

FADE IN:

TEASER

EXT. PAMPRO REFUGEE CAMP - ZINAMBA - DAY

A long queue of women clutch their babies against their bosoms in scattered showers.

It's one big chaos as the queue dangles forwards and backwards, threatening a stampede. A young mother AYEEZA SUTA 27, skin as black as charcoal, lithe and tall with kinky afro hair is caught in the melee, suffocating between two other mothers.

Moving over the queue, a group of officials wearing UNHCR vests have set up barricades, desperately trying to contain the crowd with the help of heavily armed soldiers.

A few meters away a supervisor wearing a face mask stands on the edge of a mass grave overlooking hundred of bodies stacked together like cans of sardines as bare chested young boys dig and cover the graves.

The supervisor turns and looks towards the direction of the barricade shaking his head to the commander who wields a loud speaker.

The commander climbs the metal barricade, blaring out in a deep voice.

COMMANDER (IN GUA LANGUAGE)

No more. Move back to your tents.
We start again tomorrow.

The crowd roars and surges forward.

COMMANDER (IN GUA)

I say move back to your tents. The
grave is full. We start again
tomorrow.

The crowd continues to surge forward, inching closer to the barricade as the UNCHR officials and soldiers try to hold them off.

COMMANDER (IN GUA)

Go back to your tents.

An angry mother in front of the queue holds up her unmoving baby and throws it at a European UNHCR official, hitting her in the face. She screams, falling to the ground.

ANGRY MOTHER (IN GUA)

He's all yours.

She drops out of the queue and pushes her way back through the line. The other mothers follow suit, dropping their dead babies on the floor and walking off.

The queue gradually begins to dwindle, leaving a pile of dead babies behind. When it's all over, Ayeeza is the only one left behind clutching her baby; overwhelmed by the sea of dead babies around her. The showers intensify as the strong winds flap the seams of her cover cloth.

She wraps her hands around her baby and turns, guiding her footsteps through the bodies as she heads off towards the makeshift tents swaying in the wind.

ACT I

INT. TENT - PAMPRO REFUGEE CAMP - NIGHT

A group of about twenty women are huddled around a fire in a three by four meter space. They're drinking hot corn dough porridge from calabashes to keep their bodies warm.

Ayeeza is perched quietly in the corner, far away from the fire. Her baby lies still beside her, wrapped up in a cloth. She trembles in the cold.

She wraps her hands around her legs pulling her knees in to fend it off.

An elderly woman in her late sixties shoots a glance at her.

ELDERLY WOMAN (IN GUA)

It's dead. Use the cloth.

Ayeeza turns away peering into the darkness in-between the wooden poles supporting the roof of the tent.

EXT. PAMPRO REFUGEE CAMP - ZINAMBA - DAY

Ayeeza is walking through the maze of tents clutching the lifeless body of her baby. She sneezes and coughs along the way.

She walks towards a BLUE TENT where a group of malnourished young boys are shooting darts with broom sticks and rubber bands. As she approaches, the boys break up and take off.

She turns. In the distance elderly pipe smoking men are gathered around a tall rusty big headed boy NONO (16). He is translating the news from a small transistor radio in his hand.

Ayeeza approaches making eye contact. He wraps up quickly, handing over the radio to a grey haired old man. He steps out of the circle to meet her.

He sees the dead baby in her arms.

NONO (IN GUA)

(coughs)

Still?

She coughs and nods.

NONO (IN GUA)

Wait here.

He scurries off and disappears behind the maze of tents leaving Ayeeza alone as she stands impatiently casting furtive glances.

The grey haired old man pauses on his pipe, blurting out in a hoarse voice.

GREY HAired OLD MAN (IN GUA)
Move back. We've had enough of this
stench around here.

Ayeeza stands her ground, cutting her eyes at him. The men
move away.

NONO (O.S)
Ayeeza!

She turns. Nono waves her over. She hurries to him.

EXT. PAMPRO REFUGEE CAMP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nono and Ayeeza appear at the back of the camp following a
shady-looking man with a stocky body frame. A faded
baseball cap partially hides his face.

They stop by a wire mesh fencing which separates the camp
from a cluster of mud buildings with the inscription "UNHCR
TOILET" boldly painted in Calico.

The man stretches out his hands towards Ayeeza for her
baby. She pulls away as the incredulity of the gesture
plays on her face.

SHADY MAN (IN GUA)
What differnce does it make? It's
dead.

She back peddles with a frown.

SHADY MAN (IN GUA)
Fine. Keep it.

As he attempts to leave, Nono blocks his path.

NONO (IN GUA)
Let me see you.

He pulls him to the side whispering. The man pauses for a
second staring Ayeeza down.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAMP- PAMPRO - DAY

Ayeeza is standing over a fresh grave on a hilly bushy plain looking down as the body of her baby is covered with sand. She dips her hand under her rugged blouse and pulls out her left breast, squirting milk into the grave.

She tucks it back in and turns. At the foot of the hill, Nono waits.

EXT. PAMPRO REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

A boy (10) with skeletal features is reflecting sunlight from a broken piece of glass in his hand into the eyes of a lizard perched motionless above a tent.

Another boy (12) creeps up slowly behind the lizard and clubs it to the ground. The lizard still manages to scuttle off. They chase it through the camp, running pass Ayeeza who sits quietly observing the new batch of refugees file in.

Nono emerges in the corner walking up to her with a tiny loaf of bread. He finds a seat on the YELLOW JERRYCAN beside her holding it out.

She turns away.

NONO (IN GUA)
Hungry people don't lose appetite.

Ayeeza slouches, dropping her chin into her palms.

NONO (IN GUA)
I'm leaving tomorrow. I'm going to
Menshashim. To join the Black Ants.

She sits up and makes eye contact.

NONO (IN GUA)
There's nothing here. They need me
back home. It's better than sitting
here, waiting for what?

He shoves the bread in her face.

NONO (IN GUA)
You can have it. I made
arrangements for you when I'm gone.

Short pause.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
I'm coming.

NONO (IN GUA)
I'm going to fight.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
I can fight.

Nono scoffs.

NONO (IN GUA)
Women don't fight, you raise
families.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
Do you see families here? I know
how to fight.

NONO (IN GUA)
(Chuckles)
Ayeenza stop talking crazy. Have you
seen any woman on the battle field?
Fight where? The black Ants or the
army?

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
I'll decide when I get there.

NONO (IN GUA)
(Chuckling)
You Looking for someone? Who?

A beat.

NONO (IN GUA)

Is it family? You know I'll help you. I'll look for them and make sure they get back to you safely.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

When are we leaving?

NONO (IN GUA)

I cannot protect you.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

I don't need a boy to protect me.

NONO (IN GUA)

You've seen the women from Menshashim. You've heard their stories. No woman who comes from Menshashim wants to go back.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

Tomorrow?

Nono exhales.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

Keep the bread for the journey.

EXT. ROAD TO MENSHASHIM - DAY

A recipe of hilly grasslands, tall forests and green mountains is served hot as Ayeeza and Nono follow never ending dust roads, battling the scorching sun. Shielded by the dirty brown scarves covering their heads and faces, they surge on.

Nono draws out a small jerrycan from a HESSIAN BAG tied to a stick over his shoulder. He opens the lid and holds it up to Ayeeza. She parries it away.

He takes a sip and slides it back into the bag.

EXT. MONTICULE - DAY

Nono and Ayeeza trek up a steep footpath flanked by green vegetation which rises between two monticules, disappearing into a valley.

From a distance, their bodies ripple in the heat mirage.

THEY ARRIVE AT THE APEX OF THE ROAD barely catching their breaths. Ayeeza bends over holding her thighs panting while Nono unwraps his scarf to wipe his face.

The clouds move over the sun cutting down its harsh rays to make way for gentle shadows over the hilly terrain.

Ayeeza, raises her head to look down the hill.

ROTTEN BODIES of men, women and children have created grisly patterns of death along the entire downward slope.

They stand frozen in disbelief as the scale of the carnage plays on their faces.

EXT. OLD ROAD ESTATE - SOUTH ZINAMBA - DAY

A three-car motorcade speeds down a suburban road bedecked with flashy mansions and nicely moulded lawns. They cut sharply into the next turn, hitting a paved road towards an isolated villa sitting majestically on a hill.

EXT. VILLA - DAY

The motorcade drives through heavily guarded iron gates, pulling up in front of the villa where a different group of armed soldiers look on as children run around in the sun.

The driver of the MERCEDES BENZ car in the middle of the motorcade steps out and opens the back door.

A shiny pair of BLACK ITALIAN shoes fold out. The bulky frame of a bespectacled FRANK SAPENI (54) rises into the warmth of the sun wearing a crisp BLACK SUIT and KENTE BOWTIE to match.

He adjusts his glasses onto the bridge of his nose with his pot belly leading the way. He drags himself towards the villa with the confidence of a minister.

The barrel of a gun pops up behind him, sticking into his side ribs. Sapeni stops in his tracks and scoffs.

DEEP BARITONE VOICE (O.S)
Who sent you?

With back turned.

SAPENI
(irritating tone)
Your father.

AIDA
He's dead.

SAPENI
Then your mother.

He turns around with a wry smile, pushing the barrel away. Facing him is the grinning overweight AIDA SISI (55), a 6ft 2 dark mammoth. Teeth whitely standing out from the darkness of his face, distorted by his broad cheek-to-cheek grin. He is wearing a plain BROWN SHIRT with a coffee BROWN khaki pair of shorts to match.

His almond shaped head is fully scarfed. He drops the gun.

SAPENI
I see why Effion couldn't stand
you.

Aida lets out a high pitched laughter, pausing in between laughs as if he's choking. This is the typical Aida laugh.

AIDA
The Toas. They don't have any sense
of humour. They're always serious
about nothing.

SAPENI
Maybe that's why they are winning
the war and you are here.

AIDA

They are winning because the Miyongo's take them serious. You play with me. I'm returning the favour.

Sapeni's eyes pick out his scarf.

AIDA

One of my girls wanted to test her hair styling skills.

He unties the scarf, revealing an ugly attempt at tribal braids, sticking out on his head like tiny spikes. Sapeni cringes at the grotesque sight.

The typical Aida laugh goes off.

INT. VILLA - DAY

Sapeni and Aida are strutting along the wide corridors of what seems like a luxurious refugee camp with people everywhere. They are greeted and acknowledged as they walk on.

SAPENI

Every time I come here, I see new faces.

AIDA

Our future. The reason why we fight.

SAPENI

Where is Kena and the rest?

AIDA

Around, somewhere. It's a big mansion. Thanks to the generosity of our Zinamba allies. Eh?

He taps Sapeni on the shoulder.

SAPENI

You know what they say, all monkeys
pick fruits together.

He grins.

AIDA

How's big head. I hear the
opposition is giving him sleepless
nights.

SAPENI

These are rough times.

AIDA

I tell you.

A goatee bearded man RUF AH (50) with a thick scar across
his face appears from behind one of the columns leading
outwards to the pool area. He approaches in his plain WHITE
shirt and DARK pants shaking Sapeni's hand with a stiff
face.

RUF AH

Good to see you.

SAPENI

You look much better than the last
time we met.

AIDA

He's been eating like a horse. By
the time we get back to Menshashim,
he will use his stomach to support
his rifle.

Pointing his rifle at Rufah's stomach he lets out another
typical Aida laugh.

EXT. PATIO - VILLA - DAY

Aida and Sapeni are standing by the polished railings on
the top storey, watching children frolick in the heavily
guarded swimming pool below. Aida is smoking a pipe and
puffing the wisps over Sapeni's face.

AIDA

Three hundred soldiers?

SAPENI

Like I said, times are rough.

AIDA

Three hundred!

SAPENI

Inflation is at an all time high.
We can't do anything about it
because of world bank policies.
We've had to lay over four hundred
workers in the government
ministries. I can go on and on. The
last thing the people want to hear
is Zinamba money being spent on
your war.

AIDA

My war?

SAPENI

You know what I mean.

Aida grins.

AIDA

We taught those Toa herdsmen how to
fight. They didn't even know how to
use guns. Do you know how many
times they misfired and shot my
men? Now they have guns, machine
guns. Missiles, tanks, soldiers. In
their thousands. They've taken over
my homeland, killed off our sons
and daughters. Turned my people
into refugees in your country. My
father's palace is a shit house. A
shit house!!

Beat.

AIDA

The tenants are now the landlords?
And what do we have? Three hundred
soldiers. Half of them veterans,
from our trusted and dependable
ally.

He stares Sapeni down.

SAPENI

I have another meeting around two.

AIDA

My grandfather always use to say.
The Zinambas are the kind of
neighbours who'll give you a bucket
of water when your roof is on fire.
But as soon as your house burns to
the ground, they'll show up with
trucks of water.

He grins.

SAPENI

I wish you all the best.

Staring into Sapeni's eyes.

AIDA

Tell big head I'm grateful for the
support. I'm so grateful I have to
do this.

He unleashes a loud fart, bursting into a typical Aida
laugh. Sapeni turns and walks off in disgust.

EXT. KISI- BORDER OF MIYONGO AND GURA - DAY

A military convoy of sophisticated IAV Strykers and Humvees
cut through a desertland bespeckled with rugged
ventrifacts, leaving behind huge plumes of dust.

Embossed on the trucks are the lettering 'KB'.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

MICHAEL FRASER (45), a suited broad chested man with hard freckled face and short golden tinged hair is peering through the tinted bullet proof window glass.

Seated on the opposite side and poring through some files is the much older HARRISON (55) wearing a CHECKED shirt with sleeves folded to his elbows, a khaki pair of trousers and dark shades hanging from the collar of his shirt.

Both men have noticeable glossy lips, like exaggerated lipstick.

Michael puts his head against the window in silence, smudging the glass with his lip gloss. He rubs the gloss off his lips with his left palm, fading the smudge on the window under his thumb.

HARRISON
(Keeping eyes on files)
Enjoying the view?

MICHAEL
There's nothing to view. Just
thinking of what to get Annie.

Harrison turns, making eye contact.

MICHAEL
She has this stubborn habit of
asking me to bring back a bit of
my foot tracks.

Harrison creases his brow.

MICHAEL
(Mimicking)
Something that captures the spirit
and soul of the people.

Harrison chuckles.

MICHAEL

She has a whole collection in our garage. Hoping to open her own museum after college.

Turns to look outside the window.

MICHAEL

Can't see anything here worth taking back.

HARRISON

The Toas are very simple. Nomads, not very sophisticated like the Goas. Their whole culture is based on survival. You might find something on the streets or local market. Perhaps beads, local instruments. But if you really want something that captures their soul, it will be their gods. They sculpt the most amazing figurines in honour of them. I doubt they'll give you that.

MICHAEL

Perhaps you can help me.

HARRISON

I use my influence to keep profits high. Just get her something.

MICHAEL

A museum, not a pawn shop.

Beat.

HARRISON

I would see what I can do. With the Toas every favour comes with a demand. Their own way of crediting the giver and debiting the receiver.

Beat.

MICHAEL

Why them?

HARRISON

Business is good. And simple. They don't ask for too much. Unlike the Goas. Their leader, Sisi was a tough one. Educated, intelligent, experienced.

MICHAEL

Bad for business. No wonder he didn't last.

HARRISON

We had nothing to do with that.

Michael scoffs.

HARRISON

The war between the Toas and the Goas doesn't lend itself to taking sides. Even if you do, you cannot defend it. Right and wrong, good and evil, guilty and innocent, powerful and powerless. These concepts that help us take sides have become so intertwined in this, the best you can do for outsiders like me and you is to mind our business.

EXT. TEZA - GURA - DAY

From a bird's eye view the military convoy drives towards an endless oil pipeline, snaking through the arid landscape. They slow down to a stop.

ON THE GROUND a group of 20 armed men in desert camouflage uniforms jump out of the HUMVEES with M16 rifles, forming a defense perimeter around the convoy.

Michael and Harrison step out of the middle Humvee, casually strutting towards a section of the pipeline.

HARRISON

Thousand eight hundred kilometers
of Kaza.

Michael looks him in the eyes.

HARRISON

It's what the Toas call it. The
earth god. The one whose blood
flows through these pipes.

They stop inches away from the line. Michael's eyes follow
the winding trail of the pipeline as it disappears over the
horizon.

HARRISON

When we first came here twenty
years ago, the Miyongos were in
charge. There was no Gura. The Toas
and Goas were united in their hate
of the Miyongos. The oil was on
their land but they weren't seeing
the benefits. That was our first
war. Ten freaking years, we endured
and renegotiated everything after
they broke away and became
independent. Costs shot up.

MICHAEL

(eyes fixed on the pipe)
I guess he doesn't care much about
his people.

HARRISON

Oh that. From what I gather, gods
like Kaza provide, what you choose
to do with it is up to you. They
don't interfere in the affairs of
men. Well, the contracts of men to
be specific.

Michael kneels over, putting his ear close to the pipeline
but not touching it. He hears the GURGLE sound of oil
rushing through.

HARRISON

Four hundred thousand barrels of oil a day. And you better keep it that way.

Michael stands up on his feet looking down on the pipeline.

MICHAEL

Locals attach mystery to a resource, turning it into a god. We put a price on it and turn it into money.

Harrison inches closer, staring into his eyes.

HARRISON

Not a bad side to be on.

Michael chucked and his lips crack, leaking blood. He runs his finger over his it, watching the smeared blood.

MICHAEL

Damn. This is worse than Aghanistan.

HARRISON

People believe that's why the Toas don't have a sense of humor. Always grumpy.

They start back towards their Humvee.

MICHAEL

You guys should be paying me more for this.

EXT. TEZA - GURA - DAY

Teza, the capital of Gura is like a city playing hide and seek with modernisation. Anywhere you see a glimmer of development - be it a storied apartment, a plush hotel or Western styled restaurant - it is overshadowed by insalubrious buildings, pot holed and dirt streets, spilling drainages and choked market squares.

Beautiful in its disorder, all under the armed supervision of the Toa military, noticeable in their camouflaged uniforms and RED Berets.

Michael is staring out at the chaos through his wound down window as the convoy rolls through the main streets. Children rush to line up the streets, flashing their smiles and waving.

Michael reclines into his seat.

HARRISON

They love you already.

He scoffs.

The convoy branches off onto a narrow heavily guarded dirt path with several blockades on the stretch. Cutting through a vast Sorghum field towards an elegant WHITE WASHED building.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - TEZA - GURA- DAY

Vultures are hovering over the palace as Toa soldiers and their American counterparts guard the entrance into the palace. Not even a fly can get through.

INT. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE- PALACE - DAY

Figurines, totems and skulls of donkeys line up the walls of the spacious but simple office. Decorated in dark veneer textured furniture and a wide desk overlooking a GREY curtained window.

Just above the window is a BLACK AND WHITE picture of an elderly statesman in his eighties, his wrinkled face staring right back at us.

Harrison and Michael are seated side by side with their eyes fixated on the empty seat on the opposite side of the desk, the president's chair. Over the hushed silence of the room, the curtains FLAP.

Michael's eyes drifts onto the figurines, observing their curves and contours.

One in particular pique's his curiosity; a mouthless nude feminine figurine with big piercing eyes and a wide nose.

Covered in cowries around the neck and waist with deep stripes carved on its massive breasts.

Harrison takes note. He leans over.

HARRISON

(clears his throat)

He's going to ask you why you're here although he already knows. It's ...

MICHAEL

(Cuts in)

A culture thing.

HARRISON

Don't make gestures with your left hand when you talk. It's a sign of disrespect. I'm guessing because most of us wipe our ass with it.

MICHAEL

Great. And the right?

HARRISON

It doesn't matter. Although I would advice not to at all if you can help it.

The door creaks open. They suddenly rise to their feet, turning back to reveal the short and sturdy EFFION MANASSEH (58). He strolls in casually wearing a Chairman Mao-like suit with a BLACK FEDORA to match.

His dull glazed eyes settle on Michael, who seems a little cowed by Effion's intimidating demeanour compounded by his heavily tribal marked face and thick whitish lips, covered in harmattan induced bruises.

Effion holds out his hand, greeting Harrison.

HARRISON

Nice to see you Mr. President.

Effion nods slightly and moves on to Michael. Michael shakes him with the right hand, smiling broadly to hide his anxiety.

MICHAEL

It's a pleasure to meet you Mr.
President.

Effion holds on to his hand, peering into his eyes.

EFFION

First time?

MICHAEL

Yes Mr. President. Loving it
already.

EFFION

Meaning what?

MICHAEL

(Gesturing with left hand)
The scenery, the people, it's ...

Effion's eyes follows his hand movement. Michael catches
himself gesturing and drops his hand.

EFFION

You know Toa people?

MICHAEL

Not yet Mr. President.

EFFION

You say you love Toa people. How
you love us? We no know you.

MICHAEL

I mean they look friendly and
welcoming.

EFFION

How? I look like your friend?

Effion eyeballs him. Michael flashes a nervous grin.

Effion finally lets go of his hand and walks around the
desk to his chair leaving him hanging. Michael makes eye
contact with Harrison, *what-the-hell-just-happened*.

Effion sits, gesturing to their chairs. They sit.

EFFION

Gura is peace. The Toas only fight,
if you fight we. Who sent you here?

HARRISON

We come in peace. To stand with the
Toas, our ally and partners in
these turbulent times. We're
optimistic about the future of
Gura. That's why we've chosen to
invest here despite the challenges.
Together we've worked hard and made
huge sacrifices to get to this
point.

He turns, looking at Michael.

HARRISON

That's why Mr. Michael Fraser is
here. To give us that safety and
certainty we need to continue this
partnership.

Effion shifts his eyes onto Michael.

HARRISON

His King's Brigade company is one
of the finest in the business. They
have the experience, the expertise
and technology to ensure that our
investments are fully secured.

The room falls into silence. Effion still has his eagle
eyes on Michael. Poor Michael is not really sure what to
do. Harrison brushes him with his leg.

MICHAEL

(Clearing his throat)

Thank you Mr. President for your
faith in us and

EFFION

(Cuts in)

Our people say, you go to market
you buy what you want. You don't
listen noise of the market.
Understand?

(pause)

Michael is lost, not really sure what to say.

EFFION

Excuse us.

Michael exchanges looks with Harrison. Harrison nods slightly. He stands up and walks nervously to the door, grabbing the handle. He makes a hash of it before finally yanking the door open.

Effion and Harrison look on as he steps outside and closes the door behind him.

EFFION

You sure he is best?

HARRISON

Absolutely. This is all very new to him. He'll adjust with time.

Effion sucks his teeth.

EFFION

How far, my proposal?

HARRISON

We're still looking at it. All the parties must agree. These things take time especially looking at the money involved.

EFFION

You sure it's money?

HARRISON

Of course. Otherwise we won't be here in the first place.

EFFION

The snakes, no coming back to Gura. No eggs here to eat, no bushes to hide. No trees to climb. Their Zinamba masters can keep them for pets.

He leans into his chair.

EFFION

The Chinese want come to Gura.
Think about it.

Harrison's confidence is pierced, he looks concerned.

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

Michael is seated anxiously at the back, fidgeting with his hands. He looks out the window and sees Harrison walking towards him with a BLACK plastic bag in hand.

Harrison goes around the vehicle and opens the opposite door. He sits in and slams the door. The convoy begins to move.

Making eye contact.

HARRISON

You okay?

MICHAEL

Fantastic.

HARRISON

(Smiling)

You did fine. He likes you.

Michael forces a wry smile. Harrison sets the plastic bag in the space between them. Michael's querying eyes settle on it.

HARRISON

It's for you.

Michael grabs the bag, pulling the sides down to uncover the mouthless figurine. His faces lights up with surprise.

HARRISON

Bufo, the god of secrets.

MICHAEL

Just like that huh?

HARRISON
You forget easily.

Michael thinks for a moment.

MICHAEL
What's the demand?

HARRISON
He didn't say.

EXT. ZAPKA VILLAGE - COLEA - DUSK

The sun dips behind the clouds shining its dying rays on a deserted village; painting ghostly shadows over the Tukuls and withered trees.

Ayeeza and Nono trudge onto the scene bathed in dust, drenched in sweat.

WALKING THROUGH the tukuls they scout around with their eyes, noticing the empty courtyards, the stiff cloths and garments hanging over mud walls, and cooking pots left behind on fireless clay stoves.

They stop at the center of the village, overshadowed by the eerie sound of silence. There are footprints everywhere in the sand, remnants of chaos.

NONO (IN GUA)
(Shouting)
Is anyone here!?

Silence responds.

NONO (IN GUA)
We come in peace.

Nothing. He turns to face Ayeeza.

NONO (IN GUA)
Wait here.

He strolls off calling for a response. Ayeeza looks around, she can feel the tukuls staring down at her. A soft breeze blows over her face bringing along a CREAKING SOUND AND THE

SLAMMING OF DOOR.

She spins around facing the sound. The door to a tukul in the distance swings open, creaking all the way. It slams shut, repeating the cycle again and again.

She sighs, walking along the main dirt street towards the end of the village where she finds an isolated tukul a few meters away. Unlike the rest of the village there are no footprints in the sand. The sand is finely swept together.

She hits the path, fixing her eyes on the queer looking tukul with markings of circles and the skulls of snakes on its walls.

Drawing closer, a straw mat is draped over the entrance.

She stops next to the mat and goes down on her knees, peering under the mat into the darkness where a shadow lies still.

She swipes past the mat...

INT. TUKUL - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Stepping inside. A python, about 23 feet long is coiled up on a mat in the middle of a circle demarcated with BLACK clay pots.

A hand grabs her shoulder. She spins around to attack. It's Nono.

NONO (IN GUA)
(Whispering)
We have to go.

He looks down and sees the python, falling to his knees in reverence. He mumbles incantations.

NONO (IN GUA)
(Whispering)
We cannot stand here. Let's go.

EXT. TUKUL - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Nono steps out pulling Ayeeza along by the hand. She wriggles out of his grip, facing him squarely.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
Do you have a knife?

NONO (IN GUA)
Yes.

She holds her palm out. Nono pauses, eyeballing her to figure out her intent.

NONO (IN GUA)
For what?

Ayeeza does not respond but narrows her eyes. It dawns on him.

NONO (IN GUA)
Are you crazy? This is the Zakpa shrine and that snake is Zakpa.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
I'm hungry.

NONO (IN GUA)
Ayeeza!!

He tries to grab her hand but she pulls it away.

NONO (IN GUA)
Ayeeza, No! Nobody plays with Zapka.

Ayeeza storms off towards the village. Nono chases her down.

NONO (IN GUA)
You will die, if you even try to touch it. You'll die Ayeeza. The gods will vent their anger on us. Your future generations will be cursed. They'll be wiped off.

She turns and explodes.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

My future generation is dead. All three of them. And the ones before me. Mother, father, uncles, brothers. Do you think I give a fuck about Zakpa. There's nothing that Zakpa can do to me that the war hasn't done.

She pauses.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

I'm hungry.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

KNIFE SLICES THROUGH THE SKIN OF A PYTHON SHREDDING IT ALONG THE SIDES.

Nono is sitting at the door of a tukul watching Ayeeza cut through the python, laid out on the ground beside a burning fire.

He watches her rip apart the skin, dumping the pieces onto the fire.

She freezes, backpeddling with a retch. Nono makes a dash for her, catching her as she drops to her knees.

NONO (IN GUA)

I told you not to do it Ayeeza.

She throws the knife on the floor pushing him off.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

(Looking at the dead python)

Your beloved Zakpa.

Nono turns and freezes. A partially digested human leg with beads around its ankles sticks out from the belly of the python.

She walks off into the tukul, leaving Nono behind glued to his spot.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

An arcadian village of happy people - laughter in the air as children play in the bright sun, the elderly watch birds fly over in perfect harmony and the young girls sing and dance.

INT. TUKUL - DAY - DREAM

Ayeeza is sitting by the window breastfeeding her baby and rocking gently to this sight of serenity. She looks down, smiling at her baby. It latches onto her breast, digging its fingers into her skin and sucking violently.

She tries to yank it off but the baby fights back, sucking tightly. It starts to decompose on her breast, fleshing out into a skeleton.

The decomposition begins to infect Ayeeza as she screams for help. Beginning on her breast and moving on to her face. The baby sucks hard on her breast, she decomposes faster. Harder, faster, harder, faster. Finally one last hysterical scream.

END DREAM

INT. TUKUL - MORNING

Ayeeza startles out of sleep sitting on the floor. Her body gleans with sweat as she struggles to catch her breath. Scouting the empty room, her eyes settle on the yellow jerrycan.

EXT. TUKUL - VILLAGE - MORNING

She steps into the morning rays blinking her eyes to adjust. The compound is empty; no dead python, no fire. Just embers smoking gently.

INT. ZAPKPA SHRINE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Ayeeza steps into the shrine swiping the straw mat at the entrance away. She looks into the center of the black pots. It's empty.

EXT. SHRINE- VILLAGE - MORNING

She traces tiny footprints in the sand onto a clearing exiting the village into a forest overgrowth. It dawns on her that Nono is gone.

She looks into the distance where a thin pawpaw tree with three small unripe pawpaw stands.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Over the tukuls we see Ayeeza climbing the pawpaw tree, deftly hauling herself up with her legs and arms coiled around the trunk like a lizard.

Drifting slowly towards the pawpaw fruits. Blood trickles down the inside of her thighs and legs, dripping onto the tree.

She ignores the flow and grabs the pawpaw fruit, ripping it off the branch, and throwing it onto the ground.

Two more come tumbling to the ground.

From the top of the tree she scopes the overgrowth, observing the tall grasses and trees dancing in the wind.

Her eyes stop on a thick patch of weeds, where the barrel of a gun is poking out.

EXT. FOREST - VILLAGE - DAY

Ayeeza opens up the grass with her hands uncovering the skeleton of a soldier in faded camouflage uniform, tyre sandals and a Kalashnikov rifle in his skeletal hands.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Ayeeza barrels down the clearing into the main village path carrying the pawpaw fruits, the pair of tyre sandals, uniform and rifle.

MONTAGE: AYEEZA PREPARES TO SET OFF

- She yanks a printed cloth off a mud wall.

- Rips it into two halves.

- Folds one half into the shape of a pad and using the other half to tie it between her legs.
- She skins off the pawpaw fruits, chopping them into pieces.
- She eats a quarter of the pieces, tying up the rest into a small piece of cloth.
- She takes a sip of water from the jerrycan.
- Puts on the oversized uniform, folding the sleeves to her elbows, the trousers over her ankles and fasting it to her body with a line of straw.
- She wears the slightly bigger pair of tyre sandals.
- Releases the magazine of the rifle to make sure it's loaded.
- She fixes the magazine into the receptacle, pushing the lever back into a CLICK sound.
- She turns the safety on and slings it over her shoulder.
- She grabs the Jerrycan and her little sack of pawpaw.
- Steps out of a Tukul and hits the clearing into the forest.

END MONTAGE

END OF ACT I

ACT II

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Ayeeza is walking through a thick forest, climbing up a rocky hill. Through the overhead branches and leaves, she sees a kettle of vultures hovering above.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

She makes her way onto a level ground where a scattered group of women carrying belongings on their heads come filing past her.

They cast curious glances at her as she marches on focusing her eyes on the road ahead.

In the near distance a child about 2 years cries beside the body of her mother - lying face down - as her older brother (7) stands over them holding a stick ready to fight off the vultures above.

She marches on without a flinch, still keeping her eyes on the road. The older brother turns, following her with his gaze until she disappears.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF MENSHASHIM - DAY

The sun is blazing red in the sky, grilling the earth underneath. Ayeeza is defiantly plodding down a dusty stretch of road bordered on each side by acres of bare cassava farms, laid out in furrows and ridges.

She hears faint VROOM sounds of vehicles in the distance behind and turns. Peeking through the sun's mirage she sees a long unending convoy of military armored cars, rocket launchers, cargo trucks and tanks speeding towards her.

INT. TRUCK- DAY

Aida Sisi in his camouflage is perched at the back seat poring over a book with his reading glasses.

Seated beside him is a middle Eastern man FAWAZ (47) in a BLACK T SHIRT and DESERT COLOURED khaki pants yapping over a radio.

Aida's right hand man and leading general Rufah is relaxing in the front passenger seat, his heavily rigged M-16 rifle visibly secured against the dashboard pointing outside the window.

Aida turns over a page.

FAWAZ (IN ARABIC)

No, no, no. Tell him no more
supplies until he clears his debt.
In full. You hear me, in full. Let
me talk to Ali. Where's Ali?

He slaps his thigh.

FAWAZ (IN ARABIC)

Damn it.

Aida gives Fawaz the side look and grins.

AIDA (IN GUA)

(To Rufah)

If he does not keep quiet, shoot
him.

Rufah turns, looking over his shoulder at Fawaz with cold
eyes...

FAWAZ (IN ARABIC)

Ok later, later, bye.

He gets off the radio.

AIDA

(Eyes on the page)

You see, learning a foreign
language can save your life.

The convoy surges on.

Rufah looks ahead, his face folding into curious creases.
He sticks his head through the window. In his point of
view, a woman-like figure stands by the road side dressed
in a military uniform with a rifle over her shoulder.

As their truck approaches, his curiosity turns into
disbelief. It's indeed a woman.

RUFAH (IN GUA)

(To the driver)

Stop!

The driver hits the brake, screeching the tyres in the dust
and throwing Aida forward. The book drops from his hands
onto the car floor revealing the title: THE TROUBLE WITH

AFRICA BY ROBERT CALDERISI.

The entire convoy comes to halt.

AIDA (IN GUA)
What's happening there?

Rufah ignores him and opens the door stepping out with his gun. Aida stretches his neck and catches a glimpse of Ayeeza through the window.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Ayeeza stands by the roadside, looking as defiant as ever. Rufah approaches with his pointed gun, looking as deadly as ever. He stops inches shy, sizing her up.

RUFAH (IN GUA)
Drop your gun.

Ayeeza stares him down. Rufah cocks his rifle.

RUFAH (IN GUA)
Do you understand the command?

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
I'm on your side.

RUFAH (IN GUA)
(Looking down at her uniform
and rifle)
Where did you get that?

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
It doesn't matter, I'm on your
side.

In the background, the truck door OPENS and SLAMS. Aida appears on the scene with a surprised grin.

AIDA (IN GUA)
My eyes were not deceiving me.

Typical Aida laugh rings out.

AIDA (IN GUA)
 (slapping Rufah on the
 shoulder)
 Can you believe this?

Ayeeza steels her face.

AIDA (IN GUA)
 Girl, what happened to your
 clothes? This is not some house
 garment.
 (Eyeing the rifle)
 And that is not something a woman
 should be carrying around.

Pause.

AIDA (IN GUA)
 Where are you coming from?

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
 The refugee camp in Pampro.

AIDA (IN GUA)
 Is that where you got all this?

Ayeeza does not respond. Some of the soldiers riding behind
 the long cargo trucks curiously climb out. Rufah puts his
 gun away, stretching out his hand.

RUFAH (IN GUA)
 Give me that.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
 I want to fight.

Aida breaks into his laugh as the other soldiers observe in
 silence. But Rufah remains annoyed.

RUFAH (IN GUA)
 (Harsh tone)
 Listen here woman, I don't have
 time for this nonsense. I won't
 repeat myself again.

AIDA (IN GUA)
 (Amidst laughs)
 Do you even know what it means to
 fight?

She turns and looks into the sky, six vultures are hovering over the bare cassava farm about fifty yards away.

She unslings the Kalashnikov rifle from her shoulder pushing down the safety button.

Rufah quickly swings his M-16 back into a shooting position. Ayeezah aims her gun into the sky at the vultures, pausing for a second.

All eyes zero in on her. She pulls the trigger. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The vultures surrender to gravity, plunging down in six rapid thuds.

Shock and disbelief sweeps over Aida and his men. Their faces reel in varying degrees of awe.

Rufah slowly drops his rifle, slipping it behind him. Aida's grin disappears for a moment. He approaches her.

AIDA (IN GUA)
 Where did you learn that?

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
 My uncle. Zimi Aboku.

The name registers on Aida's and Rufah's face.

AIDA (IN GUA)
 Zimi Aboku was your uncle?

Ayeeza looks him straight in the eyes as if to say "I just told you that".

Aida grins.

AIDA (IN GUA)
 Yeah. Zimi could shoot like that.
 (With a lascivious look in
 his eyes)
 Is that all he taught you?

She tightens her face. Typical Aida laugh.

AIDA (IN GUA)

I'll decide what to do with you.

He turns and walks back to into his truck. Everyone else follows.

INT. TRUCK BED - DAY

Ayeeza grabs the panel of a truck filled with Zinamba soldiers. A soldier offers his hand but she ignores it and climbs into the bed by herself.

She walks hunched over through the aisle of legs, sitting at the end of the truck. When she turns, everyone is watching her.

EXT. CASSAVA FARM - DAY

Over the vast cassava farmland, the convoy begins to move, rolling down the dusty road as the sun beats down on the bloodied carcasses of the vultures.

EXT. MENSHASHIM TOWNSHIP - DAY

In the ruins of Menshashim lies a glimpse of its glorious past. A sprawling market square carved in debris, a local business district of ravaged concrete structures, sooted buildings of tukul merge with brick designs.

While the smiling faces of scrawny children and the confident strides of the young men still carry the spirit of the once bustling town, the deserted streets and haggard faces of the women and elderly paints a bleak picture of NOW.

The convoy rides into the town, driving past a dusty brick cathedral at the entrance. Boys and men with guns and paintings of ANTS on their foreheads run onto the street cheering and shooting into the skies. Nono is seen among them without a gun.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Aida rolls his window down and sticks his head out, waving with presidential flare. In between waves he shouts over the gun shots.

AIDA (IN GUA)
Stop wasting the bullets.

The firing ceases immediately. He reclines into his seat with a grin.

AIDA (IN GUA)
Rufah you see why I don't like
putting guns in the hands of those
boys. They don't understand it
takes money to buy. Money we don't
have.

EXT. GOA MILITARY BASE - DAY

The convoy drives past empty checkpoints into a deserted makeshift base - a giant warehouse complex with a massive front compound. It arrives to a group of shirtless Goa soldiers playing football made out of hessian bags while a few others slumber around.

They stop abruptly on seeing the convoy, grabbing their camouflage shirts and throwing them on hastily. They pick up their rifles and run, quickly filing into position.

INT. OFFICE - BASE - DAY

A tall, gaunt military man with rabbit ears LINGALA (44) is at his desk going through a list of items. On the wall above him is the portrait of Aida Sisi. His attention is roused by the roaring sound of cars. He turns, peering over his shoulders through the window louvre blades.

Hundreds of soldiers drop from trucks.

He jumps out of his seat and thunders through the door, only to appear seconds later to grab his LEMON GREEN BERET on the table. He dashes out.

EXT. GOA MILITARY BASE - DAY

Zinamba soldiers from the convoy continue to jump out of the trucks. Ayeeza jumps into the light scoping her surroundings. She picks out a pretty chocolate skinned girl with bright eyes and corn rowed hair perched quietly at the front of a truck. Their eyes meet, the girl turns away.

Aida's heavy legs stump the ground, as his towering body rises out of the back seat of his truck. He slams the door behind him breathing in the air.

AIDA (IN GUA)

Home sweet home.

Lingala comes storming onto the front compound securing his Beret in position. He approaches Aida with fear written all over his face.

LINGALA (IN GUA)

Welcome your excellency.

AIDA (IN GUA)

Welcome? Where the hell is everybody? Don't tell me they are all dead.

Other Goa soldiers emerge from different sections of the base shabbily dressed. They run to take their positions in the file standing at attention. Aida launches into another one of his laughs. He looks over his shoulder to Rufah.

AIDA (IN GUA)

These are the men we want to win the war with.

He stretches his arms out and hugs Lingala, patting him on the shoulder. He pulls back with a grin.

AIDA (IN GUA)

You've done well my friend. It's not easy to motivate your men when their leader is enjoying in a Zinamba mansion.

Lingala trembles, his pupils dilate with fear. Aida looks around, counting the soldiers in the file with his eyes.

AIDA (IN GUA)

fifty?

(Staring Lingala in the face)

Not bad.

Lingala begins to sweat. Aida walks off, standing before the Goa soldiers. He sizes them up, noticing their faded uniforms, roughly unkempt hair and dirty bootless feet.

He begins a song, clapping and stumping his feet.

SONG: "*Gura was created for us, we are the Landlords, the Toas are the tenants, it's time to kick the cattle herders out*"

The soldiers in the file join in, singing in disjointed fashion with raspy voices. Aida stops the song, letting out his typical laugh.

AIDA (IN GUA)

Hunger is a terrible thing. To be a soldier is no joke eh? Don't worry. I brought lots of food. Tonight we eat and drink till our bellies cannot take no more.

He turns to look at Lingala.

AIDA (IN GUA)

Prepare a list of the soldiers who are not here.

Then to the Zinamba soldiers standing by the trucks.

AIDA

It's been a long journey. We rest tonight. Tomorrow we begin our preparation to take back Gura from the cattle herders. Eat your last eat, sleep your last sleep and shit your last shit.

He walks off towards the main office building. Rufah cuts his eyes at Lingala before following Aida into the building.

EXT. GOA MILITARY BASE - DUSK

Stacks of rice bags pile up in front of the base as residents of Menshashim - children, young men, women and the elderly - queue according to their ages. One after the other, they approach the soldiers heading the lines, each receiving a bag of rice.

Fawaz supervises in the background, leaning nonchalantly against one of the columns of the building with a smoking cigarette caught between his lips.

Ayeeza is assisting one of the soldiers heading the queue of young men and women. She helps carry a bag of rice onto the shoulder of big headed boy who scurries off smiling.

Looking up into the distance her eyes bump into Nono's, squashed in the middle of the line. He holds her gaze for a while with a deadpan face and quickly turns away dropping out of the queue. He walks over to the elderly's queue, joining at the back.

Ayeeza continues her job, focusing her attention at the young girl in front.

INT. AIDA'S OFFICE - GOA MILITARY BASE - NIGHT

Nothing out of the ordinary, Aida's banal office can only boast of a wooden shelf filled with dusty books.

He is bent over his desk going through pages of names. He flips over the pages to the last name, NUMBER 220, NDUKA LENDO.

Rufah sits quietly in the opposite chair swatting a mosquito hovering around his ear. Aida sighs and leans back into his chair with a wide yawn.

RUFAH (IN GUA)

We need every one of our men alive.

Aida ignores him, throwing his eyes onto the ceiling.

RUFAH (IN GUA)

They've been through a lot. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for their sacrifice.

Aida keeps his eyes on the ceiling.

RUFAH (IN GUA)

When we win the war, our army must be made up of Goas. Not Zinambas. I don't mind us dining with strangers, but we must save our best for our people.

Aida closes his eyes. Rufah pauses.

RUFAH (IN GUA)

These soldiers are some of our finest men on the battle field. Discipline is important but...

Aida breaks into a loud snore. Rufah leans over and grabs the pages of names, discreetly pulling them off the table without making a sound.

He gets up and walks out the office with the pages, shutting the door stealthily behind him.

INT. MESS - GOA MILITARY BASE - NIGHT

Hundred of soldiers are seated around makeshift tables and benches eating from plastic bowls amidst noisy chatter and laughter. A group of Goa soldiers are standing beside a wall observing their comrades eat with watery mouths.

Moving over their faces they look so pitiable the others can't help but laugh. They look towards the entrance of the Mess where Rufah and Lingala stand, watching them with razor sharp eyes.

Rufah hands over the pages of names to Lingala and exits.

INT. DORM - GOA MILITARY BASE - NIGHT

A dingy overcrowded dorm of Zinamba and Goa soldiers without a foot of space to spare. All over the floor, straw mats and rugs create a covering with bodies everywhere. Sweaty bodies, shirtless bodies, half naked bodies, masculine bodies.

The chatter is animated, the laughter is wild. Ayeeza steps in and everything goes crickets. She scopes the room with her eyes searching for space and ignoring the legions of eyes bearing down on her.

One of the soldiers in the corner hisses.

SOLDIER 1 (IN GUA)

You can take my place or sleep with me.

SOLIDER 2 (IN GUA)

Don't mind him, you can sleep right here. On top of me. Or do you want to go down?

The room explodes with laughter. In the far end corner, a baby faced Zinamba soldier in his late forties SALASI, does not participate. He looks on concerned.

Ayeeza turns and walks out of the dorm triggering more wild laughter.

EXT. ROOF TOP - GOA MILITARY BASE - NIGHT

Ayeeza climbs onto the roof of the base with her rifle over her shoulder, overlooking the principal streets of Menshashim basking in the moonlight. A trio of Goa soldiers stationed on the roof are sharing a joint, carefully rolled in dry pawpaw leaves.

She grabs her rifle walking past them and avoiding eye contact. They turn and giggle, ogling her buttocks as she tears off into the distance.

SOLDIER 1 (IN GUA)
Eii, won't you come and join us?
We're staying up all night.

They laugh.

SOLDIER 2 (IN GUA)
Be careful with that, don't shoot
yourself.

SOLDIER 3 (IN GUA)
Why don't you come and sit by me. I
will show you where the real
trigger is.

She hears the rise and fall of their laughter in the background as she continues her walk across the roof to the end of the stretch, right underneath the crystal moon.

She leans against the parapet, her eyes wandering into the darkness in the horizon, towards the north and beyond Menshashim. She still hears the faint laughter of the soldiers, frowning at the sound of it.

She lifts up her eyes towards the moon watching clouds drift by. From behind the clouds, a bird-like object flies into view and disappears.

She sturdies herself, searching out the clouds to find the object. A thick cloud drifts over the moon.

Hahaahah! The soldiers voices rise and fall in the background. She loosens up and turns towards the laughter, cutting her eyes in disgust.

She slides down into the corner of the parapet, unslinging her rifle and putting it by her side. She leans into the wall keeping her eyes on the soldiers in the background.

Slowly and steadily her eyes begin to close, defocusing into darkness.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

EXT. ROOFTOP - GOA MILITARY BASE - MORNING

Ayeeza is lying on the concrete floor beside her rifle. **DISTANT** SOUNDS OF EXPLOSIONS are heard vibrating the concrete underneath her.

The explosions continue, FADING UP in volume and intensity until it's right in our ears.

A final BLAST rocks the building hard, cracking the parapet. Ayeeza is jolted out of her sleep. She grabs her rifle and springs to her feet looking around.

Soldiers have taken up positions across the entire length of the roof aiming their rifles towards the north. She turns facing the north, where she sees huge clouds of dust and smoke mushrooming into the sky.

She runs towards the other edge of the parapet overlooking the front compound of the base.

It's all chaotic as soldiers run to and fro shouting orders. Aida is standing in the midst of the chaos conducting traffic.

She runs across the roof and climbs over the parapet onto a metal ladder attached to the wall. Sliding down the ladder onto the side of the base. She runs and turns the corner onto the front compound.

EXT. FRONT COMPOUND - GOA MILITARY BASE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Ayeeza sprints into view, not really sure what to do unlike the other soldiers. She notices how they all ignore her, going about their business in a defined and structured way.

She looks over her shoulder and sees Salasi shouting orders at a group of soldiers. He joins them as they run and jump into a reversing truck.

She starts off towards the truck but stops abruptly, looking down between her legs.

She looks up towards the truck, watching it speed out through the check points. She turns and locks eyes with

Aida. He grins at her.

AIDA (IN GUA)
Hope you slept well.

A hand taps her on the shoulder. She spins around bumping into Rufah's stiff face.

RUFAH (IN GUA)
To the Mess.

INT. MESS - GOA MILITARY BASE - MORNING

Ayeeza is standing alone in the middle of the Mess, frowning at the mess left behind - hundreds of greasy plastic bowls on tables.

She is disgusted. The *ka, ka, ka* sound of footsteps draws her attention to the entrance. Fawaz struts in as the last wisps from his cigaret filters through his nostrils.

He approaches her with no regard.

FAWAZ (IN BROKEN GUA)
Hey, beat it.

He walks off towards the kitchen. He stops at the entrance and turns. Ayeeza has her back turned to him. Through the sound of her loud breaths her anger is magnified. Fawaz claps his hands.

FAWAZ
Hey!

Ayeeza turns.

FAWAZ (IN BROKEN GUA)
Put the gun down. Go!

He starts off and disappears into the room. Ayeeza steels her face.

INT. AIDA'S OFFICE - GOA MILITARY BASE - DAY

Distant sound of explosions still rumble in the background. Aida is standing alone by the window with his hands behind him in a pensive mood, lost in his thoughts.

The CLICK AND SQUEAKY sound on the office door breaks his focus. He turns to see Rufah walking in with two young men - big nose with thick lips ABBEY 21 and bushy hair with sunk-in eyes ATSU 24 - leaders of the Black Ants.

They stand behind his desk looking nervous. Aida walks around his chair and drops into it. Rufah steps aside.

AIDA (IN GUA)

Which one of you went stroking the balls of the cattle herders?

Abbey and Atsu exchange surprised looks.

AIDA (IN GUA)

Anytime two people look into each other's eyes at the same time, they're hiding something.

The boys sturdy their heads.

AIDA (IN GUA)

I never told anyone I was coming, not even my men. So that leaves you.

ABBEY (IN GUA)

Never, your excellency. We promise to seek out the spies and execute them.

Abbey turns and looks at Atsu.

ABBEY (IN GUA)

This is punishment from the gods.

Aida grins.

ATSU (IN GUA)

It's true your excellency. The woman soldier you have here will cost us the war.

Aida narrows his eyes.

ABBEY (IN GUA)

She killed Zakpa and has brought this curse upon us. One of our boys was with her. They were at the camp together.

Aida and Rufah exchange looks. They hear desperate knocking on the door. Rufah opens it to reveal Fawaz's frustrated face.

FAWAZ (IN BROKEN GUA)

That crazy woman says no washing, no cleaning. She's a soldier, she fights, not clean.

INT. MESS - GOA MILITARY BASE - DAY

Ayeeza is sitting on one of the tables feeling in-between her legs.

AIDA O.S (IN GUA)

Are you missing something down there?

She looks up and quickly snaps her legs together, jumping to her feet. Aida approaches and settles on a bench beside her while she stands.

AIDA (IN GUA)

If you really want to be a soldier, you must learn to take orders and stop frowning at your superiors.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

He's not my superior.

AIDA (IN GUA)
What's your name?

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
Ayeeza Suta.

Aida looks around at the mess left behind.

AIDA (IN GUA)
Somebody must clean the mess.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)
Why must it be me?

AIDA (IN GUA)
You are like your uncle. I can tell. You have his spirit. Stubborn, rebellious, a pain to work with. Certainly one of the finest soldiers I've ever seen. It was because of men like him that we won the war against the Miyongos. Out of respect for him I brought you here. Not to make you a soldier, let's be clear on that. Yes you can shoot and for a woman in Gura it's impressive. But all the soldiers here can shoot. Even a little Goa boy can shoot.

Beat.

AIDA
The Toas will pay for what they did to him.

He pauses.

AIDA (IN GUA)
Tonight my men will take you to Botwe, for an equally important assignment.

Aida rises lazily to his feet and starts off towards the entrance.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

My uncle was a proud Goa, who loved his people. The only person who ever gave me a chance. Those Toas took him and my entire family.

AIDA (IN GUA)

Every Goa has lost family.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

But I'm not helpless. I can fight. I'm here. Isn't that what you preach? The ultimate sacrifice.

AIDA (IN GUA)

You're not required to make that sacrifice. It's not meant for you. Yours is to raise Goa men. I don't know what you think is going on here. But this is no place for a woman. The most dangerous thing any woman can do in times of war is to find herself among soldiers. Men. It doesn't matter whether they are enemies or your own people. Men never stop having erections. Not even in times of war. We'll have erections through famine, starvation, sickness and even in the afterlife if we are allowed to carry our dicks.

Beat.

AIDA (IN GUA)

You know what they were talking about last night. Fucking you. And very soon one or more of them may try it. They wouldn't need your permission. And if that happens there's nothing I can do about it. I need each one of them to win the war. The best I can do is to say sorry.

Beat.

AIDA (IN GUA)

Even if I'm able to warn them off
you, nobody wants you around now.
You're the cursed one. A bad omen.
You wanted to roast it for dinner.

He chuckles .

AIDA (IN GUA)

Zimi was anti-gods too. He didn't
believe in anything. Just what his
senses would allow. But even he
won't do that. Because he
understands that people need their
gods.

AYEEZA (IN GUA)

Do you believe I'm cursed?

AIDA (IN GUA)

It doesn't matter what I believe. A
leader must embody his people. Why
else will they follow me? With all
the trouble Zimi gave us, we
tolerated him because he was one
thing you're not. A man.

He walks off.

EXT. STREETS OF MENSHASHIM - DAY

The muted sound of explosions rumble in the distance as
three military trucks roar through the principal streets
sealed off at the back with GREEN trampoline tent covers.

They swerve onto the road leading to the base.

EXT. FRONT COMPOUND - GOA MILITAR BASE - DAY

The trucks sweep through the check points pulling up in
front of a group of waiting soldiers with face masks.

The soldiers break off in batches of three securing each
truck. They untie the tent covers, rolling them off the
truck beds to uncover hills of dead bodies in their
hundreds.

MONTAGE - AIDA AND HIS SOLDIERS PREPARE FOR BATTLE

-- The dead bodies are carried on makeshift stretchers by masked soldiers.

-- Heaps of worn out military uniforms pour out of hessian sacks.

-- In a room, masked soldiers clean the pile of bodies fitting them with the worn out uniforms.

-- Thin bamboo sticks are assembled together in the form of crosses. Strings are wrapped tightly around the center. They are threaded through the notches to create diamond shaped kite frames.

-- Soldiers unload wooden planks from truck.

-- They cut them into shapes of rifles.

-- The rifles are polished and painted in BLACK and BROWN colours.

--- Sacks of plastic rice bags are cut out and fitted onto the kites.

-- Impact Grenades are strung onto the length of bamboo sticks holding the kite together.

--- The uniformed corpses are loaded into the trucks.

-- The trucks drive out of the base, unto the streets of Menshashim heading towards the North.

-- Lingala supervises as the uniformed corpses are crammed together into medium-size fishing boats in sitting positions. About 20 to a boat.

-- The wooden rifles are fixed into their uniforms, with the barrels pointing out.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ROOFTOP - GOA MILITARY BASE - DAWN

It's dark. The foggy bank of a river is barely visible in the crosshairs of a telescope. The Crosshairs pan across the length of the river bank, smoking out.

Aida's eyes emerge from behind the telescope lens. He grins and draws out his radio.

AIDA (IN GUA)
Release the cattles into the
slaughter house.

He sticks the telescope back over his eyes.

EXT. PRAYE LAKE - DAWN

The majestic Praye lake lays calm, buried under heavy fog in rippling folds of specular. Across its vast length and width, tree stumps stick out in the water like demarcations.

EXT. TOA SIDE OF LAKE - DAWN

A heavy platoon of Toa fighters are lined up along the bank of the lake, manning tanks and rocket launchers.

Human figures in boats begin to emerge out of the fog. They are dressed in Goa military attire.

A whistle rings out through the night, unleashing a full scale bombardment. Blowing up the Goa boats as soon as they appear in sight.

The boats continue to emerge, exploding into pieces and sinking the soldiers in them.

UNDER THE WATER, uniformed corpses tumble together with pieces of wood. Sinking slowly to the bottom of the lake in their numbers.

EXT. TOA SIDE OF LAKE - NIGHT

The last round of the shelling comes to an end. All the boats have been completely wiped out.

Everything suddenly goes quiet. Smoke eerily hovers over the water obscuring it from view. The voice of a Toa soldier blares out though the thick darkness.

VOICE (IN TUA)

Lights!!!

Huge beams of light shoot out from a tower into the waters, flooding everywhere. A short stocky Toa commander steps in front of the line. He walks cautiously towards the river, standing at the edge.

He peers into the smoke, straining his eyes. A body appears through the smoke floating face down on the water to the edge where the commander stands.

He bends over and grabs the shirt of the body, turning it face up. The decomposed face of the body shocks him to back track. He looks up and sees a kite falling from the sky.

Confused by the spectacle, he watches as it parachoots to the ground, falling by his side. BOOM! He's blown into pieces of flesh.

The Toa soldiers turn their guns into the skies as deadly kites descend on them like fireworks, turning the midnight sky into a furnace of explosions. A kite falls on the light tower and shatters it. Everywhere goes dark.

EXT. GOA SIDE OF LAKE- NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Zinamba tankers and rocket launchers roll onto the bank, firing on all cylinders. The Toas run out of fire power, falling like empty rice sacks.

EXT. TOA SIDE OF LAKE - DAWN

Out of the smoke, Rufah and his men appear on fishing boats at the shore. They jump out running towards the Toa tanks and finish the job: unleashing a heavy dose of MISSILES, GUNSHOTS, BLOOD and DEAD BODIES in no particular order.

EXT. PRAYE LAKE - MORNING

The orange sun peels off from the cloak of the morning sky. From a satellite view the Praye lake and its surrounding landscape is covered in dense smoke.

Descending through the smoke onto its banks, bodies of soldiers are scattered everywhere.

A pair of legs walk among the carnage, tripping over the dismembered body of a soldier lying face-down with a RED piece of cloth sticking out of his ear.

Those pair of legs belong to Rufah. His face is partly covered in spots of dry blood. He looks into the distance where the rest of his men are standing over Toa tanks in a jubilant mood, firing gunshots into the air. He takes out his radio.

RUFAH (IN GUA)

It's done.

EXT. PRAYE LAKE - MORNING

Aida appears on the water standing triumphantly in a decorated boat flanked by his security detail. The boat glides over the water revealing the inscriptions "His excellency". His grin grows even broader as he sees his men lined up across the length of the Praye lake chanting his name.

EXT. DRONE BASE - MIYONGO - DAY

A massive dome shaped building with an airstrip is situated in the heart of vast desert landscape. A drone taxis onto the strip, accelerating its speed and jetting off into the sky. It disappears among the white clouds.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DRONE BASE - DAY

A satellite view of Goa soldiers riding on tanks into the town of Kelekele is broadcasting on several large screens in a room filled with American soldiers and the ubiquitous "KB" initials.

The door opens into the room allowing in captain HOLDBROOKS 44, a towering muscular figure followed by Michael and Harrison.

They approach the technical bench, standing behind the operators with eyes fixated on the screens. They watch as the Goa soldiers drive in jubilation.

MICHAEL

Now what?

HARRISON

Nothing. It's up to the Toas and the Miyongos. We wait.

MICHAEL

The Toas, we're on their side.
Right?

Harrison smiles.

HARRISON

Of course. We will try our best to keep it that way. Because it's cheaper. But there's a saying we have here.

Staring Michael is his eyes.

HARRISON

Whether Toa or Goa, the oil must flow.

END