

NIGHTMARE VALLEY

Written by

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EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - REMOTE CABIN - PREDAWN

SUPER: 1821

INT. BEDROOM

An infant, PIERRE, sleeps in a rough-hewn crib. His strawberry blonde curls form a halo around his head. Beneath his eyelids, movement.

DREAM SEQUENCE - PARLOR - DAY

In the baby's dream, he is an adolescent. His mother is with him. They are laughing, but something is wrong. He cannot move. His legs are crippled.

The door bursts open, and two men enter the room. One of the men backhands the mother across the face. In her fall, her head strikes the stone fireplace. She is dead.

The adolescent struggles to help his mother, but his infirmity makes him incapable.

The other man pulls a flintlock pistol, points it at the face of the young man and pulls the trigger.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. BEDROOM

The EXPLOSION of the round awakens Pierre; he screams with terror.

His mother, MARIE, a different mother than the one in the dream, appears in her nightgown, picks up Pierre and rocks him.

NOTE: ALL SUBTITLES ARE IN ENGLISH

MARIE
(French with subtitles)
Shh, shh, Pierre, It's only a bad
dream.

EXT. REMOTE CABIN - NIGHT

SUPER: 1833

INT. BEDROOM

The same GUNSHOT awakens a sleeping adolescent. His strawberry blonde hair falls onto his face as he bolts upright in bed. It is Pierre. He awakens in a cold sweat.

His face reveals weariness and grief. He sits dizzily for a moment on the edge of his bunk, his face soaked in sweat. He collapses back into a troubled sleep.

INT. MAIN ROOM - PREDAWN

Pierre, 12, enters the room as he laces up his buckskin shirt. A lantern on a table lights the room where Marie, looking older, cooks over an open hearth. His father GUSTAV, a large man, leans into his plate at the table, eating.

Gustav speaks with his mouth full.

GUSTAV
(French with subtitles)
Chop some wood for your mother.

Gustav takes another bite.

GUSTAV (CONT'D)
(French with subtitles)
Then, you must help me scrape the pelts before you run away.

Gustav stands, holds a biscuit in his mouth, as he dons a fur jacket. He pulls on a red wool cap with a long tassel hanging from the crown, turns and walks outside, closes the heavy wooden door behind him.

Marie dishes a plate of food and sets it on the table. She eyes her son suspiciously as he busies himself adjusting his moccasins. Pierre notices and looks into his mother's eyes.

MARIE
(French with subtitles)
The nightmare?

Pierre's face is hardened beyond his years.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
Yes.

He pauses with his moccasins.

PIERRE (CONT'D)

Mother, how could I have had such a dream when I was too young to know these things?

MARIE

(French with subtitles)

I have pieced together the dream since you began to speak. God has given your soul a vision of horror from another time and another place. You have suffered until you can no longer weep. Have faith your torment is for a greater good. I have always felt your pain. I have always prayed for you.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)

One day I will be free of this curse.

Mother and son embrace. She strokes his strawberry blonde hair and pats him on the shoulder. Even as his mother holds him, Pierre's eyes bolt open, again, the ghostly GUNSHOT.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - CABIN - EARLY MORNING

Pierre chops wood with great dexterity. His eyes are wide. With every frantic stroke, the nightmare loops in his consciousness.

SERIES OF SHOTS - CHOPPING WOOD

- A) The intruders in the dream,
- B) A stroke of Pierre's axe
- C) The death of the dream mother,
- D) A stroke of Pierre's axe
- E) The pointing of the pistol,
- F) A stroke of Pierre's axe
- G) The EXPLOSION of the powder

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - CABIN - DAY

An elk hide hangs from a wall of the cabin. Pierre scrapes quickly, removing the fat from the hide. After a few moments, he stands and approaches his father who scrapes a hide around the corner of the cabin.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
Father, I have finished.

Pierre waits expectantly for his father's reply. His father does not look up as he speaks.

GUSTAV
(French with subtitles)
Fetch some water from the spring.
Then you may run. Don't stray too
far west.

Pierre turns and dashes toward the spring, grabs a wooden bucket beside the cabin door.

Gustav glances briefly at his son, shakes his head and exhales deeply before returning to his task.

Pierre rushes to the spring and fidgets impatiently while awaiting the small stream of water to fill the bucket. Again, the ghostly GUNSHOT. His face is pursed with tension.

When the bucket is full, he totes the water into the cabin.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

MARIE
(French with subtitles)
Oh, Pierre, when you roam, I never
know if you will return.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
I must, mother. I simply must.

Pierre turns and bolts out the door. After he leaves, Marie pauses pensively, staring at the door.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

Pierre runs away from the cabin like a seasoned athlete. His face is still pursed with emotion. The gunshot. Pierre leaps from rock to rock, climbs rocky tors, and traverses the spectacular terrain with expert agility.

His face relaxes. The gunshot again, but it is more distant this time; the explosion is not so loud.

Pierre wanders farther from the cabin, a calm determination melts his discontent for the first time. Now, covered with sweat, he begins to smile as we hear only silence, his breath, and the sound of his footsteps on the rocks.

He arrives at a-

CRAG

He is high above the pristine valley. Far below, the cabin is a tiny spot on the floor of the valley. A tendril of white smoke rises from the chimney.

On the crag is a rock formation in the shape of an oversized chair, a natural rock throne on the mountainside. Pierre scrambles across a steep outcrop and sits regally on the throne. He breathes heavily as he sits on his royal perch.

Beneath his moccasins, a large flat rock is his footstool. Underneath the flat rock, an enormous rattlesnake bakes in the afternoon sun.

A grim expression dominates Pierre's face; He is the prince of his domain.

Again, the GUNSHOT. Pierre's expression morphs to discomfort again. He winces. He rises to leave. Movement catches his eye. The movement is below him on a narrow tier halfway up the mountain between him and the cabin.

It is a figure clad in buckskins; his long black hair hangs in braids. The figure totes a quiver of arrows, lashed to his back; he carries a bow. A leather band is wrapped around his forehead.

A Ute brave!

Pierre ducks behind a boulder and watches the figure walk stealthily and peer toward the cabin. The brave turns and quietly moves in the direction from which he had come, west toward the sinking sun.

Pierre focuses on the figure and moves silently down the mountainside in a direction that will intercept the Ute. Pierre hides, moves silently as he goes; the brave sees nothing of Pierre.

Pierre escorts the brave, unseen. They enter-

A DENSE STAND OF TOWERING TREES

Pierre now discerns the brave is a Ute boy his own age. He is OHANZEE.

Pierre gazes through the foliage. Ohanzee takes aim at a deer standing amid a lush clearing. His shot is true; the deer stumbles, drops, an arrow through its heart.

Ohanzee hurries to his kill, kneels and draws a flint knife, cuts the deer's throat. As Ohanzee kneels, Pierre reveals himself.

Pierre strides boldly but silently into the clearing in plain sight of Ohanzee. Ohanzee detects the faint sound of footsteps, spins around quickly, knife clenched. He is terrified when he sees Pierre, only a few yards away, relaxed and motionless, baring his grim expression.

Ohanzee explodes with fear and fury, screams and rushes toward Pierre. Pierre remains motionless as Ohanzee charges.

Ohanzee stops short of Pierre, confused by Pierre's casual demeanor. The two boys eye each other with mutual curiosity.

Seeing Pierre is unarmed, the boy sheaths his knife and stands defiantly before Pierre. Pierre marvels at the patterns of blue and white beads on the boys buckskins and moccasins.

The boy attacks Pierre, trying to throw him to the ground. Pierre deftly steps aside and throws the boy to the ground. The boy tries again and gets the same for his trouble.

Pierre is still aloof from the conflict, retains his expression of curiosity.

Finally, the boy dives for Pierre's knees and knocks Pierre off his feet. Ohanzee battles impressively, but Pierre clearly dominates the struggle.

As they fight, neither boy notices a huge boar grizzly has entered the clearing and stands between the boys and the deer carcass. The boy's bow is beside the carcass.

Seeing the bear, the boys both run in the same direction, with the bear in pursuit. They sprint into the jaws of

A DEEP GORGE

They are trapped before a yawning black pit, a bottomless chasm in the rocks.

The walls of the gorge are too steep to climb; the angry bear blocks their escape.

The two boys stand a several yards apart with their backs to the pit, terrified now that the bear is in full attack mode, barrels into the close confines of the gorge with them.

The two boys await the inevitable.

When the bear is upon them, because there are two, the beast pauses, roars with rage, unable to decide which boy to attack first.

The bear rises to his hind feet, towering over the boys, turning first to one then the other.

The animal lunges toward Ohanzee.

Ohanzee readies his knife as Pierre picks up a skull-size rock and hurls it at the bear, striking it in the back of the head.

The bear wheels around, enraged, in the direction of Pierre, starts to attack. At this, Ohanzee runs up behind the bear, stabs it in the rump with his flint knife.

Again the bear wheels around and roars with rage, charging Ohanzee again. The boy bravely raises his knife, but it is too late; the bear slashes with a paw, claws Ohanzee across the left side of his face, leaving three deep gashes on his temple, cheek, nose and upper lip.

The blow knocks Ohanzee backward into the pit.

The forward motion of the bear causes his paws to slide in the loose rock. The bear skids over the edge of the chasm as well.

As boy and bear start to fall, Pierre dives for Ohanzee and catches his arm.

As the bear falls, it swipes Pierre's face on the right side, rendering a wound quite similar to the wound received by Ohanzee.

The bear falls into the chasm, roaring with rage, echoes, fades to silence.

Pierre lies on his belly over the rim of the abyss, holds Ohanzee by one arm. The two stare into each other's eyes before Pierre pulls the boy to safety. Ohanzee still holds the flint knife in his free hand.

The two stand, bleeding from the wounds on their faces, stare into the blackness of the chasm.

After a few moments, Ohanzee turns to Pierre. Ohanzee slashes the palm of his hand with the knife, holds up his bleeding hand then hands the knife to Pierre, nods at Pierre's hand. Pierre takes the knife and slashes his own hand. The two bloody hands clasp as each boy gazes deeply into the eyes of the other.

Then, Ohanzee touches his chest with his fist.

OHANZEE

Ohanzee.

Pierre touches his own chest.

PIERRE

Pierre.

The two boys, covered in blood, walk out of the gorge and back to the deer carcass. Ohanzee lifts the carcass and tosses it across his shoulder, grabs his quiver and bow, and turns to leave.

He looks back and raises his bloody palm. Pierre raises a bloody palm, turns toward the cabin.

EXT. THE CABIN - WINTER - DAWN

The wind blows the snow horizontally and howls.

INT. PIERRE'S BEDROOM

Pierre's eyes open slowly and peacefully. The salient scars on his face have almost healed. He sits up and stretches. He notices the scar on his palm, pauses in a moment of reverie.

INT. MAIN ROOM OF THE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Marie and Gustav sit at the table drinking coffee.

GUSTAV

(French with subtitles)
Marie? How is the boy?

MARIE

(French with subtitles)
Since the attack, the dream has not returned, Gustav. I pray it will not.

Pierre enters the main room of the cabin. He is fully dressed in his buckskins and moccasins. He sits at the table with his parents. Marie fetches Pierre a cup of coffee.

GUSTAV

(French with subtitles)
 Pierre, today, we will build a
 shelter for our horses. Dress
 warmly, it is very cold.

Gustav rises, dons his coat and cap, and exits the cabin. We see a thick layer of snow outside as Gustav opens the door to leave. A gust sends a puff of snow into the room as Gustav slams it shut. Pierre sits with his mother.

MARIE

(French with subtitles)
 My prayers were answered. The
 nightmare has not returned.

Pierre does not look at his mother but gazes blankly at his coffee.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
 The beast has freed me of my
 torment.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - SAME MORNING

A war party of twenty braves wade their horses through deep snow. Their faces are painted, and they are rigged for battle. Ohanzee is among them. The party steers their horses to the crest of a low hill across the valley from Pierre's throne.

From the hill, Pierre's cabin can be seen below them in the valley. A leader shouts an order, and the braves dismount. They lead their horses to a spot on the blind side of the hill from the valley then move on foot together toward cabin.

The party creeps unseen to the perimeter of the clearing in which the cabin is situated. From their hiding places, they watch Gustav and Pierre working in the snow. Pierre chops posts and Gustav digs holes in the frozen ground.

When Ohanzee spots Pierre, he starts with the realization that his blood brother is the target of the raid. Before he can think, three bowmen draw arrows, taking aim at Gustav and Pierre.

One of the bowmen stands beside Ohanzee. As the bowman starts to shoot, Ohanzee grabs his arm, causing his arrow to fly wild. The bowman hits Ohanzee savagely with the back of his hand, knocks him to the ground.

EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

But, the other two bowmen are on their mark; two arrows enter Gustav's chest.

Pierre runs to his father's side and kneels. His kneeling saves his life as another arrow whistles above him where his head would have been.

GUSTAV
(French with subtitles)
Quickly! Get the rifle. Protect
your mother.

Gustav speaks his last words while reaching for his son as many more arrows enter his back. Gustav falls to the ground. Pierre, wild with terror, bursts through the cabin door.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Pierre slams the heavy door, bars it behind him. He grabs the rifle from above the mantle.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
Mother! A raid! Father is dead!

Marie crosses herself as she moves swiftly towards Pierre. With some difficulty, Marie wrenches the rifle from Pierre. She leans the gun against the door and grabs Pierre's shoulders while looking deeply into his eyes. She tosses the hair back from her moist eyes before speaking.

MARIE
(French with subtitles)
You must escape, Pierre. You must
leave me here and go.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
No, Mother! I will fight for you!

Pierre's eyes are full of tears. Marie notices.

MARIE
(French with subtitles)
You weep! Praise God, you weep.

Marie smiles at Pierre; she weeps too. Then, her face relaxes.

Marie picks up the rifle and shoves it into Pierre's chest. As he stands, holding the rifle, she rushes across the room, grabs an array of items, and shoves them into a large canvas bag. She ties the bundle with a long length of rope. She presses the bundle against Pierre.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 (French with subtitles)
 I am a woman, Pierre.

Marie grasps Pierre's shoulders, looks into his eyes.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 They may not kill me. If you stay
 and fight, we will both be killed.

Marie raises her eyebrows.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 If I survive, you can rescue me
 later. Now, go! I command you!

Hearing this, Pierre kisses his mother on the forehead. He looks briefly into her eyes then snaps about-face, sprints into his bedroom at the rear of the cabin.

He unbars the window and opens the heavy shutter. Pierre leaps lightly onto the window frame, squatting on the sill as he hangs the bag across his back by the rope. He looks toward his mother.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 (French with subtitles)
 Now, go, my son. My love goes with
 you.

Marie watches Pierre leap from the sill to the snow-covered ground, sprint up the steep incline behind the cabin. Marie watches from the window. Pierre pauses and turns back.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 (French with subtitles)
 You have learned to weep. Now learn
 to live!

Marie watches her son disappear into the foliage, sprinting up the hillside behind the cabin. She closes the shutter and bars it.

EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

From the front of the cabin, the raiders see Pierre, running like a rabbit up the hillside above the cabin.

The leader shouts orders. Four braves sprint for the back of the cabin.

Ohanzee tries to follow them but is restrained by the others.

In seconds, the braves are on the hillside above the house, in pursuit of Pierre.

Pierre ascends the steepening slope, the terrain becomes more difficult to traverse. He clamors over large boulders. The rifle inhibits the speed of his ascent.

He looks back. The four braves close in on him. He aims his rifle at one of his pursuers and squeezes the trigger.

The brave's head is blown half away; a spray of brains and skull splash on the man behind him.

Pierre falls to the ground shaking and vomits into the snow.

Pierre spits, peers around, scans the rocks in all directions, shoves the rifle beneath a boulder and continues to climb.

Time passes; Pierre and the braves are fully winded as they proceed up the incline.

Pierre reaches the-

ROCKY SUMMIT

He sucks great gulps of air. He looks back. He sees he has gained some ground, but the braves move on steadily fifty yards below him.

Pierre runs back and forth, searches over the rim of a vertical drop of over a thousand feet. He seeks a way down the precipice, but from where he stands, he can only see the flat surface of a sheer granite face.

Now, on his hands and knees, Pierre gazes farther over the edge, first one place then another.

He leans so far over the edge, he is forced to windmill his arms to keep from plunging. He sucks a gulp of air, recovers, swallows.

Finally, he finds a possible route of descent. He drops over the edge, hangs onto the rim with his hands. The abyss yawns beneath him. His feet dangle four feet from a narrow ledge.

While hanging, Pierre cranes his neck from side to side but cannot see the ledge below him.

He hears the braves' breathing and footsteps.

Pierre closes his eyes; he lets go. The four-foot drop lasts too long before the soles of his moccasins slap the surface of-

THE LEDGE

Pierre almost loses his balance before the tips of his freezing fingers claw the rock, find a tiny shelf on which to steady himself.

His breaths are staccato. He rolls his eyes, opens his mouth, squints.

He peers in all directions. To his left, another ledge is a few more feet below him.

The VOICES of the braves.

Pierre glances at the rim above him.

Pierre finds a lower hand hold, squats, drops again. The four-inch ledge is barely wide enough for the balls of his feet as Pierre slaps at the rock for a better hand hold. Looking up, Pierre can still see the rim.

He searches again in both directions. To his left, Pierre can see that the four-inch ledge on which he stands runs around a corner. He inches his way along the ledge and around the corner as the braves appear above him.

He tries to quell his staccato breath again.

The steam from Pierre's breath drifts beyond the corner.

He turns his head away from the corner as one of the braves looks in his direction. The brave catches a glimpse of the steam and scans the corner from his angle.

Pierre edges farther. The ledge becomes more narrow until only his toes are between him and the long fall. He rolls his eyes downward, winces.

Pierre hangs motionless on the rock face, hears the four braves speaking at the summit.

QUICK FLASHBACK

The brave's head is blown half away; a spray of brains and skull splash on the man behind him.

BACK TO SCENE

A horrified expression grips Pierre's face. He swallows heavily; his cheeks puff out, gags to keep from vomiting again. A gust of wind moves his strawberry blonde hair.

The braves spread out, scan over the edge of the cliff. Seeing nothing, one brave kicks a tuft of moss off the rim. Pierre watches the moss fall out of sight. The braves leave.

Pierre hangs on the cliff face for some time. He winces and shivers, sucks a trembling breath. Blood is on the toes of his moccasins. His fingers are also bleeding and blue. A stream of blood traces a red line on the rock face below one of his hands. The wind moans.

To his left is nothing but a flat rock face. To his right, the direction from which he had come, the ledge on which he is standing is obscured from his sight by the corner.

Pierre probes with his right foot, tries to locate a foothold, feels nothing but flat surface.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)

Sacred blue! I need eyes on my feet!

Finally, as the sun disappears over a mountain peak, Pierre lets go, drops.

He catches the ledge on which he stood with his hands and growls in pain. He hangs by his fingers; his feet dangle over the abyss. He edges hand by hand around the corner and onward toward the wider ledge.

When he reaches the wider part of the ledge, Pierre does a chin-up, gets a foot on the ledge, and, with the help of his elbows, rolls over and lies on the ledge, panting and weeping.

It is fully dark when Pierre finally manages to stand on the wider ledge. He pulls himself up to the final ledge. He trembles. From the final ledge, he finds a foothold, and with one leg, launches himself high enough to grab the rim of the summit, two feet above his reach, and pull himself over the top.

SUMMIT - CONTINUOUS

Pierre collapses on his back in the snow, shaking. He sucks icy air through his trembling lips. With difficulty, he stands and limps down the steep slope. He angles away from the direction of the cabin; he limps and shivers in the deepening darkness.

Pierre arrives at the

THRONE

Below, in the valley, the flames from the cabin still light the clearing where his home had been. Tears fill his eyes. His voice shakes as he whispers aloud.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
The nightmare.

Pierre crawls beneath the flat rock where the rattlesnake basked in warmer weather. He passes out with his hands tucked next to his body, inside his fur jacket. The wind moans.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - THE THRONE - DAWN

Pierre awakens, it is snowing heavily. The light has just arrived; the world is dark and gray. The cabin site below is obscured by the heavy weather.

He is dry beneath the rock. He sits cross-legged and unties the cloth bag his mother gave him: A large knife and sheath, some hardtack, a horn of gunpowder, a leather sack full of lead balls, needles and thread, a pouch containing fishhooks and a roll of line, and a metal box of phosphorus matches.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - CABIN - DAY - WINTER

Pierre approaches the smoldering ruins of the cabin. The snow has covered everything with a four-inch layer.

His father's body is now a bulge on the surface of the snow. The arrows that protrude from his back like a macabre flower blooming in the drift of pristine whiteness. He does not go to his father but begins searching the ruins for his mother. He finds her.

PIERRE
Maman!

Pierre is transfixed with horror, falls to his knees and buries his face in his hands, sobs.

He hears his mother speak her last words to him.

MARIE (O.S.)
(French with subtitles)
You have learned to weep. Now learn
to live!

Hearing the words, Pierre stops weeping and stares blankly at the burned body that was his mother.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - CABIN - LATER

Pierre stands over two large piles of rocks. He is covered with soot. He is shivering. A vacant gaze accompanies his swollen eyes.

After a time, he walks away from the graves, toward the snowy hillside behind the cabin, the hillside on which he had escaped the braves. The snow has covered the tracks made by him and his pursuers.

He passes the spot where the brave fell. The dead man is gone.

Pierre ascends to the place where he had fired his rifle and hidden it. He searches everywhere, but in the heat of the chase, and with the covering of snow, he is unable to find the precise rock under which the rifle is hidden. He walks away without it.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAY - WINTER - NEXT DAY

Pierre enters the clearing where he had first met Ohanzee. He crosses the clearing and sits on a rock. As he sits, he stares blankly at the scar on his hand. He closes his eyes and listens to the wind.

He opens his eyes; he catches sight of an object hanging from the branch of a tree above the spot where Ohanzee had shot the deer. When he approaches the object, he can see it is a hat-size bag with a beaded flap. The beads are white and blue.

Pierre climbs the tree, shinnies out on the branch and retrieves the bag.

On the ground, he opens the bag. It is filled with buffalo jerky. On top of the jerky is Ohanzee's flint knife. Pierre is ravenous and scarfs great bites from a piece of jerky, sighing and closing his eyes as he chews.

Pierre looks again at the scar on his palm.

Pierre transfers the jerky into the pockets of his fur coat. When he has eaten his fill, he puts the flint knife back into the bag, climbs back up the tree, and hangs the bag on a different branch.

Finding a hidden overhang of rock behind and above the clearing, Pierre further camouflages the nook with spruce branches, climbs inside and waits. From the overhang, Pierre has a perfect view of the clearing.

The overhang protects Pierre from a thin dusty snow that falls through the night. In the dreary morning light, Pierre watches the clearing intently.

At last, he sees movement. It is Ohanzee, cautiously approaching with the lightest of steps. Ohanzee pauses beneath the bag and scans the area.

Ohanzee shinnies quickly up the tree and fetches the bag to the ground. He opens the bag and pulls out his flint knife before scanning the area again.

OHANZEE

Pierre!

Pierre crawls out from his nook and scrambles down to the clearing. The two boys face each other again. Ohanzee holds up his palm with the scar. Pierre does the same.

MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - EARLY SPRING - DAY

Ohanzee and Pierre run together down a mountainside. Wildflowers bloom, and the two pause to watch a vee of geese winging north on their seasonal flight.

The two boys breathe hard and smile as they reach the summit of a forested hill. Ohanzee gives the sign to halt, motions for Pierre to crouch.

The two boys crawl to the edge of the forest and peek through a thicket that separates them from a huge flat clearing. Ohanzee's village.

Ohanzee points to the village, looks Pierre in the eyes and shakes his head. He waves Pierre back with a serious expression on his face.

As Pierre turns to leave, the two hear gunshots. Pierre rushes back to Ohanzee's side, and the two lie hidden, watch as white men in buckskins ride through the village shooting everyone in sight.

Ohanzee rises and starts to run in the direction of the village. Pierre tackles Ohanzee and pins him to the ground.

The gunfire is thick as the two watch in horror as the men burn Ohanzee's village and kill everyone in sight.

Pierre pulls Ohanzee away and pushes at him to leave. Finally, Ohanzee follows Pierre as they run back down the hill and into the forest, away from the burning village and gunfire.

MONTAGE:

A) The two boys run into the night then sleep among the rocks.

B) At first light, they begin running again.

C) They run all day.

D) When the sun is low in the west, they enter a valley, surrounded by steep mountainsides.

E) They scan the terrain. Rain clouds are gathering, and they are exhausted.

END MONTAGE

REMOTE VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

On the side of a bluff, the two spy a hole. The hole is the size of a cracker barrel and is situated above an outcrop of rock some fifty feet above a stream that meanders along the floor of the valley.

The climb to the outcrop is not unusually difficult, but the overhang prevents access to the hole two fathoms above.

Rain. The two hunker beneath the overhang, cling to the back wall to escape the torrent. The storm rages. The two boys seek the deepest recess underneath the overhang.

In the recess, they find a crack in the rock, just big enough for a man to squeeze through.

Pierre crawls through the crack. Inside, he sees that he is in a chimney formation. He stands and looks upward. High above, the roof of the chimney is open. The raindrops splash against his face. Through the raindrops,

Pierre can see an opening above him, another egress to the cavity behind the inaccessible hole. The opening is as large as a cabin door and ten feet above Pierre's head. He motions to Ohanzee to follow him into the chimney.

Pierre stands on Ohanzee's shoulders, secures a hand hold, and pulls himself up to the opening. Pierre enters the-

CAVE

Pierre looks down and to his left, seven o'clock. He sees the hole they were unable to reach from the other side. Pierre sets down his cloth sack and removes the rope. He tosses the rope to Ohanzee, and Ohanzee climbs up to join him.

INT. THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

The ceiling of the cave is more than thirty feet high. The cave is dry and spacious with multiple mezzanine levels.

Pierre peers out the hole into the valley. The overhang forms a natural porch in front of the hole.

In the back of the cave, a small waterfall muffles the sound of the rain.

The boys gnaw some jerky then collapse into sleep.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAY

SUPER: 1837

Sixteen year-old Pierre runs uphill through a forested slope. A deer bounds up the hill ahead of him. His strides are furious, unaffected by the steep incline. The deer crests the rounded summit and bounds down the far slope of the hill. Pierre soon follows, clapping his hands together as he runs.

Partway down the other side, Pierre slows his pace and jogs to the bottom of the hill. Ohanzee is kneeling beside the deer, an arrow through its heart. Pierre lifts the carcass and tosses it across his shoulder as the two lope away together.

The two boys evince a nobility not evident at the beginning of their association. They appear to have achieved an extraordinary level of physical ability. The bookend scars on their faces are grim enhancements to the resolute mien carved into their visages.

When the two approach a broken neck of boulders strewn across the summit of a spired prominence, they hear a sound that causes them to pause and look at each other with bewilderment.

They steal toward the sound, smell a noxious scent, which they mutually acknowledge. The sound is a combination of a human scream and a the mournful wail of a loon.

Following the sound to the summit, they look over the edge toward the sound.

Forty feet below them on a rock ledge, the only anomaly on a precipice, a sheer drop of three hundred feet, the source of the noise is revealed. A creature the size of a man, covered with reddish hair sits on the ledge below them.

Beside the creature lies a massive man-like form. The form is also covered with hair, but the fur is a darker tint than the smaller beast. The larger beast appears dead; it lies in a blackening pool of blood.

Ohanzee points to a fresh break on the edge of the cliff, pieces of which clutter the ledge underneath the dead creature.

When the smaller beast sees Pierre and Ohanzee, its screams become louder and more shrill, it stares at them in terror. Ohanzee points at the creature.

OHANZEE

Tohopka.

The two squat in silence for awhile, consider the scene below, Pierre spots a dead tree, teetering on the rim of the cliff directly above the ledge. The beast, TOHOPKA, has stopped screaming. Pierre raps Ohanzee on the shoulder with his fingernails and points to the skeletal remains of the tree.

Gesticulating, Pierre holds up a forearm and levers it downward. Holding his forearm in this diagonal position, he uses the first and middle finger of his other hand as little legs that march up his forearm.

Ohanzee rises, walks over to the tree and pushes on it. It moves. Pierre joins him and both push on the dead tree, attempting to cause it to fall over onto the ledge. The rotten roots of the tree become partially exposed, but the tree will not fall.

The two get on their knees around the roots and start pulling large rocks out from the loosened root ball.

After another attempt, the tree gives way and crashes to the ledge below, forming a bridge from the ledge to the summit.

The smaller creature is now beside the dead creature; it clings to the thick hair of the carcass and rocks as if to music. The two watch for awhile, then Pierre cautiously climbs down the tree to the ledge. The creature begins to scream again.

Upon reaching the ledge, Pierre sits quietly opposite the man-size beast, ignoring him, looking instead at the magnificent panorama afforded by their position. The beast is quiet again but appears anxious as it fixates on Pierre. Sometimes, it glances nervously upward toward Ohanzee.

When the creature calms down, Pierre reaches into a buckskin purse tied to his belt and removes a strip of jerky. He lays the meat between himself and the creature, causing the creature to crawl backward a step and moan. Pierre looks away again to take in the view.

Slowly, the beast reaches for the meat, but repeatedly draws away until finally, it snatches the meat and eats it with great relish. Pierre repeats the process a few more times. Each time the beast appears to feel safer in Pierre's presence.

Ignoring the beast, Pierre stands, ascends the tree bridge back to the rim. The creature follows some distance behind him, keeping Pierre at a safe distance. Pierre reaches the cliff edge and joins Ohanzee.

Ohanzee and Pierre watch as the creature completes the remainder of the climb with impressive alacrity then quickly bolts away, leaving Ohanzee and Pierre looking at each other in mute wonderment then gaze at the strange corpse on the ledge below them.

Pierre fetches the deer carcass, and the two proceed onward.

INT. THE CAVE - THAT EVENING

The cave has changed. Animal skins nearly cover the walls and floor of the cave. The hole, first visible at the cave's discovery, is camouflaged with brush. A fire pit of large stacked rocks is situated in front of the opening to the chimney. The fire pit is on a rock shelf higher than the hole.

The flue extends so far upward that smoke rising within it is almost invisible when it finally exits the chimney near the summit.

Pierre scrapes the deer hide; Ohanzee sews.

The two hear a sound. The sound is mournful and extended, not unlike wolves. But, wolves do not modulate their notes and end a howl with a different vowel. The two stop what they are doing and take notice. The two look at each other as Ohanzee whispers.

OHANZEE

Tohopka.

EXT. THE PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

The two crawl through the camouflage in front of the hole and sit on the porch in the darkness to listen.

In the gibbous moonlight, the valley is lit with a cold blue light. All is quiet. The first howl is all they have heard.

Before long, Ohanzee's sharp eyes spot a figure fifty feet below on the far side of the stream. Ohanzee points, and Pierre nods. Ohanzee whispers.

OHANZEE

Tohopka.

Pierre reaches into his pouch, pulls out a piece of jerky and tosses it off the porch, far enough to clear the stream below. The figure moves, pauses, crosses the stream. It climbs the rock face leading to the porch. Pierre and Ohanzee glance at each other in the moonlight.

The figure climbs.

To their amazement, Tohopka scales the overhang and sits ten feet away on the porch opposite the two. After a few moments, Pierre removes the remaining strips of jerky from his purse, eases toward Tohopka and places them on the ledge.

Tohopka shinnies quickly over the edge, peeking back at Pierre.

When Pierre has returned to Ohanzee's side, Tohopka returns to his perch and begins eating the jerky. After Tohopka finishes his repast, the three sit silently late into the night.

Finally, Tohopka disappears back over the edge. He moves slowly as if comfortable with his new friends.

Ohanzee and Pierre crawl back into the cave to their bunks. Ohanzee's bunk is on a high tier close to the roof of the cave, and Pierre's bunk is close to the hole. The fire is now a pile of red embers.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAY

SUPER: 1843

Six wagons form a circle in a flat clearing. The mountains ascend on all sides, and smoke rises from the circle. A group of a dozen or more people, men, women, and children, are gathered outside the circle. They stand beneath a large gnarled tree from which the body of a man is hanging. A noose is around the dead man's neck. TRAGEN (50), a man dressed in black, speaks to the crowd while brandishing a Bible.

TRAGEN

Race Goodfellow was an evil man.

A Woman, EFFIE, 18, sobs.

Tragen is a tall lean man with deep lines accentuating his face. His eyes are beady and cruel. The barber bowl hat is unnaturally perched on his head.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

He sat with us at prayer meeting.
He said grace before our meals.
But, Race Goodfellow was of the
devil! His willful disobedience to
God's law cursed him to a demon's
death. He dared defy me! I,
Phinnaeus Montgomery Tragen, the
chosen prophet of the Lord!

Two rough-looking men stand to either side of Tragen. They too wear black and carry rifles.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

Race Goodfellow has reaped what he
has sown. He was a black sheep that
poisoned the souls of the
righteous. Now, he will poison no
one again.

The wind moans.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

He leaves behind an honest wife and
true.

(MORE)

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

Effie, I will take you to my bosom;
I will marry you and make you whole
in the sight of Jesus.

EFFIE

Ugh.

Effie swoons. Two other women hold her on her feet.

TRAGEN

My beloved flock, take heed the
warning of Race Goodfellow. Obey
me! Obey my commands or face the
fires of eternal torment.

Tragen gravely scans the faces of his dumbstruck audience.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

Jasper, my loyal son, cut this
swine down and put him in a hole to
rot.

A lanky man, JASPER, in his early twenties, also dressed in black, begins lowering the body from the tree.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

The rest of you, get back to work.
You women! Get our supper.

The crowd walks slowly back to the circle of wagons. Jasper shouts orders, and two middle-age men carry the body away with Jasper walking behind. The two rough-looking men, SETH and CARL stay beside Tragen.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

See that my wagon is not disturbed.
After all, tonight begins my
honeymoon.

The three men chuckle. Tragen's smile is large and shocking; a front tooth is broken in half.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - CIRCLE OF WAGONS - DUSK

Tragen enters his wagon. Effie, seeing her chance, ducks behind a wagon then behind a tree outside the parameter of the circle. Seeing she has escaped, Effie runs into the blackness of the mountain forest.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - CIRCLE OF WAGONS - FULL DARKNESS

Jasper runs to his father's wagon and shouts.

JASPER

Father! Father! She's gone!

Tragen throws back the canvas flap at the aft of the wagon. His hat is gone, and his greasy hair is pasted to his scalp. His face flushes with rage in the flickering orange firelight.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Father, Effie Goodfellow is gone!
We've searched all the wagons. She
must have run aw...

TRAGEN

Fools! Quickly! Take Seth and Carl.
Find her! Find her now!

Jasper turns to a man in the crowd.

JASPER

You. Saddle three horses! And don't
be slow!

MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - NIGHT

Three men on horseback move slowly through the treacherous terrain. The moon is thin, and visibility is difficult, even for the horses.

CARL

I don't care what your father said,
if we keep going tonight, we may
not live to see the dawn.

JASPER

The bitch can't move either. We
might as well hold up 'til first
light.

Effie is nearby. She has fallen several times; her dress is torn, and her knees and an elbow are bleeding. She moves with cautious terror. Her breaths are short and rapid.

Again she falls face first, exhausted.

After a time, she raises herself onto her elbows weakly, curls her nose and sniffs. She looks up. Tohopka stands in front of her. He is eight feet tall. Effie faints.

Tohopka picks up Effie and carries her away. He carries her for miles.

After he enters the valley of the cave, he stands before the stream in front of the hole and sings a ghostly note. The noise is a wail or moan only uttered by humans amid their blackest grief.

Pierre, 22, emerges from beneath the overhang. Ohanzee crawls onto the porch. It is early dawn.

Tohopka gently lays the woman on the ground. Pierre walks up and looks down upon Effie. Then, he walks over to Tohopka and embraces him. Pierre is over six-feet tall, but the top of his head is below Tohopka's breast. Tohopka returns his embrace then disappears into the forest.

Pierre has changed. His reddish blonde hair and beard are braided, and a leather band is tied around his head. Despite the beard, the scars across his temple, cheek and nose can still be seen. His vest is made of puma fur.

Pierre picks Effie up in his arms. When he looks into her sleeping face, her face morphs briefly into the face of his mother in the moonlight. He carries her across the stream.

INT. THE CAVE

Effie lies on animal furs stacked atop one of the mezzanine tiers. She is beneath an elk skin blanket. She awakens with a start and sits up. She looks around in shock at the strangeness of her surroundings.

Ohanzee roasts venison over the fire pit. Pierre sits cross-legged in front of the hole, peering out over the valley. Pierre hears Effie awaken and walks over to her bunk.

Effie stares up at Pierre in terror bunching up the elk hide beneath her chin. Pierre stares back with curiosity and awe.

EFFIE

Who are you?

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
Be still and rest.

EFFIE

(French with subtitles)
Thank you.

Pierre is surprised.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
You speak my tongue!

EFFIE

(French with subtitles)

My father was from Grenoble. My
mother was from Bristol.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)

I do not know these places.

Pierre continues looking into her face as his own face melts then flushes red. He turns, walks back to the hole, and sits.

Effie exhibits curiosity, cranes her neck to get another look at the handsome young man.

Ohanzee glances at her without expression. Effie notices Ohanzee's scars and blenches. Without reaction, Ohanzee turns his head back to the meat.

From her bunk, Effie can see the waterfall in the back of the cave. She stands cautiously and walks weakly to the waterfall. The falls are not visible from the hole or the fire pit, so she avails herself the opportunity to refresh herself and wash her wounds.

When she returns, Pierre and Ohanzee are gone. The leg of venison is still spitted above the glowing coals. She pulls off a strip of meat and eats ravenously.

Effie looks out the hole. She sees no way down from the porch. She goes behind the fire pit and sees a ladder behind the chimney opening. She strips more meat from the leg of venison, stuffs the meat into a pocket of her dress. She grabs Pierre's fur jacket, which he has now outgrown, and climbs down the ladder.

It is dusk when Pierre and Ohanzee return to the cave. Upon entering, they see that Effie is gone. They retire.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAY

Effie reaches into the pocket of her dress, removes a small scrap of venison, stares blankly at the ort for a moment then puts it into her mouth.

Her dress is soiled and torn; she has started to weaken. She trudges along a rough game trail. Finally, she sits and starts to weep. Then, she collapse on the rocks, unconscious. She awakens to loud laughter. It is Jasper, Seth and Carl.

SETH

Now, where did you think you was
goin', missy?

Jasper gets off his horse and walks over to Effie. He stares at her for a couple of seconds then slaps her across the face, knocks her to the ground. Carl chuckles.

CARL

That'll learn you not to run off.

Effie is put on a horse behind Jasper before they depart. She is too weak to resist.

MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - LATER

Pierre and Ohanzee follow Effie's tracks to the place where the horse tracks begin. They also see the boot prints of the three men. They follow the horse tracks.

At dusk, Pierre and Ohanzee arrive at a peak overlooking the circle of wagons. They see Effie. She sits on a wooden box inside the circle of wagons. She holds a cup of coffee with both hands.

Ohanzee and Pierre move away and disappear into the waning light.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - CIRCLE OF WAGONS - THAT NIGHT

Jasper approaches the rear of Tragen's wagon.

JASPER

Father, I need to speak with you.

Tragen exits the rear of his wagon and dons his black barber bowl hat. Jasper hands Tragen Pierre's fur jacket.

TRAGEN

What's this?

JASPER

She was wearing this when we caught up with her.

TRAGEN

The whore has consorted with savages!

Tragen walks toward the campfire where Effie still sits. He approaches her and throws the jacket at her feet.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

Where did you get this? Answer Me!

Effie stands weakly but does not speak. Tragen strikes her heavily, and she falls to her knees sobbing. Tragen turns to an elderly woman, MATTIE.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

Woman! Keep her in your wagon until I return. If she escapes again, someone will hang! Jasper, saddle four horses. We leave tonight. These savages will be dealt with.

Tragen walks back to his wagon and disappears inside.

He emerges from the wagon wearing a black greatcoat. He carries a rifle, and two black pistols can be seen stuck in his belt. Effie runs up to him sobbing.

EFFIE

Please! They never touched me! They only gave me food and a place to sleep.

TRAGEN

Jezebel! I will deal with you when I return.

Four horses and four riders move away into the night. Mattie and Effie huddle together and watch them disappear in the darkness. Soon the sound of hoofbeats melts into the moaning wind.

MATTIE

God protect us. With any luck, they won't come back.

MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAWN

In the blue light of predawn, the four men arrive at the spot where Effie was found. Seth searches the ground and finds moccasin tracks.

SETH

There you are, you red bastards. Reverend Tragen! I got their trail! There's only two of them.

TRAGEN

Good work. Get on with it.

The four move off, following Pierre and Ohanzee's tracks.

The four horsemen traverse the spectacular landscape through the day. In late afternoon, they stop to make camp.

SETH

Those dirty heathens were trailin'
her alright. Their tracks are all
mixed together.

The men dismount and start making camp.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - NIGHT

The four men sit around a campfire drinking coffee.

TRAGEN

The savages in this land are
demons! All of them. With God's
help, they will all be scourged
with whips of fire and brimstone.
We will wipe them from the face of
the earth. We will find these
fiends and send them to hell where
they belong. We leave at dawn.

INT. THE CAVE - AFTERNOON

Pierre and Ohanzee peer through the brush that covers the
hole. They watch the four horsemen enter the valley, still
following the faint trail.

The four men follow the tracks to the stream below the cave.
Pierre and Ohanzee hear the voices of the men fifty feet
below the hole.

TRAGEN

They are near. The tracks end in
this valley.

Pierre and Ohanzee watch the men move upstream. They watch as
the men make camp beside the stream, a few hundred yards from
the cave. Ohanzee whispers to Pierre.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)
Same men.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
I'll see what they want.

Pierre disappears down the ladder behind a cold hearth.
Ohanzee catches a glimpse of Pierre when he crosses the
stream.

MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - TRAGEN'S CAMP - NIGHT

The four men slouch around a campfire. Tragen is amid one of his sermons.

TRAGEN

...Must be destroyed. Only I can
lead the righteous to...

Tragen's tirade is interrupted when Jasper stands up suddenly, rifle in hand. The three other men stand and execute frenetic spins in the direction of Jasper's concern. Standing on the circumference of the firelight, Pierre hovers like a ghost. The men are fixated for several moments by the sudden, unannounced appearance of the dim figure.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

Why do you tarry? Fire!

Seeing the rifles being raised at him, Pierre disappears as four shots echo through the valley. Smoke from the rifles is dense and pungent as the men run to where the figure had been. They scatter and search the entire area before returning to the campfire.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

From now on, someone will be awake
at all times.

JASPER

That was a white man!

CARL

He's right, reverend.

TRAGEN

He was a savage. Did you see his
dress? Did you see his eyes? He
will be brought before the Throne
of God and punished. My eyes
discern the wicked.

EXT. THE CAVE - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Pierre ascends the ladder and rejoins Ohanzee by the hole.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)
My turn.

Ohanzee disappears.

EXT. TRAGEN'S CAMP - MINUTES LATER

Tragen, Jasper, and Seth sit drinking coffee. Carl stands as he pours coffee into a tin cup. The men hear a whispering sound.

Carl's body shudders as he drops the cup and coffee pot. He continues to stand with the shaft of an arrow protruding from his eye. Carl collapses forward, falls face first into the fire. His leg trembles.

Three men toss their tin cups to the ground as they grab their rifles and repeatedly fire in all directions. As all the men dive for cover, Tragen shouts an order.

TRAGEN
Douse the fire!

Seth exhibits a repulsed expression as he lifts Carl's head by the hair while pouring the remaining contents of the pot of coffee on the fire beneath. Then, he too scrambles for cover.

EXT. TRAGEN'S CAMP - DAWN

Tragen, Jasper and Seth are still at the ready. Hiding behind the boulders that surround the campsite. Their rifles in hand, they scan the area, obscured by a dense fog. Carl's body lies beneath a blanket. The arrow forms a tent-pole. A thin plume of smoke still rises from the coals of the fire.

JASPER
They could have killed us all!
Father, let's leave this place!

TRAGEN
Leave? These demons must die. I
will not be foiled by heathens.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAY

The fog has lifted, but the day is overcast and misty. Three men on horseback walk the animals slowly, scan the ground. Jasper pulls his horse to a halt and speaks.

JASPER
They could be anywhere. We may
never see them again. Father,
please, let us return.

TRAGEN

I will hear no more from you,
coward! You will obey me and search
on.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - NIGHT

The three men dismount and lead their horses behind a huge pile of boulders. Rifles in hand, the men each find a hiding place. They start to show their exhaustion. Seth squeezes his eyes with his fingers. Tragen blinks and bulges his eyes while shaking his head. Jasper nods with drooping eyelids.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAWN

Tragen's chin rests on his chest; he is asleep. Seth snores audibly, mouth open, head tilted back on his hat. Jasper's eyes are open; his throat has been cut.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAY

Tragen kneels over the body of his son, staring into the dead face with wrath. Seth walks to Tragen and squats beside him.

SETH

I would never go against you
reverend, but we must save our own
lives. We can return later and set
things straight. The winter's
comin', and we got to get our
people out of these mountains.

Tragen does not look up. He speaks slowly as if reading a melancholy poem.

TRAGEN

I will heed your council, Seth.
Return? Oh, yes. I will bring an
army if I must.

EXT. CIRCLE OF WAGONS - AFTERNOON

Tragen and Seth look at no one as they ride into the circle of wagons leading two riderless horses. Effie and Mattie peek out through the canvass and watch the procession. The men are weak and spent, and their clothes are soiled and torn.

EXT. CIRCLE OF WAGONS - NIGHT

Tragen and Seth sit by the fire, cradling coffee in their hands. Both stare into the flames as they speak. Blankets cover their shoulders. Seth picks up a bottle of whisky and pours a slug into Tragen's coffee. Then, he does the same for himself.

TRAGEN

I will hire an army of mercenaries to help me find and kill these devils.

SETH

An army might not be necessary.

TRAGEN

What do you mean?

SETH

One man. One man could do the job.

TRAGEN

Well? What man?

SETH

His name is Mongwau. I have never seen him, but I heard Jim Bridger crow about him when he was drunk as a skunk. He said that Mongua is a half-breed Crow Indian, banished from the tribe for murder. They say he can track an eagle to its nest and kill a panther in a fair fight. He works for gold.

TRAGEN

Yes, I will hire a savage to kill a savage. Let them kill each other. Bring me that woman tonight.

Tragen stands and tosses the rest of his coffee in the fire. The whiskey makes a flash in the flames. In the flash, Tragen's face is lit from underneath.

In Mattie's wagon, Effie grabs Mattie's arm.

EFFIE

Will no one give us justice when we get to the trading post? My husband has been murdered.

MATTIE

No, child, there's no law here
except the law of nature.

Effie begins to cry.

EXT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - DAY

The wagons circle again close to the settlement, situated in a large clearing beneath a high mountain pass. Tragen is on horseback. He shouts orders.

TRAGEN

Circle the wagons! Set up here!

EXT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - LATER

As Tragen and Seth ride into the post, they pass beneath a faded sign. The sign hangs by ropes from the cross beam of a high, square entry made of weather-bleached logs: "Bridger's Trading Post".

The settlement consists of a blacksmith shop, a stable, a large barn, an array of canvas tents, and a large log building with a spacious covered porch in front. Above the entrance is a sign: "Rocky Mountain Trading Company".

The two men dismount in front of the building, tie their horses to a hitching post and walk inside.

The primitive interior is lit with whale oil lamps. A large stone fireplace dominates one wall, making one side of the room more lit than the other. The two walk up to a wide counter, the surface of which is constructed of split logs. Furs hang everywhere on the walls, and more furs are stacked behind the counter.

There are tables in the room around which sit mountain men in their strange regalia of distinctive fur hats, tunics, and moccasins.

The two men walk across the room to the counter.

LOUIS VASQUEZ, a large black-eyed older man with long grey hair and an olive complexion sits behind the counter watching them approach. Seth nods as he speaks.

SETH

Viskiss?

VASQUEZ

So, you have survived another journey.

SETH

Reverend, this here's Old Viskiss.
The reverend Tragen.

Vasquez holds out his hand to Tragen. Tragen gives Vasquez a cold fish as he scans the room. Vasquez seems a bit offended by Tragen's indifference to the handshake.

SETH (CONT'D)

The reverend and I brought in six wagons from Denver. He wants to talk to Mr. BRIDGER.

VASQUEZ

I will fetch him for you.

Vasquez disappears through a door behind the counter. Soon, a rough hewn man emerges. He is as tall as Tragen with leathery skin and a crooked mouth. His dirty blonde hair is a disheveled mop atop his head.

Bridger slams two paw-like hands on the counter before speaking, causing Tragen to start.

BRIDGER

What can I do for you boys?

TRAGEN

Two renegades killed my son. One of the murderers white. I want revenge. Seth tells me a man named Mongwau can be hired for gold.

Bridger's eyes glaze as he stares into Tragen's face.

BRIDGER

This is hard country, mister. If I was you, I'd let it go.

TRAGEN

Where do I find this Mongwau?

BRIDGER

There ain't no way to find him. All I can do is pass the word. Somebody will see him in the mountains and let him know he has a job. But, I'll tell you now; I'd rather find the devil in my bedroll.

Tragen reaches in the pocket of his tunic and tosses three gold coins on the counter. Bridger rakes the coins into his hand before he speaks.

BRIDGER (CONT'D)
Don't say I didn't warn you.

EXT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - CIRCLE OF WAGONS - DAY

Mongwau strides into the circle of wagons. All the people scatter, stand by their wagons and gawk at him. Seth approaches the Indian with rifle in hand.

MONGWAU
I seek Tragen.

Tragen exits his wagon buttoning his shirt.

TRAGEN
I'm Tragen.

Tragen walks over to Mongwau and stands before him.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)
You are Mongwau.

Mongwau narrows his eyes at Tragen and speaks with authority.

MONGWAU
I kill for gold.

TRAGEN
How much gold?

MONGWAU
One man, this many big gold.

Mongwau holds up five fingers.

MONGWAU (CONT'D)
When I bring scalps, this many more.

Mongwau holds up five fingers.

Tragen reaches in his tunic, pulls out a handful of gold coins, and drops ten of them, one by one, into Mongwau's outstretched hand.

TRAGEN
There are two.

Tragen holds up two fingers.

TRAGEN (CONT'D)

I will know if you have done your job. At least one of them is a white man.

EXT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - CIRCLE OF WAGONS - LATER

Tragen, Seth and the people of the wagon train, including Effie, watch as Mongwau sets off on his mission, disappearing into the trees to the east. He rides a pinto mustang and leads a pack mule loaded with supplies.

EXT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - CIRCLE OF WAGONS - THAT NIGHT

Tragen climbs into the back of his wagon and is blown backward onto the ground; a gigantic hole is in his chest. Effie emerges from the wagon with a smoking shotgun, her face has been battered.

EFFIE

Give the Devil my regards.

She breaks down the barrel, takes out the two spent shells, and loads two new rounds into the chambers before snapping the barrel shut.

The people begin to gather around Tragen's body. Seth runs up with his rifle.

Effie points the barrel at Seth with a stony expression on her face.

Seth backs up a few steps then turns and runs for his horse. The people shout insults and throw rocks at him. As he gets on his horse and starts to ride away, his furry beaver hat falls to the ground; he does not stop to pick it up.

Effie turns to the crowd and speaks with conviction.

EFFIE (CONT'D)

Let's go to Oregon.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - THREE DAYS LATER - DAWN

Mongwau rides into the valley still leading the pack mule. He scans the ground while frequently pausing to reconnoiter the trees and mountainsides around him. He pauses upstream from the cave to water his horses.

INT. THE CAVE

Pierre and Ohanze watch Mongwau closely.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Mongwau looks around cautiously. Then, he exits the valley continuing east.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - LATER

Mongwau stacks brush and large tree limbs. He constructs a make-shift corral for the animals. When the corral is completed, he gathers tall grass, cuts it with a large knife. He tosses the grass into the corral where his horse and mule mill about nervously. Water falls from the cliff above and collects in a shallow rock basin inside the corral.

He carries his supplies up the side of the cliff and stashes them among the rocks before setting off on foot. He totes a bow and a quiver of arrows.

He scales a rock face; his bow and quiver form an X on his back.

Mongwau gains the summit. He sits on a precipice overlooking the valley of the cave. He draws his big knife and begins sharpening it on a flat stone retrieved from a pouch sewn into his knee-high moccasins.

Mongwau's skin and buckskin clothing are covered by the dust of the mountains; he is the same color as the stone on which he sits. Were it not for the ominous rasping of steel on stone, one might be standing next to him and still overlook his presence.

EXT. MONGWAU'S PERCH - DUSK

As the sun descends behind a roiling bank of clouds, swarming in above the mountains to the west, Mongwau sits motionless as if in a trance, peering into the valley below. The wind howls around him like mournful ghost.

EXT. MONGWAU'S PERCH - DAWN

It is misting rain. Mongwau, still motionless, sits in the same place, soaked with the rain. Drops stream from his nose and hair. He even remains motionless when he sees movement far down in the valley below. It is Pierre and Ohanze heading south away from the cave.

When they have gone, Mongwau stands and heads southwest down the steep slope in a direction that will intercept the two.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAY - TWO HOURS LATER

South of the cave, the stream widens and becomes deeper. Sheer bluffs rise up on both sides of the stream. Ohanzee and Pierre fish with rods fashioned from willow branches. They stand forty yards apart, toss their catch on the rocks behind them.

Mongwau watches them from above, hidden behind rocks on the summit of one of the bluffs.

Ohanzee can feel the eyes of Mongwau and is distracted from his fishing. Pausing, he scans the ridges above him. He sees nothing, but feels uneasy enough to gather his fish into a deerskin bag, detach his line, roll up hook and line, and stuff the roll into the pocket of his deerskin vest. He straps the bag onto his shoulder, picks up his bow and quiver, and walks over to Pierre.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)

Pierre, something watches us.

Pierre gathers his fish, line, and hook, and the two move away upstream to the north. When they enter the shelter of the trees, they begin to run, follow the stream.

Soon, they reach a place on the stream ideal for an ambush. Crossing the stream, Ohanzee leaps from rock to rock, careful not to leave a trail. Pierre does the same as he scales the rocky rise above the opposite bank. They take their places above either bank of the stream and wait.

After a time, they see Mongwau jog into view. He pauses before he reaches the ambush site and starts moving stealthily forward toward them, following their tracks and scanning the rocks in which the two are hidden as he comes.

When he reaches the spot directly below them, Mongwau's eyes widen as he scans the bank for tracks. He crouches suddenly, scanning the rock above on both side of the stream. He turns quickly and begins running full out in the direction from which he had come. At the same time, Ohanzee stands and draws his bow, aiming an arrow at Mongwau, but it is too late. Mongwau is now out of range.

Pierre and Ohanzee descend from their positions and meet at the water's edge.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
He hunts us.

OHANZEE
(French with subtitles)
Yes.

The two move on to the north, stepping only on the tops of rocks to hide their trail.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - VALLEY OF THE CAVE - LATER

Mongwau runs behind a boulder, notches an arrow and waits.

After a while, he emerges, walks slowly in the direction he had been watching.

He arrives at the ambush site. He is unconcerned by the location this time as he proceeds north along the edge of the stream, scanning the bank for tracks.

When Mongwau arrives at the spot below the cave, he pauses. He sniffs the air and scans the area intently. He sniffs again. His eyes widen.

INT. THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Pierre and Ohanzee lie on their bellies side by side peering out the hole. They watch Mongwau fifty feet below.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - VALLEY OF THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Mongwau moves quickly into the underbrush and steals away unseen to a lay-by within bow shot of the hole.

INT. THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

OHANZEE
(French with subtitles)
He has found us.

Pierre looks at Ohanzee and exhales deeply.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
He will kill us when we leave the cave.

INT. THE CHIMNEY - LATE AFTERNOON

Pierre is in the rock chimney. His moccasins are against the wall of the flue, and his back is pressed against the opposite wall. He uses his elbows and feet to shinny in a sitting position up the shaft.

Soot covers the walls of the shaft. Tied to his wrist is a knotted rope made of braided leather. The rope dangles seventy feet down to the opening of the cave where Ohanzee feeds slack and watches Pierre's ascent.

When he reaches the top, another forty feet higher, a robust wind whips Pierre's beard and hair. Sitting on the edge of the shaft, he wraps the rope around a jagged rock tooth, jutting out over an abyss.

He jerks the rope three times. Ohanzee starts to climb the rope hand over hand while walking up a wall of the flue. His bow and quiver form an X across his back.

Shortly, both men are on the sharp crest of the bluff in which their cave is located. Pierre scans into the darkness below as Ohanzee coils the rope over his arm and detaches it from the rock tooth. He hands the large coil of rope to Pierre.

The two men start down the far side of the bluff, a rock wall with narrow footholds made even more treacherous by the darkness. Sixty feet off the valley floor behind the cave, a protruding overhang prevents their descent.

Pierre makes a loop in the end of the rope and secures it over a formation of rock while the coil is around his shoulder.

He drops the coil over the edge. The coil unrolls, and the men hear the faint sound of the remainder of the coil striking the rocks below.

Pierre climbs down the rope hand over hand until his feet touch the valley floor. When he is on the ground, Ohanzee follows. The two men pass into the darkness of the valley, leaving the rope hanging from the cliff.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - SAME NIGHT

Pierre and Ohanzee arrive at the western entrance of the valley of the cave. Hugging the base of the mountains, they travel east in the direction of Mongwau's corral until they reach the base of the mountain on which Mongwau had surveyed the valley in the rain. They ascend part way up the gentle slope of the mountain and hide among the rocks.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAWN

In the blue light of predawn, Ohanzee points in a direction just below the hole. Pierre strains his eyes then sees Mongwau hiding behind a boulder, an arrow notched, waiting. His back is exposed to them.

Pierre and Ohanzee split up and approach Mongwau from behind. When Ohanzee is thirty yards from Mongwau, he draws his bow and fires. Mongwau hears the flight of the arrow and flips a shoulder toward Ohanzee, dodging the projectile. The flint tip of Ohanzee's arrow shatters on the granite boulder inches from Mongwau's chest.

When the arrow shatters, Pierre dashes full speed toward Mongwau, but he is much farther away than Ohanzee. Mongwau does not see Pierre because he is focused on Ohanzee.

Mongwau draws an arrow from the quiver on his back and fires at Ohanzee. The arrow's flight is in line with Ohanzee's eye, and he hears the arrow's passage and feels its breath as he ducks his head just in time to keep from being struck.

Mongwau begins to walk toward Ohanzee as he looses another arrow then another with deadly accuracy. Ohanzee dodges frantically trying to avoid the hail of arrows. If he runs or draws his own bow, he will be hit. Each blurry arrow makes a zipping sound accompanied by a puff of air.

Ohanzee rolls, comes up on one knee, and fires an arrow back. Mongwau casually moves aside, avoiding the arrow while walking steadily toward Ohanzee, firing arrows.

An arrow hits Ohanzee in the shoulder. Ohanzee bends at the waist, holding the wound.

When Mongwau draws his bow again, Pierre dives off a ledge and tackles Mongwau at the neck, knocking him off his feet and causing the arrow to miss Ohanzee.

Mongwau rolls to his feet while pulling the large knife from his belt. Pierre stands from his crouching position and faces Mongwau while kicking Mongwau's bow many yards away.

Mongwau smiles at Pierre then chuckles shockingly a few times. His teeth are yellow and rotten. Pierre is filled with rage and charges Mongwau.

Mongwau's stroke is faster than a striking snake, and only Pierre's extraordinary agility allows him to avoid the blade. Mongwau's expression becomes menacing as he walks toward Pierre.

Only now does Pierre draw his own knife. Pierre's face is flushed with fear and fury. Pierre lunges at Mongwau's belly. Mongwau cuts the back of Pierre's hand while turning his body to avoid Pierre's thrust.

But, Pierre does not drop his knife. Pierre steps backward ignoring the laceration on his hand.

Ohanzee winces in pain as he tries to draw his bow, but Mongwau target had been well chosen. Ohanzee tosses down his bow and picks up a fist-size rock. He moves, staggering, toward Mongwau and Pierre. Mongwau's back is to Ohanzee when Ohanzee hurls the stone. The stone strikes Mongwau in the back of his head, causing him to fall to his knees.

When Mongwau turns back toward Ohanzee, Pierre stabs Mongwau in the neck and leaves the knife. Mongwau swings his blade again and cuts through Pierre's puma skin vest, making a shallow wound across his abdomen.

As Ohanzee arrives, Mongwau stands and pulls Pierre's knife from the side of his neck. Blood spews from his neck as Mongwau rises to his feet. Mongwau screams, holding a knife in each hand, and falls to the ground dead.

Leaving Mongwau to the vultures, Pierre and Ohanzee gather Mongwau's bow and quiver as well as his big knife and head back toward the cave.

EXT. MONGWAU'S CORRAL - NEXT DAY

Pierre is alone when he finds Mongwau's horse and mule. Their grass is gone, and they are spooked by Pierre's presence. Pierre pulls back the brush, and the animals run away.

Scouring the area, Pierre finds Mongwau's supplies. He stuffs the bridles and reins into one of the two large canvas bags, hefts the bags on his shoulder and leaves.

As he totes the bags, Pierre notices that the horse and mule are following him, far behind on the trail.

EXT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - NIGHT

The wind howls through the log eaves of the Rocky Mountain Trading Company.

INT. ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRADING COMPANY

The big room is dark and empty except for an oil lamp on a table in the corner. Bridger and Seth sit opposite each other at the table.

Seth takes a slug from a large ceramic jug. His eyes are red, and his chin is wet from the whiskey. He stares into a whale oil lamp as if transfixed by the flame. He speaks with a sawing drone.

SETH

I only seen him once. In the glow of the fire. He stood there staring at us. Like a nightmare! Just standing there. Four men fired at once. He disappeared like a ghost. His face was mangled, and his beard was braided. A white Indian, not human or animal.

Bridger takes a draw from his large fancy pipe and blows a thick plume of smoke into the golden glow of the lamp.

BRIDGER

That renegade half breed, Mongwau, took off from this very spot - paid gold to bring in their scalps. That Injun was the meanest, sneakiest varmint that ever slit a throat. I heard it told he kilt eleven Crow what chased him for choppin' up a chief's daughter. A dozen Crow braves chased him into the wild country. Only one got out alive to tell the tale. If ole' Mongwau never come back from that nightmare valley, there's somethin' mighty bad in there. Anything. Any thing coulda' bested ole' Mongwau? Out there? It's not a thing of this earth. It come straight from the smokin' pits of hell itself.

SETH

We was after 'em for what they done to a woman. She got lost, and we rode into that valley after 'em. Four went in and two come out. Only me and the reverend Tragen come out alive. One got a arrow in the eye. One got his throat slit! We never even seen 'em.

(MORE)

SETH (CONT'D)

We was together every minute, and
we never even seen 'em.

Seth squints and grits his teeth before taking another long slug from the jug.

SETH (CONT'D)

After them devil's had her, that
woman went balmy. Shot the
Reverend. Him - who saved her! She
blowed daylight through his chest
with a double barrelled scatter
gun.

Seth turns up the jug as whiskey runs down his chin.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - WATERFALL - LATE AFTERNOON

Ohanzee lies on his belly, peering downward. He is on a ledge halfway up the face of a bluff two hundred feet high. In the gorge below him, a cove of bluffs with a narrow access, the stream becomes a giant white pillar, rising from a clear pool, blue and deep. The sound of the falls echoes off the walls of the canyon like a million voices singing.

The young woman is WOKAIH. We see her from Ohanzee's perch. Her hair is long and black. She is nude. Her buckskin dress lies across a boulder behind her. She stands in the clear water up to her knees, bathing.

After awhile, she dives into the water. Ohanzee can see her lighter form moving beneath the surface of the clear water.

Ohanzee turns his eyes away and squints. He shakes his head and rubs his scarred face heavily with his hand. He must look back.

At last, Wokaih steps out onto the bank, dons her dress and leaves through the narrow access. After she has gone, Ohanzee leaps off the bluff, one hundred feet, into the deep clear pool below.

He swims to the bank and emerges from the pool, rubbing his face with his hands. Still dripping, Ohanzee disappears through the narrow access.

Ohanzee follows the girl, unseen.

Finally, Ohanzee sees the village. Tepees rise among gigantic trees, and smoke ascends through the branches above, whose highest branches point to the mountain peaks towering over them. Wokaih enters the village.

Ohanzee turns and heads back.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - SAME DAY

Pierre walks toward the cave. He carries two blue grouse, dangling from his belt. Mongwau's bow and quiver form an X on his back.

He passes the spot where Mongwau died and pauses, staring down at Mongwau's grinning skull.

The clothes are rotten, and Pierre notices the whetstone revealed beneath the rotted leather pouch on what had been Mongwau's high-top moccasins. Pierre kneels and reaches to retrieve the square stone.

A glint of brilliant gold strikes his eye. Among the deteriorated shards of rotted buckskin and bleached rib bones, the ten gold coins glint in the sun.

Pierre retrieves the whetstone and the ten gold coins, stuffs them into his leather fanny pack, continues on toward the cave.

EXT. THE PORCH - THAT NIGHT

The milky way arches above their heads as Pierre, Ohanzee and Tohopka sit on the porch, listening to the wind.

Finally, Tohopka stands. Pierre and Ohanzee stand and walk over to him. All three embrace. Tohopka turns slowly and disappears over the edge of the porch.

Pierre and Ohanzee sit again on the porch in the darkness.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)
Today, I saw a beautiful girl. She
was bathing at the waterfall. My
heart sang for her.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
I have seen her village.

Pierre turns his head toward Ohanzee and grins.

PIERRE (CONT'D)

(French with subtitles)
If you meet her, you could make
little Ohanzees.

A moment passes before Ohanzee purses his lips and blows an invisible bugle before bursting into laughter. His laughter amuses Pierre and both begin to laugh heartily.

The sound, echoing through the valley, makes the animals pause and perk their ears.

MONTAGE

- 1) A pack of wolves stop, all peer in the same direction;
- 2) a wolverine wheels around and sniffs the air;
- 3) an elk raises his giant antlers.
- 4) Tohopka turns toward the laughter, cocks his head.

END MONTAGE

From a distance the laughter is eerie and reverberating.

When they catch their breaths, Pierre speaks.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
I have a gift for you.

Pierre turns and enters the hole. He returns moments later, sits beside Ohanzee and tosses five gold coins on the rock surface. The coins make a distinctive sound. Ohanzee gathers the coins in his hand and inspects them as best he can in the dim light.

PIERRE (CONT'D)
(French with subtitles)
That is money. My father had three.
They were very dear to him. Thanks
to the crazy man, we have five
each.

EXT. THE WATERFALL - DAY

Wokaih enters the towering gorge of the waterfall through the narrow passage and approaches her spot on the bank of the pond. She walks to the boulder on which she left her clothes before.

There, on the spot where her dress had been, a gold coin.

The coin frightens her, and Wokaih looks in all directions with apprehension.

She snatches the coin and disappears through the narrow access.

EXT. THE WATERFALL - ANOTHER DAY

Wokaih enters the cove through the narrow passage. She looks around cautiously before walking to the boulder. A gold coin hangs, secured by braided leather, around her neck.

On the boulder lies another gold coin. She picks up the coin and stares around the cove. This time, her expression is one of bewilderment.

She removes her dress and walks into the water.

After her swim, Wokaih puts on her dress and gives the coin another look before palming the coin and leaving.

EXT. THE WATERFALL - ANOTHER DAY

When Wokaih enters the cove, she scurries directly to the boulder. There is no coin. She has a moment of contemplation. She hears a splash behind her. She looks toward the pool and sees Ohanzee swimming toward her.

As he exits the water and starts to walk toward her, she recoils with fear.

Ohanzee hands her a gold coin, which she takes warily. Then, he steps backward while drawing Mongwau's big knife from his belt. The young woman recoils again while clutching the coin to her breast.

Ohanzee cuts a gash into his chest with the knife, across his heart, while staring deeply into the eyes of Wokaih.

He returns the knife to its sheath, turns slowly, still fixing his eyes into hers before jogging away through the narrow access.

Wokaih has her swim. As she leaves, she places the gold coin on the boulder.

EXT. THE WATERFALL - THE NEXT DAY

The young woman emerges running through the narrow access and over to the boulder. The coin is gone.

Ohanzee appears regally from behind a boulder. He strolls to her with a stern expression on his face. He hands her the coin.

She does not take the coin, but tries to contain a giggle as she puts her fingers against her mouth.

Ohanzee stares at her for a moment, blows his invisible bugle before breaking out into laughter himself. The sound of their laughter commingles with the sound of the waterfall, all reverberating off the canyon walls.

OHANZEE
(Shoshone with subtitles)
I am Shadow (Ohanzee).

WOKAIH
(Shoshone with subtitles)
I am White Antelope
(Wokaihwokomas).

Ohanzee rolls his eyes with feigned frustration. Wokaihwokomas laughs at him then speaks still smiling.

WOKAIH (CONT'D)
(Shoshone with subtitles)
You may call me WOKAIH. Ohanzee?

Ohanzee exhales as if relieved then smiles at Wokaih.

OHANZEE
Wokaih.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - FOREST GLADE - NIGHT

Ohanzee and Wokaih walk together, hand in hand. They pause and face each other.

WOKAIH
(Shoshone with subtitles)
I cannot stay long. I must not be missed. Tomorrow, I will meet you at the falling water. My heart sings for you.

The two embrace warmly, rubbing their bodies together.

A puma screams. It is upon them. Wokaih gasps as Ohanzee wheels around, unsheathes the knife of Mongwau.

The puma leaps from the branch of a tree, hitting Ohanzee in the chest and knocking him down. Wokaih gasps in terror. As man and cat roll across the ground together, Ohanzee plunges the knife deeply into the puma's shoulder.

Ohanzee defends himself from the teeth of the beast, now lunging for his throat, by raising his forearm.

The cat gnaws Ohanzee's arm while it lacerates Ohanzee's thigh with his rear claws and gouges his arms and vest with its fore claws.

Ohanzee stabs again, this time at the cat's eye. The blade makes a shallow wound, but the cat retreats momentarily.

Seizing the opportunity, Ohanzee rolls backward, stands to his feet and dives for a large dead branch lying on the ground. He picks up the branch and pokes the end toward the enraged beast.

Ohanzee holds the cat at bay. The animal bleeds from an eye and limps from the shoulder wound while snarling. In a few moments, it disappears into the forest.

Wokaih runs to Ohanzee's side and embraces him, ignoring the blood.

OHANZEE

(Shoshone with subtitles)

Go home now. I am well. Look for me
at the falling water.

The two embrace before Ohanzee pushes her away.

OHANZEE (CONT'D)

(Shoshone with subtitles)

Go.

Wokaih runs toward her village as Ohanzee disappears into the blackness of the forest, following the puma.

EXT. WOKAIH'S VILLAGE - DAY

The inhabitants of the village mill about performing routine chores.

INT. TEPEE - CONTINUOUS

Wokaih enters the tepee of her father, SANTANTA.

Santanta is a large man with splendid attire made from beaded buckskin. Five eagle feathers form a halo behind his head. He sits on a fine buffalo hide. They are alone. Wokaih is nervous.

WOKAIH

(Shoshone with subtitles)

Father, I have met a young man by
the waterfall.

(MORE)

WOKAIH (CONT'D)

He loves me and wants me to be his wife. I love him as well.

Her father looks at her with suspicion.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)
What is his tribe?

WOKAIH

(Shoshone with subtitles)
He is Ute, but his village was wiped out by the white men. He was only twelve. He alone was left alive.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)
We are Shoshone. The Ute are our enemies. Where does this man live? How does he live?

WOKAIH

(Shoshone with subtitles)
He lives in the mountains with a white man. They are blood brothers. They have lived there since his people were killed.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)
You must forget this man. I forbid you to see him. I am Chief. I must choose a husband for you by ritual. If you do not obey me, I will hunt this man and kill him. Now, leave me, and speak no more of this matter.

Wokaih buries her face in her hands and exits the tepee, weeping.

EXT. THE WATERFALL - RAINY DAY

Wokaih enters through the narrow opening, walks to the boulder, and sits on it with her head bowed. The blowing rain drips from her nose and chin.

Ohanzee appears, grabbing her by the shoulders.

OHANZEE

(Shoshone with subtitles)
Wokaih. What is wrong?

Wokaih looks into Ohanzee's face weakly. We see her tears despite the rain.

WOKAIH

(Shoshone with subtitles)
I told my father about you. I had to! He has forbidden me to see you.

OHANZEE

(Shoshone with subtitles)
Nothing will keep us apart. Only you can decide against me. Come with me now.

WOKAIH

(Shoshone with subtitles)
I cannot. I must get some items dear to me. I will meet you at dawn where the water leaves the cliff. I will leave my people forever and be your wife. But, my love, he will come for me. My father will come for me!

OHANZEE

(Shoshone with subtitles)
Any man who stands between us will die.

Wokaih embraces Ohanzee then turns and disappears into the narrow access.

EXT. SHOSHONE VILLAGE - MORNING

The Shoshone village of three hundred people gather around Santanta. He speaks loudly so that all can hear.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)
Wokaih, my daughter, has left us. She has gone to be with a renegade Ute.

Santanta bows his head in shame then looks across the throng with a fierce expression.

SANTANTA (CONT'D)

(Shoshone with subtitles)
I call on the suitors of Wokaih to come forward.

Twenty young men make their way through the crowd and stand in a circle around Santanta. He turns, looking at the men as he speaks.

SANTANTA (CONT'D)
 (Shoshone with subtitles)
 Wokaih must be found. Whichever one
 of you kills this usurper may have
 Wokaih as his wife.

Santanta turns and enters his tepee. The crowd thins, and the suitors make for their horses.

INT. THE CAVE - NIGHT

A fire crackles in the fire pit; the waterfall sings. Wokaih sits on an elk skin spread upon the rock floor. She weaves a basket. Ohanzee and Pierre sit on the porch, speaking.

OHANZEE
 (French with subtitles)
 Her father will send many braves to
 fetch her.

PIERRE
 (French with subtitles)
 Your fate is mine.

OHANZEE
 (French with subtitles)
 Wokaih and I can go far away
 together. I fear for you.

PIERRE
 (French with subtitles)
 I will leave for you and Wokaih to
 make your home in this cave. I will
 live alone across the valley.

Ohanzee places his hand on Pierre's shoulder. Pierre pats his hand.

Just then, Tohopka appears over the edge of the porch and stands in his usual spot. Ohanzee and Pierre rise and walk over to him. They all embrace. Then, Pierre and Tohopka sit while Ohanzee peeks into the cave where Wokaih weaves a basket.

OHANZEE
 (Shoshone with subtitles)
 Wokaih, come out and meet a friend.

Ohanzee sits on the porch.

Wokaih walks out on the porch. Tohopka stands.

Wokaih gasps audibly, stands frozen by the vision of Tohopka.

OHANZEE (CONT'D)
(Shoshone with subtitles)
Do not be afraid, my wife, this
creature is my brother. This is
Tohopka.

Tohopka approaches Wokaih. She bravely stands her ground, but starts to tremble. Pierre is amused, tries to hide it.

Ohanzee looks at Wokaih and nods at Tohopka, urging her to approach him.

Wokaih looks upward into the dark face of Tohopka. Her chin is level with Tohopka's belly. His head is haloed by the full moon.

Tohopka embraces Wokaih. She puts her arms around the huge form. During the embrace, she wrinkles her nose. When Tohopka drops his hands, Wokaih looks into his face and smiles. The giant places the palm of his hand upon the crown of Wokaih's head, returns her gaze.

Tohopka returns silently to his spot and sits.

Wokaih looks at Ohanzee in astonishment. Her voice quivers.

WOKAIH
(Shoshone with subtitles)
Now, I will return to my weaving.

She enters the cave quickly. Pierre is still amused. Ohanzee gazes stoically into the dark valley.

After a time, Tohopka stands. The three embrace again. Tohopka turns to leave but pauses, turns back, and puts his gigantic hand on Ohanzee's head for many seconds, staring into his face. Then, he turns and disappears over the edge of the porch.

Pierre and Ohanzee sit in silence. Finally, Pierre speaks, turning his head toward Ohanzee.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
We will face this battle as we
always have. Together.

Ohanzee nods, returning his gaze.

INT. THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

The two men enter the cave. The fire burns low.

Pierre picks up an elk hide and heads for the ladder behind the fire pit. He pauses before he descends and smiles at Ohanzee.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
I'll finally be free of your
snoring.

Ohanzee's eyes are misted as he smiles back. He holds up the scar on his palm. Pierre holds up his own scar. His smile fades away as he disappears down the ladder, holding Ohanzee's stare with his eyes. Wokaih looks at him, and at the last moment, Pierre looks at Wokaih and smiles.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - MORNING

A Shoshone warrior, SHAPPA, walks his horse into the valley of the cave. He sees the pinto mustang and the mule grazing fifty yards apart in a grassy clearing. As the warrior rides in, the pinto and mule bolt away and disappear into the trees.

Shappa is dressed for war. His face is painted black with a white lightning bolt on his cheek. He walks his horse slowly, scanning the ground. A feathered spear, tipped with a large flint point, is in his hand.

Shappa sniffs as he scans the terrain carefully.

Pierre watches him from the mountainside opposite the cave.

INT. THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Ohanzee watches from the hole as the warrior moves closer to the cave. Shappa speaks loudly in his native tongue.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

SHAPPA
(Shoshone with subtitles)
Abductor of Wokaih! I challenge
you. Come out and fight me!

The warrior kicks his horse a few more steps and repeats the challenge.

INT. THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Ohanzee grabs his bow and quiver and starts for the ladder. Wokaih clasps his arm and pleads with him.

WOKAIH

(Shoshone with subtitles)
That is Shappa. He is a great warrior. Stay here with me where it is safe!

OHANZEE

(Shoshone with subtitles)
I will defend my home.

Ohanzee pulls away from Wokaih and descends the ladder. Wokaih runs to the hole and peers out with tears in her eyes.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

The exit beneath the porch is obscured from the warrior's view when Ohanzee emerges from the recess. Ohanzee makes his way along the bank of the stream and follows it some distance north before turning toward the clearing and appearing before Shappa.

When Pierre sees Ohanzee, he leaves his niche and sprints down the mountainside toward the intruder.

OHANZEE

(Shoshone with subtitles)
I am the husband of Wokaih. Leave my valley or have your challenge answered.

SHAPPA

(Shoshone with subtitles)
You will fight me with arrows when I have only a spear?

Ohanzee tosses his bow to the ground.

Shappa yells his war cry and hurls the spear at Ohanzee, leaps from his horse.

Ohanzee ducks the spear.

Shappa draws a flint knife and charges Ohanzee. Ohanzee draws Mongwau's knife and meets him head-on.

The two men come together in a violent clash, roll together on the rocky ground.

Ohanzee slams Shappa's wrist onto a stone. The flint knife falls to the ground.

Ohanzee plunges Mongwau's knife into the warrior's ear.

Shappa lies dead as Ohanzee rises to his feet; he breathes heavily, the bloody knife still in his hand. Ohanzee's forearm is slashed.

Pierre arrives at the scene, running full out then stands beside the corpse with Ohanzee. Ohanzee stares at the body of Shappa as he speaks.

OHANZEE
(French with subtitles)
Many will come.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - NIGHT

Tohopka follows a high, rocky game trail through the bright blue light of the full moon. His giant steps are almost soundless as he walks briskly.

The air enters and leaves his huge lungs. His breaths are very long, lasting four or five steps each.

The rise and fall of a moaning wind whips Tohopka's long hair with every gust.

Tohopka descends a treacherous vertical rock face without hesitation or difficulty.

When he reaches the stream below, gushing at a steep angle and raging with white-water, he uses the boulders as stairs and elongates or chops his huge stride to step from one boulder to the next, continuing downward.

When the stream flattens out in the valley of the cave, he goes to Pierre's niche above the slope opposite the cave.

Pierre's niche is a deep rock over-hang overlooking the valley. The niche is camouflaged with brush. Large rocks are stacked to enclose the opening of the niche, leaving a window that also serves as an egress.

His fire is in the rear of the niche where the smoke is sucked into a large crack in the rock that lifts the smoke to the peaks above.

INT. PIERRE'S NICHE - NIGHT

Pierre sits beside the fire eating when he smells Tohopka. Pierre puts his meat down on a flat rock beside his fire and turns to see Tohopka's face and shoulders filling the window.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Pierre climbs out the window and embraces Tohopka.

Tohopka tugs on the sleeve of Pierre's buckskin shirt then walks a few steps away before turning to look at Pierre.

Pierre grabs his belt on which hangs a square leather bag and his knife.

Pierre secures the belt around his waist as he follows Tohopka into the night. Tohopka does not look back as Pierre deftly follows the large dark form across the rise and fall of the treacherous, moonlit landscape.

After a long hike, traversing a diverse array of terrains, including a final fifty foot vertical climb, the two reach a crow's nest formation that looks westward from the valley of the cave.

Tohopka looks down to a clearing below then looks at Pierre.

In the clearing, Pierre can see a war party of Shoshone. Their fire is small, but Pierre can see at least ten braves in its glow.

Their camp is situated in a strategic spot to invade the valley.

The climb down is a longer route. When they reach the valley floor, they circle around the base of the mountains to the valley's western entrance. When they reach the Shoshone encampment, they pause seventy-five yards away and hide.

EXT. THE SHOSHONE ENCAMPMENT - LATER

In the smallest hour of the morning, when the camp is quiet, Pierre draws his knife and moves toward the camp. This time, Tohopka follows. The two move silently over the rocks.

Pierre seizes the first guard across the mouth from behind. He puts a knee into the base of the man's spine and cuts his throat. He holds the struggling man mute until he is dead, then lets him drop to the ground.

Approaching the second guard, Tohopka steps into view, standing directly in front of the man.

Before the man can react, Tohopka grabs the guard's neck like the snap of a fish, causing him to drop his bow. With one of his massive hands, Tohopka holds the neck like a haft, suspending the man's feet off the ground.

When he squeezes, the neck is elongated as the man's eyeballs depart his skull. Tohopka drops the man like a crumpled rag.

The final guard sits with his back to a tree. Pierre sheaths his knife and removes the bow from his shoulder.

The arrow goes through the guard's teeth and exits through the base of his skull.

The entire camp is asleep. Pierre and Tohopka enter the encampment and walk silently to the fire pit; the fire is low. An arrow is notched in Pierre's bow as Tohopka emits an ear-splitting and unearthly scream.

The camp is aroused, and twelve Shoshone stand at once. When any move, Pierre draws the bowstring threateningly, causing them to stop. All the braves are transfixed by the giant hairy form looming above them.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)

You will not understand my words. I speak because I do not wish to kill you.

Tohopka's growl starts as a guttural bass note then whips the air like a panther's snarl. He displays large, pointed canines as he rolls his lips back and knits the skin between his eyes in the flickering firelight, peering around at the group in a half squat as the hair on his upper spine rises.

Pierre looks on all sides of the throng in turn.

PIERRE (CONT'D)

Wokaih? Wokaih? WOKAIH!

(French with subtitles)

Wokaih stays here!

(beat)

Tohopka, go.

The giant ape moves strangely, as if weightless, toward the edge of the circle, with every muscle tensed. He moves his gigantic torso from side to side, seeking each man's eyes with his own.

The men who meet Tohopka's gaze, suck a nervous breath and spasm, one by one. The braves in Tohopka's path yield quickly as he starts to walk away. Pierre is heel to heel with Tohopka, following him closely, backing away with an arrow notched.

Tohopka and Pierre move away from the circle and into the darkness, continuing their synchronized dance. The braves gaze in awe at the unearthly duo's macabre departure.

Tohopka and Pierre disappear; the braves mumble with one another, terrified by what they have seen.

EXT. SHOSHONE VILLAGE - DAY - LATE FALL

SUPER: 1843

A circle of men sit on the ground before the entrance Santanta's tepee. Santanta sits with his back to the flap. Across from him sits a white, bearded mountain man, SILAS ZANDT, wearing a garish costume of beaded buckskins. On his head is a red fox fur cap adorned on the crown with spiked feathers from the tail of a male sage grouse.

Inside the circle, a bright blue blanket is laid out on the ground. On the blanket are knives, cooking utensils, a rifle, and rolls of brightly colored cloth.

The men in the circle are all older, and some of them have gray hair. Sitting beside Zandt is a younger Native American, LONE CROW, in white man's clothes.

ZANDT

I am here to bargain.

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT (CONT'D)

I will trade for all your furs from now on. No one else will trade with you. I give more than all others.

Lone Crow translates.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)

Why should I make such a deal with you?

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT

My medicine is strong. My goods are the finest in the world. I have big wagons to bring them here and haul away the furs. Your people will prosper.

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT (CONT'D)

But, I am jealous of my business. If you trade with others I will not return.

Lone Crow translates.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)

I think you will return, regardless. But, I will make you an offer. First, you must prove the power of your medicine.

Lone Crow translates.

SANTANTA (CONT'D)

(Shoshone with subtitles)

Bring me the hair of the demons that dwell in the valley of nightmares. Bring my daughter back to me, and I will trade with you alone. That is my final word.

Santanta stands and enters his tepee.

EXT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - WINTER

Zandt pulls his wagon full of furs to a halt in front of the "Rocky Mountain Fur Company". The cold makes his breath steam as he jumps to the frozen ground, walks to the rear of the wagon, and starts to unload the furs onto the split-wood walkway. Lone Crow hops down from the other side. Zandt's team of horses blows steam from their nostrils too.

INT. THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY - NIGHT

A fire roars in the giant fireplace. Forty rough-looking men sit at the tables. At one table, they play cards. Raucous, drunken laughter fills the big room. Zandt is sitting in the corner by the fireplace. He speaks with Jim Bridger, Seth, and another very large man in dirty buckskins.

ZANDT

He says they abducted his daughter. He'll only make a deal if I get her back and bring him their scalps. He says they live two days due west of the ford. Called it the valley of nightmares.

The wind wails.

ZANDT (CONT'D)

I want to organize a manhunt. Those furs are worth a king's ransom.

JIM BRIDGER

You're a damn fool to go in there.

Bridger stands and takes his pipe from his mouth.

JIM BRIDGER (CONT'D)

I'll have nothing to do with it.

ZANDT

You afraid, Bridger?

Bridger gets steely-eyed and points an evil eye at Zandt.

BRIDGER

I'll give you that one mistake, sir. But, call me a coward again, and I'll dress you like a pig on a hook. I don't hunt men. I been in these mountains since you was suckin' tit, and I'll give you some free advice. If a man survives out there, he ain't a man no more. He's a force of nature, like a storm or a swarm of locusts. If I was you, I'd listen to ole' Jim and be happy with what you got. Iffin' you know what's good fer you, you'll steer clear of that Nightmare Valley.

Bridger looks hard into Zandt's eyes before he saunters behind the counter and disappears through the door to the back.

ZANDT

Well? You seen one of 'em. Was he a man or a force of nature?

Zandt grins and winks at the large man sitting at the table. The other man grins back with rotten teeth.

SETH

You act pretty cocky for a man
who's about to get his self killed.
That money ain't worth dyin' for,
mister.

Seth stands and stares into Zandt's eyes.

SETH (CONT'D)

It just ain't worth it.

Seth turns and exits through the front door. When he opens the door to leave, a howling gust of wind blows snow into the room. He holds onto his hat as he leaves. Zandt stands up and yells over the commotion.

ZANDT

I'll give any man thirty dollars
who will join my posse. We're gonna
ride into Nightmare Valley to fetch
the scalps of them demons that
steal women!

Jim Bridger is half hidden by the door facing as he looks out on the commotion, shakes his head, and returns to the darkness of the back room.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - EARLY SPRING - DAY

SUPER: 1844

Twenty-four men, dressed in buckskins, ride together on a narrow mountain trail, along a large ledge, angling across the face of a cliff. Four pack mules, heavily loaded, are led by the men in the rear of the procession.

The ice is not completely gone, and streams of water from melting snow pour down upon the posse from above, as they plod slowly along. The men descend the steep incline.

Now, the group is in the flat woodlands, just west of the final pass leading to the valley of the cave.

ZANDT

Alright, boys, get the pots a
boilin'.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - POSSE'S CAMP - NIGHT

The men build a bonfire. Jugs are passed around, and all the men are drunk.

The whooping and loud laughter echoes off the mountain pass that leads into the valley of the cave. Some of the men stumble around firing their pistols into the stars.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Pierre and Ohanzee sit quietly on the porch, listening to the commotion in the distance.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)
They will come with the sun.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
Take Wokaih and travel east. If you leave tonight, you can be into the spires by noon. There, you can find shelter in the maze of canyons.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)
What about you?

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
I will stay and greet our guests.
Now, quickly.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - LATER

Ohanzee is mounted on the pinto. Wokaih sits behind him, holding on to his waist. They lead the mule, loaded with supplies.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
Go before the moon falls any lower.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)
Come to us when this is done.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
You will hear me as a raven.

Wokaih speaks Shoshone to Pierre while looking at him sincerely.

WOKAIH
(Shoshone with subtitles)
Live for us, Pierre!

OHANZEE
(French with subtitles)
She wants you to live, and so do I.

Ohanzee turns the pinto east and rides away leading the pack mule.

Pierre watches them fade into the night, and watches even after they have disappeared.

EXT. POSSE'S CAMP - DAWN

The men stumble around, gather their goods and saddle their horses.

Amid the morning bustle, Pierre casually walks into the camp, carrying a canvas bag.

A couple of men stand close by, but, at first, do not notice Pierre. A third MAN follows Pierre as he approaches the camp's remuda. The MAN walks up and eyes Pierre suspiciously.

MAN
Who the hell are you?

Pierre looks at the man, opens the bag, holds the bag by the bottom, hurls a hornet's nest from the bag. The nest rolls underneath the horses, while Pierre cuts the rope that tethers the remuda.

Pierre bolts for the forest, still carrying the bag. Before the man can pull his pistol, Pierre has disappeared into the trees.

The man pulls his pistol and points it in Pierre's direction, but before he can fire, a horse kicks him in the head. He is knocked several feet through the air. Another man sees Pierre and fires at him with a rifle.

The insects swarm, stinging horses and men. The horses buck and kick. One man is bucked off into the rocks head first. The men run wildly, screaming and cursing. Horses and men scatter in all directions.

EXT. POSSE'S CAMP - AFTERNOON

Most of the men have huge welts on their faces and hands. One man's ear is the size of a fist, causing him to tilt his fur cap awkwardly. A few men walk back to the campsite. Some lead horses. Supplies are scattered about on the ground.

Two bodies, wrapped in blankets, lie side by side on the ground. Two men dig graves.

ZANDT

Get this cleaned up, and find the
rest of the horses. You'll earn
your money before I'm done.

One of Zandt's eyes is swollen shut from a hornet sting.

EXT. POSSE'S CAMP - NIGHT

Half the men sleep while the other half stand guard.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAY

The posse rides through the western pass, leading into the valley of the cave. Eighteen are still on horseback, leading the expedition, and six are on foot, following behind.

Pierre is two hundred feet above them, sitting on a ledge, with his back to the rock face. His feet are on a boulder perched on the edge of the ledge.

With teeth-gritting effort, Pierre pushes the boulder off the ledge, using his legs. The boulder bounces down the steep slope like a cannonball rolling down a flight of stairs.

The boulder causes a rock-slide that buries six men and five horses. Zandt is on the lead horse and escapes injury. But, he looks upward and fixates on the source of the landslide with shock and ire, cursing under his breath.

Pierre picks up his canvas bag, stuffs it in his belt and climbs the slope behind him, unseen by the group below.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - NOON

When the men enter the valley of the cave, they are exhausted and morose. Zandt swings a hand over his head in a circular motion, and the men dismount.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - A ROCKY SLOPE - NOON

Pierre walks, turns slowly from side to side, carries the canvas bag in one hand and a four-foot staff in the other. On the end of the staff is a fork the size of two fingers making a vee. As he moves along, he sniffs the air carefully.

One direction becomes more interesting than the rest, and Pierre follows his nose. He comes upon a large flat rock. Pierre flips the big rock over.

A huge rattlesnake shakes its rattle as Pierre pins it to the ground beneath the fork in the stick. Holding the snake down, he grabs the snake behind the head and holds it in his fist before dropping it into the bag. He secures the bag with the rope and walks on, still sniffing.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - FOREST TRAIL - LATE AFTERNOON

Pierre winds his way along a game trail through a stand of gigantic trees. His canvas bag is so full, Pierre labors aerobically to carry it.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - POSSE'S CAMP - SUNSET

The fifteen remaining horses are tethered on a rope stretched between two trees. The bonfire blazes, and two men are cooking.

ZANDT

You four scout this valley and see
what you can find. And, you might
try to stay alive long enough to
report back to me.

The four men walk off in four directions, carrying rifles. Except for the two cooks, the rest of the men (9) are at the ready, rifles in hand, scanning the terrain around them. No one laughs.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - EARLY EVENING

One of the scouts heads in the direction of the cave. Pierre is waiting for him and puts two arrows into his chest.

Pierre unties the rope from the canvas bag. He pinches the opening with both hands. Allowing one of the rattlesnakes to stick its head out of the bag, Pierre grabs the snake behind the head and pulls the snake from the bag. He lays the snake on the ground, places his foot on the snake's head, and ties the bag.

Then, carrying the rattlesnake, Pierre climbs to the overhang that forms the porch, making his way to the hidden entrance in the recess. He rolls back a big rock, covering the narrow opening, revealing the floor of the chimney. He tosses the snake into the opening and rolls the rock back.

Then, Pierre walks back to the dead man, retrieves his arrows and puts the arrows back into his quiver. He sprints away quickly, careful to only step on the tops of rocks. He totes the bag of rattlesnakes and the corpse.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - POSSE'S CAMP - NIGHT

The posse is camped in a two acre grassy clearing close to the middle of the valley of the cave. One tree stands farther into the clearing than the trees that surround the clearing, an island in a lake of grass. The tree is fifty yards from the bonfire, well outside the parameter of the firelight.

Pierre approaches the tree carrying the corpse and the bag of rattlesnakes.

He removes the dead man's belt, ties the belt around the ankles of the corpse, then hangs the body upside-down by the belt on the stump of a broken limb, eight feet off the ground. The dead man hangs in plain sight of the camp, but none there can see it for the blackness of the night.

Pierre crawls through the knee-deep grass, dragging the bag of rattlesnakes. He crawls alarmingly close to the milling assembly of men. He is hidden by the grass. It is a cool night, and the men, still armed, pull their collars closer to their necks.

Pierre pulls a snake from the bag and tosses it a few feet to his left. He pulls out another snake and tosses it to his right. He pitches a third snake even closer to the men. The snakes are lethargic and seem dead.

Pierre crawls backward toward the lone tree and repeats his placement of snakes. He repeats this process numerous times until he has returned to the tree.

Pierre then stands and walks away into the night, carries his empty canvas bag.

EXT. PIERRE'S NICHE - EARLY MORNING

Pierre is awakened by gunfire. His eyes open, and he can see that the sun has started to warm the earth. He looks out the window, and in the valley below, the size of ants, the campsite of the posse swarms with confusion.

Men seem to run in all directions, and a riderless horse, saddled, bolts to the east.

Pierre stoically watches the darkly comic scene in the valley below.

EXT. POSSE'S CAMP - AFTERNOON

There are two graves in the grass. Three men slump on their horses while another RIDER holds the reins. The other nine men, including Zandt, stand in a tight group.

ZANDT

Take them three back to Bridger's.

RIDER

We want our money now.

ZANDT

Tell the boy to meet me at the Green River ford. We'll be there waitin' for him. And, remember this: You get him to that ford or you'll never see your pay.

The rider eyes Zandt then spits. He pulls on the reins of the other three horses, and the four head slowly west.

The LARGE MAN, who had sat at the table with Seth, Bridger, and Zandt, stands beside Zandt.

ZANDT (CONT'D)

Curse that fiend. I'll kill that buck if I have to raise the Devil out of hell to get the job done.

Zandt spits snuff then purses his lips.

LARGE MAN

We're gonna need all the help we can get.

ZANDT

Saddle up!

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - LATER

The remainder of the posse, nine riders, leaves the valley of the cave heading east. One saddled horse is led by the reins, riderless, a brace of bundled rifles strapped to its sides. The four pack mules are led away as well

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - THE MAZE OF CANYONS - NEXT DAY

Pierre enters the maze of canyons, a labyrinth of gulches at the base of high spires of rock, a mile-long cluster of finger-like rock formations three hundred feet high. As he walks the floor of the maze, Pierre stops frequently and makes the sound of a raven.

Before long, he hears the sound returned. It is not an echo.

The calls are repeated, and soon Ohanzee and Pierre are embracing.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)

The men are gone. I pray they do not return.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)

Come and have some roast grouse.

EXT. SHOSHONE VILLAGE - ONE WEEK LATER

Zandt leads nine other men into the Shoshone village. The interpreter in white man's clothes rides beside Zandt. They stop before Santanta's tepee and dismount. Santanta exits the tepee and faces them. Fifty warriors surround the posse.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)

Have you brought me the hair of the demons that dwell in the valley of nightmares?

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT

We went into the valley with twenty-four men; we came out with only nine.

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT (CONT'D)

We both have buried men, killed by these demons. They have your daughter. We must join together to destroy them.

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT (CONT'D)

This horse and thirteen rifles are my gift to you. We have many knives as well. They are yours.

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT (CONT'D)

I ask you for men to ride with me back into the valley of nightmares. We will kill these demons and rescue your daughter.

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT (CONT'D)

We must mix our medicine to defeat these demons and save your daughter.

Lone Crow translates as Zandt knits the fingers of both hands together and holds them up to be seen. The group stands in silence. Santanta stares at Zandt for many seconds. Everyone awaits his words. The wind whispers in the giant trees above their heads.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)

We will make war on these demons.

Lone Crow translates. Zandt smiles. All the warriors yell their war cries.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - EVENING - THE PORCH

Ohanzee, Pierre and Tohopka sit on the porch in their usual positions. The trio turn their heads in unison as they listen to the sounds of the night, an owl, a deer, and then, a wolverine.

Wokaih emerges from the cave carrying a basket of berries. She sets the basket down and returns into the cave.

Tohopka considers the berries, smacking his huge lips. Ohanzee pushes the basket closer to Tohopka, and he reaches into the basket, pulling out a berry and eating it with surprising poise. He chews the berry slowly while still engrossed, listening to the night.

Ohanzee gives Pierre a handful of berries then gets a handful for himself. Tohopka eats them one at a time from the basket.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAY - RIVER VALLEY

Fifty Shoshone warriors and ten white men ride together along the banks of the Green River. Santanta and Zandt lead the procession. As they approach a gap in the mountains, they leave the river valley and head west into the forest toward the pass.

EXT. THE SPIRES - DUSK

The party makes camp beneath the spires that reach above them like a thousand fangs, as if the men are in the mouth of the snarling landscape.

From a windy crag, Tohopka peers down upon the camp of the war party. After a few moments, he rises and starts to descend.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAWN

Tohopka picks up a large broken limb from the ground beneath the large tree, on which Pierre had hung the corpse. He strikes the tree several times with the limb. The sound echoes off the walls of the valley. He waits a minute before he repeats his action again.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

Pierre and Ohanzee follow Tohopka as the three approach the edge of a high bluff. The three peer over the edge and, far below, see sixty men on horseback, winding their way along the narrow pass toward the valley of the cave.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)

The men return with many warriors.

Ohanzee gasps then stands quickly. His voice displays panic.

OHANZEE

(French with subtitles)

They will reach the valley before us!

Ohanzee sprints to the rocky slope behind the cliff. He starts down the treacherous route with reckless speed. Pierre follows him, matching his rate of descent.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - LATER

Two Shoshone scouts enter the valley of the cave. They follow the stream south to the deep pool beneath the bluffs where Pierre and Ohanzee were fishing.

On the banks of the pool, Wokaih picks berries. She sees the two men in war paint, drops the basket, and flees. The two men catch up easily.

They leap from their horses and seize Wokaih. At first, Wokaih resists gallantly, but, when she is restrained by the men, she acquiesces.

EXT. CAMP OF THE WAR PARTY - LATE AFTERNOON

The two scouts ride triumphantly into the camp of the war party. Wokaih sits behind one of the men. They ride up to the campfire where Zandt and Santanta stand waiting for them. The man roughly pulls Wokaih from his horse. She falls, lying on the ground before her father, not looking at him.

The camp is not in the valley of the cave but behind the peak that forms its western side, a smaller valley where a mountain and two high bluffs intersect.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles

You have disgraced me, my daughter.
I told you I would kill this man if
you disobeyed me.

Lone Crow translates to Zandt; Zandt speaks to Lone Crow; then, Lone Crow speaks to Santanta. Santanta looks at Zandt and nods.

Santanta shouts orders, and two warriors lift Wokaih to her feet. The two drag her to a nearby sapling and tie her hands behind her around the tree.

Zandt and Santanta continue to shout orders as the entire group disperses into the shelter of the surrounding rocks.

The horses are led into a box canyon close to the campsite. Behind the canyon, a sheer rock face rises to become the eastern border of the triangular valley.

Two Shoshone douse the fire, and Wokaih is left alone, tied to the tree.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DUSK

Pierre and Ohanzee approach the cave running full out. They are covered with sweat and breathe heavily. Ohanzee clambers up the rocky slope and crawls quickly through the opening. Soon, he appears on the porch calling down to Pierre who stands on the bank of the stream.

OHANZEE
(French with subtitles)
They have her! Wokaih is gone.

EXT. THE DEEP POOL - NIGHT

Pierre and Ohanzee find Wokaih's basket, half filled with berries. Discarding the basket, they run north into the blackness of the night.

EXT. MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - DAWN

Pierre and Ohanzee are on the mountaintop where Mongwau had sat in the rain, but they strain their eyes in the opposite direction - east. When the light is bright enough, they see Wokaih below, tied to the tree.

Wokaih slumps; her long hair obscures her face. From their perch, Pierre and Ohanzee can see the box canyon where the horses are corralled. In their hiding places, the war party are not visible to Pierre and Ohanzee.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
They use her as bait.

Ohanzee buries his face in his hand while shaking his head.

OHANZEE
Wokaih.

Pierre puts his hand on Ohanzee's shoulder while continuing to scan the situation below.

The main trail enters and leaves the valley of the war party on the east and west, as it does in the valley of the cave. Both egresses are narrow, and each is the only entry from their respective directions.

The box canyon is cut into the eastern ridge and south of the eastern egress. The north is a cliff face and thus impassable. To reach the cliff, from which Pierre and Ohanzee study the valley, would require the same climb undertaken by Mongwau.

But, in the south, although treacherous, a man could traverse an entry with difficulty. Wokaih is in the middle of the valley.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - LATER

Pierre and Ohanzee descend from the cliff into the valley of the cave. When they reach the valley floor, they part. Both run swiftly. Ohanzee heads south toward the large pool where Wokaih was captured. Pierre heads north up the steep, rocky slopes.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE WAR PARTY - EASTERN ACCESS - AFTERNOON

High above the trail leading east from the valley of the war party, Pierre climbs a cliff face. A braided buckskin rope is tied to his waist and dangles to the bottom, fifty feet below him.

He reaches a ledge several feet wide and shinnies over the edge. He turns, and, looking over the edge, pulls the rope up hand over hand. Attached to the end of the rope is a bundle of brush and dried branches tied tightly together. He pulls the bundle over the edge and continues to climb.

At the next ledge, he repeats the process. He continues in this manner until he and the bundle are atop a cliff. He carries the bundle and the rope south along the final ledge.

Above the final ledge, the mountain rises another thousand feet to become the peak that forms the eastern border of the valley of the war party.

Finally, Pierre kneels and peers over the edge. Directly below him, some three hundred feet, he can see the box canyon in which the horses are corralled. He sits, gazes into the valley; the bundle is by his side.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE WAR PARTY - SOUTHERN ACCESS - AFTERNOON

Meantime, Ohanzee climbs the rocky slope whose summit forms a southern entry into the valley of the war party. He approaches the summit warily, careful not to expose himself to any of the men who might be hiding there.

Reaching the summit, he scans down the opposite slope intently. He can see men hiding everywhere between him and the valley floor, where Wokaih has now been tied to the tree for twenty-four hours.

He starts to inch his way toward the men. Then, stopping fifty yards short of the nearest men, he crawls beneath a stand of thick brush, gazing into the valley.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE WAR PARTY - NIGHT

When the dusk has melted into night, Ohanzee crawls closer to the men. Some of the men are alone, but most are in small groups of two and three. The men and groups of men are fifty yards apart and encircle the entire valley. They all watch the clearing in the valley below.

The nearest of the war party is a group of three men who crouch behind a boulder. Their backs are to Ohanzee. Ohanzee kills them with his bow and three arrows. He rushes to the dead men. Ohanzee retrieves his arrows from the bodies and replaces them into his quiver.

The next lay-by is a single warrior, lying on his belly. Ohanzee shoots the man through the temple; the arrowhead protrudes through the opposite side of his skull.

Another stand of two men is dispatched similarly.

Now, Ohanzee is level with the valley floor. He can faintly see Wokaih through the trees, seventy-five yards from him. He lies hidden among the rocks, looking up and to the east.

Pierre pulls a piece of flint from his square fanny pack and unsheathes his knife. He also retrieves a wad of fibers from the inner bark of the pine.

He scratches the flint against the dull edge of the knife, causing streams of sparks. He positions his scratching so that the sparks ignite the pine shavings. Then, he uses the blazing wad to ignite the bundle.

The bundle bursts into flames. Pierre screams at the top of his lungs. The scream echoes repeatedly through the valley. Some of the men fire their rifles toward Pierre and the blazing bundle.

Ohanzee waits several seconds after he sees Pierre's fireball then sprints toward Wokaih.

Pierre kicks the fireball off the cliff. The ball of flames falls three hundred feet then splashes fiery brands when it crashes into the box canyon filled with horses. The animals panic, and sixty horses burst through the brush and logs that contain them.

When the stampede begins, Ohanzee is at Wokaih's side, cutting the ropes that bind her hands. Wokaih moans when her hands drop to her side.

The stampede starts to enter the clearing as Ohanzee and Wokaih run in the direction from which Ohanzee had just come. The last twenty yards, the two are among the stampede, dodging horses and stumbling as Ohanzee tries to keep Wokaih on her feet. Some of the men see Ohanzee, but the stampede blocks their pursuit.

They enter the forest and start up the rocky incline. Men sprint toward Ohanzee and Wokaih. The two scramble over the large boulders that impede their ascent; the pursuers close in.

Ohanzee picks up Wokaih in his arms and continues to make his way up the incline. His breaths are heavy and frequent.

We hear gunfire, but distant orders are shouted, and the gunfire ceases.

Three-quarters up the incline, a clear path opens before the escapees. Ohanzee puts Wokaih on her feet again as they continue to run. Their way ahead has gotten easier.

Ohanzee reaches into his pocket as he runs and tosses handfuls of something onto the trail behind him. Soon, the pursuers in the lead start to yell in pain. They hop and limp then stop to remove the thorns from the soles of their moccasins. Others get through and continue climbing.

Ohanzee picks up Wokaih again and continues to run as he crests the rise. On the other side, out of view from the pursuers, Ohanzee leads Wokaih in a more westerly direction, slanting down the hill toward the stream. When the pursuers reach the summit of the rise, they split up. Five men guess right and run downhill toward Ohanzee and Wokaih.

When Ohanzee and Wokaih reach the deep pool, the five pursuers catch up with them. Wokaih falls to the ground, exhausted. Ohanzee notches an arrow and kills one pursuer with an arrow through throat. Another is slowed by an arrow in the thigh. The last three rush in as Ohanzee pulls Mongwau's knife from its sheath.

The lead man swings his war club at Ohanzee's head as he screams a deafening war cry. Ohanzee ducks beneath the blow and stabs the man in the hip. The knife sticks in bone, and Ohanzee is overwhelmed by the three men. One of the men strikes Ohanzee in the back of the head with a war club, and Ohanzee falls to the ground, unconscious.

Wokaih screams and crawls to Ohanzee's side. She holds him about the shoulders, buries her face against his cheek and weeps.

EXT. THE DEEP POOL - LATER

As they leave the deep pool, two men limp. One of the limping men roughly pushes Wokaih ahead of him. Her wrists are tied behind her back. Ohanzee's wrists are also tied behind his back and also to his ankles. A pole of wood is threaded through, and the other two men are on either end of the pole; Ohanzee hangs from the pole.

Beside the pool lies a dead man with an arrow through his throat and a basket half filled with berries.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE WAR PARTY - NIGHT - LATER

Fifty-three men throng together around a large fire. Beside the fire, Ohanzee is tied to the trunk of a tree. Many yards of braided buckskin rope secure Ohanzee to the tree, wrapped around his ankles, knees, waist, chest, neck, and forehead. Santanta stands before Ohanzee, and behind him, two large warriors hold Wokaih's arms tightly. Santanta approaches Ohanzee.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)

You have defiled my family and my people, Ute. You have killed many of my warriors. Now, I can see that you are not a demon. You are a man.

Zandt stands close by, accompanied by Lone Crow. The other eight white men are in a throng behind him.

Santanta turns to Zandt.

SANTANTA (CONT'D)

(Shoshone with subtitles)

We will leave this man with you to lure the others. I have my daughter. I have defeated her abductor.

Lone Crow translates for Zandt.

SANTANTA (CONT'D)

(Shoshone with subtitles)

Soon, the sun will rise. I will take my daughter and my braves and return to my village.

Lone Crow translates.

SANTANTA (CONT'D)
 (Shoshone with subtitles)
 Kill this man when you are done
 with him. You still owe me two
 scalps.

Lone Crow translates as Wokaih cries out.

WOKAIH
 (Shoshone with subtitles)
 No!

By now, the horses have been captured, having nowhere from which to escape the enclosed valley.

Santanta mounts his horse and yells an order. The forty-four Shoshone mount their horses and move east out of the valley, leading a horse on which Wokaih is riding.

As the Shoshone lead Wokaih away, she turns to look at Ohanzee.

WOKAIH (CONT'D)
 Ohanzee!

The Shoshone disappear into the blackness of predawn, leaving the ten white men standing beside Ohanzee. Ten saddled horses are tethered nearby.

After the Shoshone have gone, Zandt stands before Ohanzee. Zandt stares at him for a moment then backhands him across the face. Lone Crow stands nearby. Zandt puts his face close to Ohanzee's face.

ZANDT
 Where's that white buck?

Lone Crow translates.

ZANDT (CONT'D)
 Answer me, lad, or I'll gut you
 like a fish.

Lone Crow translates. Zandt draws a knife and stares menacingly into Ohanzee's eyes before backhanding him again. Ohanzee bleeds from the nose and mouth. Bloody slobber drools off his chin.

ZANDT (CONT'D)
 Last chance, fish. Where's your
 partner?

Lone Crow translates as Zandt strikes Ohanzee a third time. Ohanzee spits blood and smiles at Zandt. The others look on, fixated and amused by the interrogation.

OHANZEE
(Shoshone with subtitles)
He stands behind you.

Lone Crow turns on his heel in terror. Then, all the men wheel around, losing their grins.

Nothing is there but the yawning blackness. Ohanzee blows his invisible bugle, spraying spit and blood, before laughing. Zandt turns back and strikes Ohanzee with the butt of his knife.

Ohanzee is cut above his eye; blood streams down his face. He still smiles as he speaks through his bloody mouth.

OHANZEE (CONT'D)
(Shoshone with subtitles)
If you kill me, you will all die.

Lone Crow is spooked.

LONE CROW
He says if we kill him, we will all die!

Ohanzee loses his smile and speaks with solicitude while looking Zandt in the eyes.

OHANZEE
(Shoshone with subtitles)
You have what you want. Let me go.
Leave my land now and live.

Lone Crow translates as if speaking his own heart.

Zandt is furious. He grabs Ohanzee by the hair and starts to scalp him, but an arrow comes out of the blackness and passes through his neck. He raises the knife, but falls dead. The men all turn their rifles and pistols outward into the darkness, firing in all directions. As they reload, the large man gets an arrow through the heart.

Tohopka appears, wading through the group of terrified men swatting one man into another with his huge arm. Both fly several yards through the air. One man screams and starts to run, but an arrow slams into his spine.

Another man is shot with an arrow in his forehead. Tohopka grabs one of the men by the ankle and swings the man like a club. He uses the human club to kill another man then another, crushing skull against skull.

One of the men is still alive, and weakly rises to his feet. Tohopka grabs the man by the throat; his bulging eyes behold the face of Tohopka as they leave their sockets.

Lone Crow sits on the ground shaking with fear. Nine men lie dead around him. All are spattered with blood.

Pierre pulls his knife and cuts Ohanzee free.

Ohanzee yanks Lone Crow to his feet by the scruff of the neck. His battered face, with the marks of the bear, flickers in the dying firelight.

OHANZEE (CONT'D)
(Shoshone with subtitles)
Take a horse and leave my land. If
you return, my large friend will
have you for his supper.

Tohopka emits a guttural rumbling while staring at Lone Crow.

Lone Crow stumbles as he runs for the nearest horse. He leaps into the saddle and gallops away, headed west.

When he has gone, Tohopka, Pierre, and Ohanzee, come together in a warm embrace as the blue light of dawn reveals a scene of horror. Then, Tohopka also lumbers off to the west.

After gathering the nine saddled horses, Pierre and Ohanzee lead the horses into the valley of the cave, while smoke from the smouldering embers of the campfire rises slowly into a windless gray sky.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CAVE - THE DEEP POOL - DAY

Ohanzee approaches the deep pool beneath the bluffs where he and Wokaih were captured the night before. He glances disapprovingly at the corpse with the arrow through its throat before walking over to the basket, half filled with spoiled berries. He looks down upon the basket then squats in front of it. His eyes soften as he lifts it gently and pours out the spoiled berries. He holds the basket to his breast and stands. Then, he walks sadly north, back toward the cave, carrying the basket close to his heart.

EXT. SHOSHONE VILLAGE - DAY

Wokaih stands before the Shoshone council of elders. The fourteen elders sit in a circle on the ground before the tepee of Santanta. Wokaih stands in the circle with her head bowed.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)

This woman, my daughter, has disobeyed me. She has lain with the Ute whose scalp will soon be mine. Six braves lie dead at the hands of this Ute. What is to be done with her?

One of the elders, the medicine man, NAMID, stands. He wears a headdress made from the skull of a bear. Namid walks slowly around Wokaih, looking her over while humming rhythmically and amelodically. Then, Namid stops, peering at Wokaih's bowed head. After a few moments, he addresses the council.

NAMID

(Shoshone with subtitles)

She bears the wound of the demon. His invisible arrow has pierced her heart. She carries the child of this Ute.

Wokaih raises her head and gasps, staring at Namid expectantly. Namid returns to his seat in the circle.

Another elder, HONANI, rises. He addresses Santanta.

HONANI

(Shoshone with subtitles)

Your wrath is quenched. Mine is not. My son, Yantotocho, was killed by the Ute. This woman must die; the child she carries is cursed.

Honani returns to his seat.

A third elder, DEGOTOGA, rises. Degotoga is older than the others. His hair is snow white, and he rises slowly. He walks to Wokaih and looks into her face. Then, he addresses the council.

DEGOTOGA

(Shoshone with subtitles)

This woman is innocent. No one can escape the arrows of the demon. She grieves for this dead Ute.

(MORE)

DEGOTOGA (CONT'D)

It is the Shoshone way to welcome strangers. This Ute was never given a voice. Santanta's wrath has caused him to break our sacred traditions. It is he that caused the death of Yantotocho and the others.

Degotoga returns to his seat.

SANTANTA

(Shoshone with subtitles)

We will vote on this matter. Stand if you think this woman should die.

Seven men stand.

SANTANTA (CONT'D)

(Shoshone with subtitles)

The vote is split. The women will decide this matter.

Santanta motions to his wife, OCONA, mother of Wokaih. Ocona approaches the council. Her face is stoic, but her eyes are full of tears.

SANTANTA (CONT'D)

Take Wokaih to the council of women. They will decide her fate.

Ocona walks to Wokaih, puts an arm on her shoulder, and the two leave the circle.

EXT. BELOW THE SHOSHONE VILLAGE - DAY

Fifty yards downhill from the Shoshone village, a small stream tumbles down a gentle slope. Wokaih carries three water bladders to the bank of the stream. Two Shoshone women accompany her; they carry bladders as well. The three women squat and begin filling the bladders.

Ohanzee hides on a ridge overlooking the women. He glances up at the sun.

EXT. BELOW THE SHOSHONE VILLAGE - NEXT DAY

Ohanzee is hidden in the trees much closer to the stream. When the women arrive, Ohanzee observes Wokaih as she trudges sadly carrying the bladders. Again, Ohanzee looks at the sun.

EXT. BELOW THE SHOSHONE VILLAGE - THIRD DAY

Wokaih approaches the stream with her companions. As they did before, all squat and begin filling the bladders. When Wokaih looks into the water, something glints beneath clear shallow ripples. She reaches into the water and realizes it is a gold coin. Unnoticed by the other women, she palms the coin and continues to fill the bladders.

EXT. THE TEPEE OF SANTANTA - NIGHT

Ocona and Wokaih sit alone in the tepee of her father. They sit facing each other on the buffalo hide. Wokaih speaks softly but with great sincerity.

WOKAIH
(Shoshone with subtitles)
Mother, Ohanzee lives.

OCONA
(Shoshone with subtitles)
How could you know this?

Wokaih reveals the coin in her palm.

WOKAIH
(Shoshone with subtitles)
He left this in the stream for me
to find.

Ocona looks her daughter in the eyes. Her face is sad.

OCONA
(Shoshone with subtitles)
You must be sure, my daughter. If
you leave again, you may never
return without your father's
permission. The women have decided
on your banishment from the tribe
should you ever leave again.

WOKAIH
(Shoshone with subtitles)
He is alive, and I must go to him.

The two embrace and rock from side to side.

Santanta enters the tepee.

SANTANTA
(Shoshone with subtitles)
I have heard your words.
(MORE)

SANTANTA (CONT'D)
 Leave this village. You are
 banished from your people.

Wokaih and Ocona smile at each other through their tears. Wokaih stands and starts to leave. She pauses when she passes Santanta, looking deeply into his face, before exiting the tepee.

EXT. OREGON - SKINNER'S MUD HOLE - DAY

SUPER: 1844

Effie drives the wagon of Tragen. Mattie pulls her rig up along side and stops. Both hold reins as they speak.

MATTIE
 If it hadn't a been for you, child,
 none of us would probably 'a' made
 it to Oregon. I'm a thankin' you
 for that.

EFFIE
 You do what you must.

MATTIE
 You're welcome to come with me to
 Californy. My sister's husband has
 a fine farm and a big house. I'm
 sure they could fit you in
 somewhere.

EFFIE
 During my escape, I met a man. He
 spoke French with me. I have
 thought of him often. I don't think
 I could forgive myself if I didn't
 see him again.

MATTIE
 Well, when you find the right one,
 you know it. I hate to think about
 you making that trip alone. But, I
 wouldn't trust any of the gentlemen
 in this place to take you there.

Mattie reaches into her dress pocket and hands a folded piece of paper across to Effie.

MATTIE (CONT'D)
 I writ down how to find me at my
 sister's if it don't work out.

Effie takes the paper.

MATTIE (CONT'D)

No, I say go and get the man you
want, and don't let heaven or earth
stop you.

Mattie's eyes are misted.

MATTIE (CONT'D)

I'll be a prayin' for you, child.

Mattie and Effie clasp hands, reaching from one wagon to the other.

Mattie whistles through her teeth, slaps her reins and moves south.

EXT. TRAGEN'S WAGON - NIGHT

Effie sits alone inside the wagon of Tragen. Her face is lit by candlelight.

The covered wagon is rather luxurious as covered wagons go.

Effie kneels before a wooden chest with a hinged lid. The casket is open. Effie's hand touches the gold coins that fill the chest.

A worried expression is on her face.

She closes the chest and, with difficulty, shoves it into a cavity formed beneath the seat of the wagon. When she inserts a wooden panel into the opening, the cavity is perfectly hidden, and appears to be part of the woodwork.

She removes a slat in the floor and pulls a metal lever, replaces the slat and lies on her bunk to sleep.

Effie stares blankly at the canvas above her, flickering in the candlelight.

EXT. OREGON - SKINNER'S "MUD HOLE" - DAY

Skinner's Mud Hole sits on the banks of a swollen river. Many tents and campsites litter an area that surrounds a natural and prominent knoll that rises some fifty feet off the undulating landscape. On the knoll sits the trading post of Eugene Skinner. It is the only permanent structure.

Effie rides one of her Morgan team horses up the narrow path that leads along the side of the knoll. Her bridle is a portion of a harness. She rides bareback.

The porch affords an excellent view of the mountains to the east, looming quite close across a stretch of rolling plain.

She rides up to the front door beneath a covered porch. After tethering her horse on a hitching post, she walks up the stairs leading to the door.

Above the door, a painted sign reads: E. F. Skinner, Proprietor. Beside the door is a larger sign: U.S. Post Office.

Effie pulls open the heavy wooden door and walks inside.

INT. SKINNER'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The inside of the trading post appears to be part warehouse and part general store. It is more organized and cleaner than Bridger's establishment.

Skinner's wife, MARY, greets Effie when she enters. Her voice is cheerful and strong.

MARY

Good day, Missie. I'm Mary Skinner.

Mary sticks out her hand like a man, and Effie shakes it.

EFFIE

I am Effie Dubois Goodfellow. I am pleased to meet you.

MARY

Hey, you're a foreigner.

EFFIE

My father was French.

MARY

How did you get way out here, girl?

EFFIE

I came across the Oregon Trail with my parents. They were killed by the Blackfeet. Then, I married a man on our wagon train, but he is dead too.

MARY

You're out here all alone! Saints preserve us! This ain't no place for a girl like you to be travelin' alone. Where are you goin' now, child?

EFFIE

I do not know, but wherever I go, I will need supplies. I hope we can do some business.

MARY

That's what we're a doin' here.

EFFIE

I have a good wagon. I wish to sell it and buy supplies for a journey. I will keep my brace of horses. One I will ride, and the other I will use to pack my goods.

MARY

Well, little lady, you've got some spunk, I'll give you that.

EXT. SKINNER'S MUD HOLE - DAWN

Effie wears the clothes of a man, including a large hat with a flat brim. She rides one of her Morgans and leads the other, carries a large canvas bundle tied to its back.

The butt of the shotgun, with which she killed Tragen, sticks up behind her saddle. She heads east, toward the mountains. She passes through the cluster of tents and campsites as she leaves Skinner's domain.

Two trappers sit beside an open fire in front of a rough lean-to made of posts and canvas. Many steel animal traps hang from the posts. The men are dressed in dirty buckskins. They are scruffy and hard looking, pass a ceramic jug.

The two men stare at Effie as she rides past them. She does not look at them but takes note of them with a discreet glance. They stare at her until she disappears over a rise, heading for the mountains.

EXT. THE TRAIL EAST - AFTERNOON

By afternoon, Effie is well into the mountains. She scans the side of the trail until she finds a solid rock surface. There, she turns off the main trail and heads uphill.

A hundred yards off the trail, she finds a shelter of boulders that form a small cove in the hillside

She dismounts and leads her horses inside the cove behind the boulders. She tethers her horses to a gooseberry bush before she crawls onto one of the boulders and peers back down the trail in the direction from which she had just come. She holds the shotgun close to her body.

EXT. THE TRAIL EAST - LATER

Effie sees the trappers coming up the trail, scanning the ground.

Seeing them, Effie hunches out of sight, breathing rapidly and squinting her eyes. Her knuckles are white as she squeezes the shotgun barrel with both hands.

The trappers stop at the place where Effie had left the trail. They scan the area closely, squinting their eyes.

Finally, they move on east up the trail. Effie shinnies down the boulder and sits on a ledge of rock, hidden inside the cove. Tears are on her cheeks, but her expression is as hard as the granite mountains.

EXT. THE TRAIL EAST - COVE OF BOULDERS - LATE AFTERNOON

The canvas bundle and the saddle are on the ground, and the horses are tethered with a rope. Effie has found a gap between two of the boulders from which she can see the trail below. Her shotgun leans against the rock surface beside her. She gnaws jerky and watches the trail. She has built no fire.

EXT. THE TRAIL EAST - COVE OF BOULDERS - NIGHT

When the night has fallen completely, Effie allows herself some sleep, using her hat for a pillow and covering herself with a blanket.

She awakens before dawn to a misting rain. She shivers beneath her blanket, continuing her surveillance of the trail as she rubs the sleep from her eyes.

EXT. THE TRAIL EAST - COVE OF BOULDERS - MID MORNING

At mid morning, the trappers canter past Effie's hiding place, heading west. The rain has stopped and the morning sun shines on Effie as she watches them pass.

She saddles her horse, secures her canvas bundle to the pack horse, and descends to the trail. She turns her horses east and moves up the trail at a gallop.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAY

Pierre is in the clearing beneath the lone tree. The carcass of a deer hangs by its hind hooves from a limb of the tree. Pierre skins the deer with his knife.

Wokaih enters the clearing with a large bundle on her back. She walks weakly, exhausted.

WOKAIH

Pierre!

Pierre turns to see Wokaih trudging across the clearing in his direction. Pierre runs to her and helps her remove her bundle before hugging her tightly. Pierre carries the bundle as the two walk toward the cave.

When they reach the stream, Pierre motions for Wokaih to stay beside the stream as he scales the bluff and stashes the bag inside the entrance of the cave.

Returning to Wokaih, he leads her downstream to the deep pool beneath the bluffs. At the edge of the forest, Pierre points toward the pool.

On the bank of the deep pool, Ohanzee fishes with a willow pole. Pierre smiles at Wokaih before turning and heading back upstream.

Wokaih walks to within a few yards of Ohanzee. He sits staring into the clear water.

WOKAIH (CONT'D)

(Shoshone with subtitles)

I have come to return your golden coin.

EXT. THE TRAIL EAST - LATE AFTERNOON

Effie rides through a high pass, leading her pack horse. As she crests the pass, the trail widens into a small alpine meadow cluttered with boulders.

She looks down the other side and sees a group of wagons heading toward her single file up the steep narrow trail.

She leaves the trail and winds her way through the rocks above the crest.

She comes to a balcony ledge one hundred feet above the meadow. She dismounts and holds her horses by the reins, obscured from the trail by a clump of gnarly pines.

The wagons come into view. There are seven of them. Reaching the summit, the wagons scatter, each finding a place to spend the night.

Effie tethers her horses to the pines, unsaddles her rider and unties her canvas bundle from the other. She waters the horses from her hat, retrieves some hardtack and jerky then settles in, guarding the entrance to the balcony with her shotgun.

EXT. THE TRAIL EAST - ALPINE MEADOW - NIGHT

Peeking through the pines, Effie sees the campfires below. People move about cooking and seeing to their horses and oxen. She finds a flat place for her blanket, from where she can still observe the camp below and makes her pallet.

Before long, she dozes off to sleep. Somewhere in the distance, a wolf howls at the rising moon. The howls echo eerily over and over.

EXT. THE TRAIL EAST - ALPINE MEADOW - LATE NIGHT

Effie is awakened by loud voices. Through the shelter of the pines, she can see two men faced off in the glow of one of the fires. A woman stands beside one of the men when the other man pulls a pistol and fires.

The man beside the woman is thrown backward, sprawling to the earth, as the woman screams and drops to the ground beside the fallen man, sobbing. As the woman weeps, the echoes of the pistol shot repeat, fade.

The other man sheaths his pistol, grabs the woman by the arm, and drags her toward one of the wagons. The woman resists, but the man is too strong.

Observing closely, Effie can see that the killer has two henchmen with pistols holding the people of the wagon train at bay, allowing the killer to have his way with the woman. The people stand by helplessly and watch.

Effie stands and begins walking downhill. She follows the dark sinuous path down to the meadow. She walks into the glow of the fire, carrying her shotgun. All eyes turn toward Effie. When the men with the pistols see Effie, one of them takes a step toward her.

MAN WITH A PISTOL

Well, now, whadda we got here.
Whacha think you're a gonna do with
that, girl?

Effie kills the man. The echoes of the shotgun blast reverberate over and over. The other man with a pistol points the weapon toward Effie, and she kills him as well, slamming his back against a boulder. Effie reloads, pulling the shells from the pocket of her shirt.

Before the echoes fade, the killer emerges from a wagon, pulling his suspenders over his shoulders and cocking his pistol.

He sees three dead men lying in the glow of the fire, instead of one. Then, he sees Effie. She is his last vision on the earthly plane as Effie's shotgun sings its song of death.

She lowers her weapon and turns toward the stunned families, aghast at their bizarre savior. When the echoes die, silence trumps the music of hell.

EFFIE

Now, you are safe. Continue your
journey in peace.

Effie walks back toward the balcony, out of the glow from the campfire, and into the darkness from whence she had come.

Effie does not wait for dawn. She saddles her horse, secures her canvas bundle to the pack horse, and leads both horses down into the camp. She does not stop but leads the horses past the people and down the steep trail, headed east.

EXT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Effie and her horses are covered with trail dust when they arrive at The Rocky Mountain Trading Company. She tethers the horses on the hitching post out front and walks into the building.

INT. BRIDGER'S TRADING POST - CONTINUOUS

Bridger sits behind the counter, cleaning a rifle. Otherwise, the room is empty except for Lone Crow. He sits at a table alone with a jug. He appears quite intoxicated.

Closing the door behind her, Effie walks heavily across the room and up to the counter.

BRIDGER

What's your pleasure, lad.

Effie removes her hat. She shakes her auburn hair and tosses it away from her face. Bridger is a bit stunned.

EFFIE

I wish to hire a guide.

BRIDGER

Excuse me, miss, we don't get many women in here. How many in your party?

EFFIE

I am alone. I wish to go to the place where the killer, Mongwau was sent by Tragen.

Bridger is stunned again. He lays his pipe on the counter beside the disassembled rifle and narrows his eyes at Effie as he speaks.

BRIDGER

That's Nightmare Valley, girl. Them what go there don't come back. What's so important there that you would face certain death?

EFFIE

That is my own affair. Will no one lead me?

Bridger lowers his head, shakes it slowly, exhaling. His eyes turn upward and stare into Effie's granite visage.

Bridger points a finger toward Lone Crow.

BRIDGER

Lone Crow.

He returns his pipe to his mouth and continues cleaning the rifle. His eyebrows are raised.

Effie turns and walks with purpose to the table of the gaunt young Native American in white man's clothes. She speaks with authority.

EFFIE

I am Effie Dubois Goodfellow. I am told you can lead me to Nightmare Valley.

Lone Crow snaps his eyes into Effie's face. His eyes are bloodshot.

LONE CROW

You wish to die? Why not just kill yourself here? It would save you a hard journey.

His words are filled with dark amusement. He takes another belt from the ceramic jug and squints.

Effie's words are short and filled with frustration.

EFFIE

Can you guide me or not? I will pay you with gold.

Lone Crow turns the jug upside-down. A single drop splashes to the table. He weaves and tilts to one side as he sticks his hand into his pocket then drops three pennies to the table. One of the pennies has been cut in half.

LONE CROW

How much gold?

EXT. THE TRAIL TO THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAY

Effie rides behind Lone Crow, leads her pack horse. Lone Crow's attire seems too formal for the occasion, in his soiled frock coat and battered top hat.

The two traverse a narrow mountain trail, along the edge of a cliff. Then, after descending a steep incline, they reach the valley floor. From the valley floor, a narrow mountain pass can be seen in the distance.

Lone Crow pulls his horse to a halt, pointing to the pass.

LONE CROW

That is the pass that leads to death. I will go no farther. I want my gold.

Effie rides up and alongside Lone Crow. She drops the coins into Lone Crow's hand. Lone Crow kicks his horse and gallops west.

Effie looks ahead to the pass. The pass is a narrow gorge, a jagged crack in the vertical mountainside. Even in the sunlight, one could believe the pass to be the gates of hell.

She purses her lips and urges her horses forward.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - LATE AFTERNOON

Effie rides into the middle of the clearing, leading her pack horse. She halts and dismounts in the most visible part of the valley. She stands, staring toward the hole, and waits. Her shotgun is still lodged in her saddle.

Pierre watches her from his niche. From this distance, she looks like a man. He grabs his bow and quiver and bounds deftly out the window.

When Pierre reaches the clearing, Effie's back is to him. He notches an arrow, hides among the foliage.

Effie removes her hat and hangs it on her saddle horn, shaking her auburn hair and combing it with her fingers.

Pierre lowers the arrow and speaks menacingly.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
Who are you? And what do you want?

Effie turns toward the voice and calls out.

EFFIE
(French with subtitles)
I am Effie Dubois Goodfellow. I
have come to thank the friends who
saved my life.

Pierre emerges from the forest like a phantom appearing. He walks toward Effie with a regal gait and stands before her. He looks deeply into her face then smiles.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
I see that you have learned to
weep.

Effie is confused by his statement.

PIERRE (CONT'D)
(French with subtitles)
Come, you will be our guest.

INT. THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Pierre ascends the ladder ahead of Effie. Ohanzee and Wokaih stand together watching him. Wokaih is showing her pregnancy.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)

This is Effie. She is the woman
Tohopka brought to us. She has made
a long journey to visit us.

Effie ascends the ladder and stands before Ohanzee and
Wokaih. Wokaih still wears the gold coin around her neck.

Ohanzee looks at Wokaih and nods toward Effie. Wokaih blushes
and takes a step toward Effie, looking meekly into her face.

WOKAIH

(French with subtitles)

Welcome to our home. Will you eat
some roast grouse?

Wokaih puts her fingers on her mouth and looks from Pierre to
Ohanzee expectantly. Pierre snickers. Hearing Pierre, Ohanzee
blows his invisible bugle before laughing out loud as he hugs
Wokaih, swings her from side to side.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)

Very good, Wokaih.

Effie finds herself laughing. Her laughter turns to tears as
she buries her face into her hands and sobs.

Wokaih walks over to Effie and embraces her. Effie holds
Wokaih tightly. Still clinging to Wokaih, Effie looks at
Pierre and then to Ohanzee as she speaks sincerely.

EFFIE

(French with subtitles)

Thank you all for your kindness.

Then, holding Wokaih by the shoulders, she smiles into her
face. There are tears in Wokaih's eyes as well.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - THE PORCH - THAT NIGHT

Pierre and Effie sit together in the darkness of the porch.
The moon is full, and the valley is flooded with blue light.
Streams of clouds are blackened by the moon as they pass
before it. A gentle breeze moves their hair.

EFFIE

(French with subtitles)

Before, when I awoke in the cave, I
had a nightmare. I dreamt I was in
the arms of a monster.

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
That was no dream. That was
Tohopka. He is our friend. It is he
who saved your life.

EFFIE

(French with subtitles)
You have a monster for a friend?

PIERRE

(French with subtitles)
He sits behind you now.

Effie turns quickly around and gasps. Tohopka does not take notice of Effie but gazes into the valley, sniffing the breeze.

Seeing Tohopka, Effie grabs Pierre in terror. Pierre whispers to her.

PIERRE (CONT'D)

(French with subtitles)
Go and embrace him. He will
remember you.

Effie looks in shock at Pierre then at Tohopka again. She swallows hard and stands. She takes a step toward Tohopka, and Tohopka stands. She looks upward, into the face of the giant. The breeze moves his long hair in strands across his face.

She approaches Tohopka slowly and embraces him. He returns her embrace.

EFFIE

(French with subtitles)
Thank you for my life, Tohopka.

Then, Tohopka puts a massive hand on Effie's head and strokes her gently before returning to his seat.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAY

Pierre and Effie walk together close to the grassy clearing. In the clearing, Effie's two Morgans have joined a heard of eleven others, including the pinto and four mules.

EFFIE

(French with subtitles)
Tomorrow, I will leave the valley
and make my way in the world.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
Where will you go?

EFFIE
(French with subtitles)
I have much gold. As long as I can
keep it, I will survive. The world
is very big. Somewhere, there must
be a place for me.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
We will miss you very much,
especially me.

Effie stops and turns toward Pierre, looking into his eyes.

EFFIE
(French with subtitles)
I do not wish to go, Pierre.

PIERRE
(French with subtitles)
Then, you will stay. We both wish
it.

Pierre and Effie kiss passionately.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE - DAY

SUPER: 1846

A small cabin sits in the clearing close to the lone tree.
Elk hides hang, tacked to the walls. Smoke rises from the
chimney. An infant can be heard, screaming madly.

INT. THE CABIN IN THE VALLEY OF THE CAVE.

Effie is dressed in a skillfully beaded buckskin dress as she
walks over to a small buckskin hammock, hung from the ceiling
with braided ropes. The infant is in the hammock.

She picks up the infant who sports a fine head of red hair.
She holds the screaming infant gently to her breast and
rocks.

Pierre enters the cabin and walks over to Effie. Effie looks
at Pierre with concern in her eyes as she continues to rock
the infant.

EFFIE
(French with subtitles)
The nightmare.

Pierre narrows his eyes and smiles.

THE END