. Wisps of red smoke swirl about his amulet; the center scarab glows. Faint at first, then brighter until--

--A soldier swings his staff, WHACKING Kahotep on the back of the head, knocking him unconscious.

The glow of the amulet instantly fades.

The Captain of the Guard retrieves the Amulet with a pair of tongs and seals it in a small wooden box.

INT. ROYAL THRONE ROOM - DAY

The massive, sculpted golden doors to the royal throne room open to reveal the PHARAOH seated atop his throne.

TWO POWERFUL GUARDS drag Kahotep, now gagged, bound, bruised and bloodied, before the Pharaoh and his COURT.

The Pharaoh nods and the court MAGISTRATE reads from a scroll, his voice booming in ancient Egyptian. <English> appears in subtitles.

MAGISTRATE  
 <Kahotep, High Priest of the Temple  
 of Thoth, you have been found  
 guilty of crimes against his  
 holiness, the Pharaoh.>

EXT. EXECUTION CHAMBER - MONTAGE - DAY

The EXECUTIONER polishes his blade as the guards drag Kahotep to the execution block.

MAGISTRATE (O.S.)  
 <For reaching beyond your station  
 and pursuing forbidden knowledge of  
 death and resurrection, we take  
 your hands.>

The Guards secure Kahotep's hand as the Executioner's blade slams down with a SPLAT! Blood splatters Kahotep's agonized face.

MAGISTRATE (O.S.)  
 <For speaking against the Laws of  
 Nature, and summoning dark forces  
 to do your bidding, we take your  
 tongue.>

The Guards remove the muzzle and force Kahotep's mouth open while the Executioner jerks out his tongue with tongs.

MAGISTRATE (O.S.)  
 <These we shall feed to the  
 jackals.>

As Kahotep slumps to the ground, the Executioner tosses the body parts to the groveling JACKALS chained just out of reach.

The Guards drag Kahotep to a slab surrounded by five similar, yet distinctly different Canopic Jars.

MAGISTRATE (O.S.)  
 <Then, as you yet live, you shall  
 be disemboweled. Your eyes and  
 organs to be preserved so your ka,  
 your spirit, shall blindly walk the  
 realm of the after world for all  
 eternity.>

Kahoptep struggles.

MAGISTRATE (O.S.)

<Let this serve as a warning to any  
who would attempt to meddle in the  
affairs of Gods and a curse on all  
who try.>

The Guards hold Kahotep while the sadistic Executioner uses a crude blade to rip out Kahotep's stomach. Kahotep still clings to life.

The Executioner raises the bleeding organ high for all to see and PLOPS it into the first of the canopic jars while an EMBALMER pours a honey-like amber liquid over it.

The Executioner moves back to remove another organ. Kahotep's eyes flutter, his face contorted in pain.

FADE TO:

INT. RWANDAN MEDICAL CLINIC - TRIAGE WARD - DAY

Super: "Rwanda, Africa, Present Day"

Rows of rusty metal cots line the ramshackle triage ward filled with wounded and MOANING African soldiers.

Stray chickens CLUCK and wander about unattended.

DR. VICTORIA BANNING (late 20s), a naturally beautiful, brilliant, American surgeon with a sarcastic wit and a secret past, uses a small power saw to remove a leg oozing with gangrene from an unconscious PATIENT.

Several NURSES assist, all turning their heads to avoid getting splattered with blood.

Victoria pulls the rotting limb free and a nurse moves in with gauze.

VICTORIA

Must men always wait till the last  
minute to see a doctor?

NURSE

But you caught it before it was  
fatal?

VICTORIA

We'll know in a few days. Start him  
on an IV drip of twenty CC's of  
cephalosporin.

NURSE

The new administrator said we should only be using half doses.

VICTORIA

This is an amputation, we're not removing a damn hang nail.

NURSE

I'm - I'm sorry, Doctor Banning.

VICTORIA

Complete the dosage. And monitor his vitals. We'll resume the cauterization once he's stable.

Victoria covers the amputated, puss oozing leg with a large towel and then grabs a clip board off the next patient's bed.

An INTERN approaches.

INTERN

Excuse me. There's an Egyptian woman out front who's demanding to see "the American doctor".

VICTORIA

Have her make an appointment like everyone else.

INTERN

She's not a patient. She has "personal business" to discuss that she says can not wait.

MADAME AMUNET (50s), an elegant Egyptian woman with expensive tastes and a distinct air of cold aloofness, boldly marches into the triage ward. She wears a small, stylized necklace of Kahotep's Amulet of Thoth.

CHIGARU (40s), her imposing mute Egyptian bodyguard follows closely behind her; his massive muscles obvious under his custom tailored sports coat. He too, wears a variation of the distinct amulet.

AMUNET

Dr. Victoria Banning?

VICTORIA

We're a little backed up here, ma'am. Not the best time for a social call.

AMUNET

This isn't exactly social.

VICTORIA

And you aren't exactly dressed like one of our poor and disenfranchised. If you're here selling something we're--

AMUNET

Ten minutes of your time. That's all I need Dr. Banning. Or should I call you Dr. Bohmer?

Victoria has a flash of alarm, but quickly recovers.

VICTORIA

Five minutes. Make it count.

She walks hastily out. Her two visitors follow.

INT. RWANDAN MEDICAL CLINIC - MORGUE - DAY

Buzzing flies circle the small morgue crammed with dead bodies in various states of dress and dissection.

SVEN, the pimple-faced young coroner's assistant, eats a fly covered sandwich while he dissects a particularly gruesome body.

Victoria enters, trailed by the two Egyptians.

VICTORIA

Sven, could you leave us alone for a few moments, please?

SVEN

Jah, Dr. Banning. Is everything alright?

VICTORIA

I'm fine, just need a little privacy.

Sven looks Chigaru up and down. He inflates his chest a little as he whispers to Victoria.

SVEN

I'll be right down the hall if you need anything.

Victoria smiles. Sven exits reluctantly.

VICTORIA

We can talk freely. I don't think the dead will be sharing any secrets.

AMUNET

Hmmmm.

Madame Amunet steps in front of a multilingual "No Smoking" sign, removes a long, stylish filtered cigarette from her purse and allows Chigaru to light it.

AMUNET

You needn't worry we'll report you to the authorities, Dr. Banning. If you want to practice medicine with a revoked license and an assumed name, that is your business.

Amunet moves over to a sheet-covered corpse and takes a peek.

VICTORIA

Then what the hell are you doing here?

Victoria forces the sheet back down.

AMUNET

Our intel said you were very direct. We of the East prefer a more delicate approach. I am Madame Amunet and this is my associate, Chigaru.

VICTORIA

Never heard of you.

AMUNET

I would be surprised if you had. Our consortium prefers to maintain some measure of anonymity.

VICTORIA

This "consortium" have a name?

AMUNET

We have many names in many lands, but we are in essence Disciples of Thoth.



VICTORIA

Sounds like a high school rock band, but somehow I can't picture you and

(nodding to Chigaru)

Mr. Muscles here jammin' out at the senior prom.

AMUNET

We are librarians, file clerks, curators of the past. Secrets are power.

VICTORIA

Is that another veiled threat?

AMUNET

You are a difficult woman to track, Doctor. May I call you Victoria?

VICTORIA

Sure. Tick, tock, tick, tock.

Amunet forces a smile.

AMUNET

Ever the brash American. Very well. I'll dispense with the pleasantries. I am here to retain your services.

VICTORIA

News flash, I already have a job.

AMUNET

A second rate clinic in a third world country. Hardly the career path I would expect from such a gifted medical student.

VICTORIA

It pays the bills, and I'm doing some good.

AMUNET

But think of the good you could do if you had an opportunity to complete your experiments? Two years ago you were risking everything to prove your theories; to advance the frontiers of medical science--

VICTORIA

And look where it got me? I just want to stay off the radar.

AMUNET

You cannot escape your destiny, Victoria. The past and present are inseparable.

VICTORIA

Listen, I appreciate the new age platitudes, but if you're not here to rat me out, I really need to get back to my patients.

AMUNET

Considering how academia vilified you, I can appreciate your reluctance. But I assure you, there are no moral judgments made in our organization.

VICTORIA

I displayed poor judgment and I paid the price.

AMUNET

You can feign contrition for Your monkey lived.

VICTORIA

No, not all of them.

AMUNET

We have a human subject, Victoria.

Obviously intrigued, Victoria masks it quickly.

Madame Amunet nods to Chigaru, who removes a thick manila envelope from his blazer and hands it to Amunet.

AMUNET

If I cannot appeal to your scientific curiosity, perhaps you may be tempted by baser needs. This envelope contains a substantial sum. U.S. Dollars, of course.

VICTORIA

For what? I haven't agreed to anything.