GOMA

Original Screenplay
by

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FADE IN ON:

EXT. THE CONGO RIVER - NIGHT

Gliding like slow mercurial lava under the ghostly light of a full, Equatorial moon. Distant CHANTING -- thousands of native voices repeating THREE DISTINCT PHRASES, like a mantra. We will learn their meaning later.

THE LIVINGSTONE FALLS

A ROARING mass a half-mile wide, cascading like quick silver into the forty-foot drop. SUPERIMPOSE:

"FRENCH CONGO, 1925."

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

An OLD BLIND SORCERER wearing a leopard mantle and Mékée war mask, surrounded by thousands of burning torches, shifts rhythmically with his flock. He removes his mask, directs his veiled gaze toward the river. Intensely fanatical - if not mad. TITLES BEGIN.

EXT. ISLAND - NIGHT

A black native -- GOMA -- stares into the night. Noble face, liquid eyes, eliciting instant sympathy. He seems to be standing in the middle of the stream; all we perceive behind him are the flowing river and the glittering cascade. Goma is in his 40's but could just as well be 65. A strong torso deeply scarred with tribal tattoos and a life of hard labor. His mouth opens in an angry SHOUT. We HEAR NOTHING but the ROAR of the fall.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The SORCERER'S BOY beats with two thick sticks on a Mungungu, a powerful-sounding tom-tom made from a hollow tree trunk. The natives raise a reverential CLAMOR to the heavens. A skin crawling sight. A particularly menacing-looking contingent of MÉKÉE WARRIORS shifts in place around the Sorcerer.

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - NIGHT

TWO BOOTED FEET climb the slippery crest of a grassy knoll.

EXT. ISLAND - NIGHT

Goma lets out another unheard SHOUT.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The Sorcerer -- stock still -- as a HOLLOW SOUND AKIN TO A MOAN seems to reach from the beyond. His blind eyes vibrate with excitement.

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - NIGHT

The boots scurry along the grassy hill. The silhouette of the man holds a hunting rifle with telescopic sight. He drops to one knee, into shooting position.

THE RIFLE

Museum-piece quality. Bolt-action. Remington. The hand of the white man pulls back the bolt, slips a lustrous cartridge into the chamber, locks it with a LOUD METALLIC SOUND.

EXT. ISLAND - NIGHT

Goma -- listening, it would seem, to the same sound, though impossible in the deafening ROAR of the fall. Now SOUND FADES, is replaced by HEAVY BREATHING, that of the man with the rifle AND...

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - NIGHT

The man’s hand turns the rifle’s focusing ring; wipes his sweaty brow; presses his anxious eye to the telescopic sight AND...

POV THROUGH TELESCOPIC SIGHT:

The image of Goma comes into focus: motionless in the drifting drizzle, arms apart -- like a Christ -- AND...

THE MAN'S FINGER

Curling around the trigger AND...

WHAT HE SEES:

Goma -- only the visual hint of the cascade behind his relaxed countenance. Now the man's HEARTBEAT invades the TRACK. Goma's mouth opens in one more mute shout AND...

THE FINGER PULLS THE TRIGGER AND...

THE RIFLE'S HAMMER STRIKES THE PIN AND...

THE RIFLE'S MUZZLE SPITS OUT FIRE AND...

THE MAN'S PUPIL REFLECTS THE FLARE. THE LOUD CRACK OF THE SHOT FADING AFTER WE...

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, BEDROOM

GASTON DEVEAUX -- we'll meet him better later -- gasps into a mosquito net. Soaked, feverish, eyes wild -- like a drowning horse.

CONTINUED:

EVA OLSSON, a beautiful woman of thirty, sits bedside him. She inspects the bloody bandage on Deveaux's abdomen, cools his brow with a soaked cloth.

EVA
I'm here ... I'm with you.

He clasps her hand. Distant TOM-TOMS fade out long after we...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE ENDLESS BLANKET OF THE CONGOLESE RAINFOREST - DAY

Vegetation so dark green as to appear black. CAMERA glides forward, skimming the tree-tops. SUPER:

"ONE YEAR EARLIER"

AS CAMERA TRAVELS deep inland. Over rivers. Through valleys. Under a gray sky of morose sadness, to the very heart of the Mayombe Forest where it now peers through towering trees.

Bellow them, a PROCESSION OF FIVE WHITE-SHIMBECKED TIPOYES moves along a trail -- like a line of white ants. TITLES END.

ON THE GROUND

TWO HUNDRED NATIVES united by a cord tied around their necks, follow a dozen PORTERS through the underbrush. A DOZEN BLACK GENDARMES bring up the rear, chatting and chuckling. Their VOICES ECHO under the green canopy. A mosquitoe-swatting FORESTIERE AGENT carried by porters in a hammock, closes the convoy.

EXT. CLEARED SWATH THROUGH THE MAYOMBE - DAY

SEVERAL THOUSAND NATIVE LABORERS pound with sledge hammers on half-laid railroad tracks. Like black ants. SOLDIERS strike the air with five-thong whips, keep the human pistons pumping.

A sign: "SOCIÉTÉ DES BATIGNOLLES - CHEMIN DE FER CONGO OCEAN, BRAZZAVILLE-POINTE NOIRE." Another, smaller sign -- written by hand in white chalk -- hangs on the first one: "Km 103."

SIX RAILROAD OVERSEERS -- white men armed with revolvers -- hold the high ground. CAMERA CRANES UP REVEALING the gargantuan enterprise, extending as far as the eye can see.

GOMA

Barefoot -- a loincloth, leather-wrapped amulet around his neck and not much more -- hammers with the rest. Hopeless, beastly work. His mind numbed by monotony. HOLD.

EXT. THE MAYOMBE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING draws its massive silhouette against the loaded night sky.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Goma lies shivering on the muddy ground, staring at the silvery raindrops bouncing off his ebony skin. His eyes finally surrender to exhaustion. ANGLE WIDENS REVEALING the army of laborers sleeping, exposed to the elements.

EXT. RAILROAD WORKS, PANORAMIC - DAY

Gloomy sky. The rhythmic HAMMERING of the thousands of laborers echo like dropping pins. STEAM WHISTLE. The workers abandon their heavy tools.

EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST - DAY

The laborers eat their rations on the edge of the forest: a fist-size ball of manioc paste, rainwater collected on leaves. Goma is among them. FAINT VOICES, he turns...

The CONVOY OF TIPOYES moves through the underbrush.

Goma steals a glance toward the overseers, stands, follows the convoy through the forest, from one tree to the next.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

THREE RAILROAD OFFICIALS have pitched tents. BARON DE FONSECA, the man in the leading tipoye, is put to ground. Tall. Imperious. Cold eyes, sleek, black hair. Slight limp managed with the help of a beautiful cane. Its heavy silver handle encrusted with gems and an ivory snake head.

The RAILROAD MEN greet him with the deference he obviously feels entitled to.

TIME CUT

LATER

The sun has risen. Shafts of thick, yellow light raise an ethereal vapor from the ground. Canvas chairs, a folding table, tablecloth, napkins, the tinkling of spoons echo in the cathedral of the forest. Fonseca and the Railroad Officials share tea, cookies and cigars.

Goma, squatted behind a fallen tree, observes the strange tableau. His eyes shift to the prisoners hunkered under armed guard -- like a troop of captured game.

An untidy man with a quick wit and intelligent eyes we will meet better later (DR. CACAVELLI) sits next to Fonseca. A heavy set man wearing the soiled uniform of a police captain (DUBOIS) sits on his other side.

CONTINUED:

The officials are pleased with the delivery. Money changes hands. Fonseca is on the receiving end.

A PRISONER suddenly breaks loose, bolts for the forest. Two gendarmes give chase. The fugitive leaps over the fallen tree behind which hides Goma. He slips on the wet bark, falls with a terrible BONE-CRACKING SOUND.

Goma ducks out of sight.

The gendarmes force the man to his feet. One of his legs has an exposed tibia fracture. They drag him back to the clearing. Fonseca pokes the fracture with his cane, the native lets out an agonizing CRY. Cacavelli looks over the wound, shakes his head at Fonseca: damaged goods.

Fonseca tosses his cane in the air, grabs it by its end and, in one continuous motion, buries the heavy snake-head handle into the base of the native's skull, killing him instantly.

Goma shrinks back, stunned. Fonseca turns to the RUSTLE of leaves, peers intently into the shadows. Goma holds his breath, eyes riveted to the stick's precious grip as Fonseca wipes the blood off it on the dead man's loin cloth, peers some more into the darkness, then casually turns and follows Cacavelli back to the tea-party.

The gendarmes toss the native's body away, like so much trash. The STEAM WHISTLE sounds off. Goma hurries back.

EXT. RAILROAD WORKS - ANOTHER DAY (RAIN)

Laborers push and shove before an improvised office shed, under a torrential downpour. Railroad officials wearing rubber coats call out names from checklists.

Laborers step up and receive their pay, then board an open boxcar. Many others -- not yet scheduled to depart -- watch sullenly from the sidelines. Armed soldiers keep an eye on the proceedings.

FIRST OFFICIAL
Batu, Lami!

A laborer shuffles up.

SECOND OFFICIAL
Two years...three-hundred francs.

He signals the emaciated man to make his mark on a ledger, hands him a handful of coins from a chest, cocks head toward the awaiting box car. Next:

FIRST OFFICIAL
Fagasu, Lami!

CONTINUED:

SECOND OFFICIAL
(checks list)
Deceased.

FIRST OFFICIAL
Vanuti, Boulima!

SECOND OFFICIAL
(checks list)
Deceased.

FIRST OFFICIAL
Goma, Boulima!

Goma mumbles something, pushes through.

FIRST OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
Two years...three hundred francs.

Goma takes his pay, puts his mark on the ledger, heads for the steaming train.

He is suddenly arrested by the sight of a skeleton lying in the bush, perfectly stripped of flesh. A few large ants roam its white bones. The tough skin of the feet remains untouched, resembling black sandals.

Goma's eyes linger a moment, then he hurries to the boxcar. The row-call continues OFF, AS THE TRAIN WHISTLE LEADS THE

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST TRACK - DAY

The rackety, narrow gauge train cuts through the Mayombe Forest.

INT. BOX CAR - DAY

Packed. Goma rides by the open door. He looks with eyes flooded at the receding mountains: a miracle. The train bombs into a tunnel -- ALL GOES BLACK.

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - DAY

Goma walks along a prairie. Empty-handed. As if he was just returning from a stroll.

EXT. RAIN FOREST - DAY

Goma sits under a ravenea (traveler's tree), in the gathering darkness. He slashes open the petiole at the base of one of its leaves, drinks the water that flows from it. He sits there, listens to the all-enveloping FOREST SOUNDS and for the first time, the hint of a smile shines in his eyes.

EXT. CORN FIELD - NEXT DAY

Goma pulls his shadow with long, CRUNCHING strides through a patch of young corn (LEFT TO RIGHT). Distant LAUGHTER. He climbs a small promontory to observe a white mission house and chapel of Scandinavian design.

WHAT HE SEES: Eva, the beautiful young Swedish woman with soft, angelic features we saw in the opening sequence, chatting and laughing with an attractive young man (ROSETTI), a few years her junior, dressed in immaculate whites. His horse nibbles at the grass beside them.

Their attitudes suggest a one-way platonic romance -- Rosetti's. The gentleman caller sees Goma, Eva follows his gaze.

Goma goes on his way.

EXT. VILLAGE OF BOULIMA - LATE AFTERNOON

Goma walks through a dozen huts of Beteke design -- all that remains from a once prosperous village. He looks into one of them, then a second, searching.

INT. HUT

Goma comes into the dark, mud structure. In the far end, he makes out the gaunt, motionless figure of AMPETI -- his grandmother -- kneels beside her, suddenly breaks into sobs.

GOMA
Mimi ni hapa, bibi... Goma ni hapa.
I am here, grandmother... Goma is back.

He takes her face in his hands. Ampeti's features are ashen. Goma paws her flesh -- she's burning up.

EXT. UNDERBRUSH - NIGHT

Goma carries Ampeti on his back, under a luminous full moon (RIGHT TO LEFT).

EXT. PLAIN - LATER

Goma stops to rest, breathless. The moonlight washes all to black & white. A distant WILD ROAR cuts through the silence. Goma hoists Ampeti back on his shoulders, hurries on.

EXT. MISSION - LATER

Goma's labored BREATHING grows near against the silence of the night.

CONTINUED:

He emerges from the darkness, collapses with Ampeti before the verandah of the mission house. FADE TO BLACK AND

CUT TO:

EXT. MISSION - DAY

The quaint, white-washed buildings stark against a lilac sky. Ampeti and Goma lie asleep on the wooden steps. Like a knot of decrepit limbs.

The front door opens and REVEREND OLSSON, the Swedish missionary, a handsome man in his late sixties, with a full head of white hair, steps out, immediately sees them.

OLSSON
(Swedish, subtitles)
Eva! Quickly!

Goma starts awake. Olsson kneels down, listens to Ampeti's heart-beat, stretches her out. Goma squats several feet away. Eva hurries out, touches Ampeti's feverish face.

EVA
(to Goma, slowly)
How long has she been ill?
(Goma stares)
Muda gani yeye mgonjwa?

Goma blinks, Eva turns to her father.

EVA (CONT'D)
(Swedish, subtitles)
I saw him yesterday ... They must be from around here.

OLSSON
(Swedish, subtitles)
Inside!

NAMU and LETI, two native young women wearing European dress, help carry Ampeti inside the house.

LATER. Goma looks in through a window. Inside, Eva squirts an injection up to the light, injects Ampeti. Goma looks on concerned AS WE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MISSION - DAY (WEEKS LATER)

Goma plows a patch of land alongside MISSION NATIVES. He works hard, with pleasure. SEVERAL MONKEYS observe from outside the plowed field. Goma stops, stretches. A monkey mimics him perfectly. Goma laughs.

CONTINUED:

ANOTHER DAY

Goma rests against a tree, draws with the base of his amulet on a piece of bark -- a clever rendition of a monkey with three tails. The traces from the amulet are led gray. VOICES -- he turns: Eva helps Ampeti to a verandah chair.

ANOTHER DAY

Goma feeds Ampeti at the shade of a tree, fights to keep her cigar out of her persistent reach.

They turn to the SOUND of Olsson's motorcycle approaching in a cloud of white smoke. Namu and Leti hurry to meet the Reverend.

ANOTHER DAY

Eva teaches Goma ride an old, battered bicycle, pushing the wobbling vehicle. Goma laughs. Olsson films the scene with a bulky, 35 mm camera.

INT. MISSION CHURCH - DAY

A service in progress. Eva plays a small, foot operated organ. The pews are crowded with NATIVES SINGING. Goma watches from the door, moved.

EXT. MISSION - ANOTHER DAY

Olsson repairs a movie-projector on a small table. The driving mechanism springs off every time he turns the crank. Several mission natives follow his every move, enraptured. He fidgets with the coil, turns the crank: it comes apart again.

CACAVELLI (O.S.)
Reverend, what's your guess on this one?

Olsson turns.

DR. CACAVELLI -- we first met him at the Mayombe tea party -- a rotund, cynical man with bifocals resting low on a red, variegated nose, sees the day's long line of ill and diseased natives. He paints his prescriptions in large, white-wash characters on their naked torsos.

Eva assists Cacavelli, prepares to inject an OLD MAN afflicted WITH GENITAL ELEPHANTIASIS -- a grotesque sebaceous deposit, three times the size of a football.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
Thirty-two, thirty-three kilos?
(Eva glares at him)
Way short of any record, though...
Ever tell you bout the one I once cut off near Batongafo..?

CONTINUED:

EVA
Yes, you have, Doctor--!

CACAVELLI
Seventy-four kilos weighed the damned thing! Man dragged it nineteen kilometers to Fort Crampel to have it excised...

Olsson will have no part of this, turns back to his projector. Cacavelli sips from a small, silver flask.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
I succeeded in saving his virility despite it having laid buried under the mass of hypertrophied conjunctive tissue for over a decade--

EVA
(has had enough)
Doctor, please!

She turns to Goma, who approaches wrapping a piece of bark in a banana leaf, looks at the diseased old man with compassion.

EVA (CONT'D)
He'll be alright, Goma.
(sarcastic)
The good doctor will make him well.

Cacavelli eyes the wrapping in Goma's hands.

CACAVELLI
Hell’s that you’ve got there?

Goma knows better than to acknowledge Cacavelli, shows Eva his drawing of an elephant with three trunks.

EVA
It's beautiful, Goma! Isn't, father?

Olsson concurs, goes on with his work. Cacavelli can't hold back his curiosity, takes a peek over Eva's shoulder.

CACAVELLI
Ever seen a bloody elephant, boy!

GOMA
(frostily, eyes on Olsson’s busy hands)
Many time.

CACAVELLI
Then, why the hell three trunks?

CONTINUED:

Olsson's mechanism comes apart again. The coil lands at Goma's feet. He picks it up, twists it this way and that, places it back into the mechanism. It sticks.

GOMA
(over action)
Elephant with one nose everybody know ... Magic elephant, I take two pata for it.

Eva and Olsson give Cacavelli an amused look. Cacavelli rolls his eyes, carelessly injects the old native, sends him off.

CACAVELLI
Next!

CAR HORN. All turn to see a yellow postal truck stop at the access road. Olsson waves.

OLSSON
Goma, please let Captain DaRosa know that our people will be arriving late today.

Goma wraps his picture, kisses Olsson's hand.

GOMA
Bless me, Tata.

OLSSON
God bless you, Goma.

Goma leaves at a trot toward the access road. Olsson turns the crank on his projector. It runs smoothly. He shakes his head, baffled.

Cacavelli writes the prescription on a new patient's chest.

CACAVELLI
No walk in rain, understand?!

The man mumbles something in Kikongo, starts off.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
Hopeless, unimaginative mammals...
Next!

The next native in line shuffles up.

EVA
Can you remember the last time you actually enjoyed your work, Doctor?
(Cacavelli grins, takes a shot from his flask)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

EVA (CONT'D)
How can a man of your learning spend his days without ever attempting to gain insight into the souls of these people?

CACAVELLI
Well, first I would have to believe in the soul, wouldn't I, Miss Olsson?

Reverend Olsson reassembles the projector, follows the exchange -- clearly a game of sorts, as Cacavelli does not lack humor and takes pleasure in needling Eva.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
I, on the other hand, find it hard to believe that a young woman as clever as you has not yet realized the scam religions are.

EVA
(bristling)
So, father and I...we're scamming these people!

CACAVELLI
(writing prescription:)
Not consciously, no... But, are you aware that the very notion of guilt was alien to the Congolese until we - you, rather, the religious folk - arrived with your bag of fairy tales? Their own beliefs were just as illusory, of course, but at least they were notions they understood!

EVA
Well, you shan't change my mind, Doctor--

CACAVELLI
But I'm not trying to, darling... That's precisely what sets us atheists apart from your lot: we're not out to convert anyone to our sinful ways ... We're perfectly harmless!

Eva springs up, exasperated, stalks into the mission. Olsson frowns at Cacavelli, watches Goma pitch his artwork to the Postman.

OLSSON
Why don't you pick on me - see how you fare, Doctor?

CONTINUED:

Cacavelli smiles guiltily, sends the last patient off, takes a shot from his flask, produces a small travel chess set with a game in progress, sets it on the table.

CACAVELLI
You I rather see sweat over this board, Reverend. My move, was it?

OLSSON
Was it?

Cacavelli's eyes shine with mischief, he pushes the board toward Olsson -- the Reverend's move.

EXT. MISSION, WIDE - DAY - WEEKS LATER

Idyllic under an early morning sun.

Namu, Leti and several natives are gathered to see Goma off. Goma ties a bundle, then kisses Olsson's hand, sees Eva approaching with the bicycle. She offers it to Goma.

He turns to Olsson, incredulous. Olsson nods and smiles. Goma’s liquid eyes flood.

Eva helps Ampeti onto the rack and Goma pedals away proudly. Before he disappear below the crest of the road, he waves back AS WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CONGO RIVER - DAY

A large paddle-steamer -- "L'AURORE DU CONGO" -- seems fixed in place as it labors up-stream on the tea-colored water.

EXT. STEAMER STERN DECK - DAY

GASTON DEVEAUX (the man from the mosquito net), 40’s, dressed in impeccable whites -- a man of breed and distinction, but rugged and frank -- plays chess with the steamer's CAPTAIN, gazing at the gliding landscape in endless delight. He waves back at the natives waving from shore. The Captain watches him amused.

CAPTAIN
You know, Governor, they don’t really expect us to wave back.

Deveaux glances at him, continues to wave.

DEVEAUX
What makes you so certain, Captain?

The Captain does not press, regards him with a hint of condescension.

EXT. THE CONGO RIVER - SUNSET

AERIAL. The steamer. An arrowhead moving upstream. Pulling a raft with an automobile in tow.

EXT. STEAMER STERN DECK - EVENING

Deveaux, the Captain, TWO OFFICERS, a COUPLE and their YOUNG SON dine on white tablecloth, under paper lanterns. BLACK STEWARDS serve. The Boy is at the railing, watching the natives waving torches from shore.

BOY'S MOTHER
Come back to the table, darling.

The boy obeys, takes his seat beside Deveaux.

BOY
What do they teach the native boys, Sir? French or Dutch?

DEVEAUX
(points toward the opposite shore:)
Dutch is on the other side of this river, young man. The Congo Free State, as King Leopold of Belgium fancies calling his property. Four times larger than ours...
(smiles at boy)
But half as free.

BOY'S FATHER
You were here before, then, Excellency?

Deveaux crosses the Captain's eyes as he resumes eating, abashed.

DEVEAUX
Before we could call it French, even. Left in 1891 ... Most reluctantly.
(eyes boy)
I must have been about your age.

DEVEAUX - SHORT TIME LATER

Smoking a cigar at the railing, enjoying the balmy evening. The Boy runs past, chasing a small monkey. Deveaux looks after him, then fishes a wallet out of his pocket, opens it to gaze at...

CONTINUED:

A PHOTOGRAPH: AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN WITH A BOY OF FIVE, IN AN ASIAN SETTING (LAOS).

The photo stirs deep emotions. Deveaux puts wallet away, responds to calls from the table where the Captain holds up a bottle of Cognac.

EXT. CONGO RIVER - MAGIC HOUR

SHOOTING FROM THE COASTLINE. The lighted steamer glides past. The chatter on board loud and clear over the boat's GENTLY-TAPPING ENGINE.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CONGO RIVER - DAY (AERIAL)

The steamer draws a wide "V" on the mirror of the river. Neat puffs of smoke rise from the stacks, take our view to the RENAULT TOURING CONVERTIBLE securely fastened to the raft in tow.

EXT. PORT OF BRAZZAVILLE - DAY

The steamer in final approach. Easy-gliding, dug-out canoes filled with excited NATIVES escort the vessel. The PASSENGERS toss coins overboard. Divers snap them up and stuff them in their bulging cheeks.

EXT. STEAMER - DAY

Deveaux, at the railing, delights on the spectacle, waves at the accompanying canoes, notices...

FOUR MANDARA NATIVES

Splendidly built men with oiled skin, whose only garment consists of a cotton gauze wrapped around their penises, man a particularly sleek-looking catamaran. Under their powerful paddle propulsion it seems so fleet, as to almost skip on the surface of the river.

EXT. WHARF - LATER

The docking of the steamer has drawn a large CROWD OF NATIVES and COLONIALS.

FOUR BLACK WIND-BLOWERS play an out-of-tune "La Marseillaise." The TROMBONE PLAYER is late; the other three stop playing, frustrated, then the four start over.

NATIVE DOCK WORKERS make a noisy business of landing the Renault. The vehicle's strident KLAXON goes off accidentally and they spring back startled, then laugh, childlike. Deveaux joins in their laughter.

CONTINUED:

The steamer's plank comes down. Deveaux debarks. Rosetti, the lean, young man we saw earlier calling on Eva, comes forward, clicks his heels.

ROSETTI
Secretary Rosetti, Excellency. Welcome to Congo.

DEVEAUX
You have a first name, Rosetti?

ROSETTI
Philippe, Sir.

DEVEAUX
(his eyes smile)
Thank you.
(offers hand)
Gaston Deveaux.

Rosetti takes it, pleased.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
We'll have to do something about your diet, Secretary. You're far too thin for the hard work ahead of us.

He moves on. Rosetti considers his lean frame, catches up.

A line of OFFICIALS wait to greet the new Governor. Rosetti makes the introductions.

ROSETTI
Major Delafosse, Sir... Commander of the Army.

DELAFOSSE, a fastidiously military man in his fifties, with a long, rigid mustache and a spotless, starched uniform, snaps to attention.

DELAFOSSE
First and Second companies. Hundred and fifty men at your orders, Sir!

He juts out a sharp salute. Deveaux restrains the intended hand-shake, responds in kind. Delafosse motions to a petite, gentle-mannered woman wearing an expensive, haute-couture turquoise silk dress, with matching scarf and capelina.

DELAFOSSE (CONT'D)
My wife and I welcome you to Congo and wish you all the success at your new post, Sir.

DEVEAUX
Most kind of you both, Major.

CONTINUED:

He pauses at the sight of Mme. Delafosse's extended, jewel-studded hand, brushes it with his lips.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Madame.

MME. DELAFOSSE
Enchanté, Governor.

Rosetti motions to the next official in line.

ROSETTI
Doctor Cacavelli, Sir... Chief of Health Services.

Deveaux beams politely, offers his hand.

DEVEAUX
Doctor...

Cacavelli takes Deveaux's hand a tad too familiarly.

CACAVELLI
Welcome, Excellency.

DEVEAUX
(holding on to Cacavelli's hand)
I have it from a good source that you are the local chess champion. We shall see about that.

CACAVELLI
It will be my pleasure, Sir.

Deveaux moves on. "La Marseillaise" again grinds to a halt. Rosetti glares at the Trombone Player who flashes back an endearing smile and resumes play.

DUBOIS, the portly, ill-kept police captain seen earlier in the Mayombe tea party is next in line. He wipes his hand on his trousers, profits from Rosetti's distraction to offer it to Deveaux with exaggerated deference.

DUBOIS
Captain Dubois, Your Excellency. Chief of Police. At your orders. Sir.

DEVEAUX
(the once over)
Ah, yes...Dubois...I've heard much about you...

Dubois beams proudly, darts a satisfied glance at Delafosse. Then his low self-esteem gets the best of him and he becomes worried. Delafosse eyes him unkindly -- no love lost between these two. SHOUTS, all turn.

CONTINUED:

The Sorcerer we saw in the opining sequence bursts through the crowd, chanting wildly, tossing "magic powders" at Deveaux and his party. Snickers ripple through the colonials. Soldiers usher the Sorcerer away roughly. Deveaux makes signs to them to go gently on the old man.

Rosetti leans into Deveaux, somewhat embarrassed.

ROSETTI
Sorry, Sir...
(quick smile)
Nothing to worry about...Crazy old Mékée...Nobody knows when he came here...his people belong far North.

DEVEAUX
(mimicking, softly:)
"A great voice will come,
Will drive all the white men,
Back into the sea!"

ROSETTI
(surprised)
Yes, Sir ... That’s exactly what he says.

DEVEAUX
Well, let's hope he <u>is</u> crazy, Secretary.
(moving on)
Never been much of a swimmer.

Rosetti follows Deveaux, charmed. Deveaux graciously shakes colonials’ hands, returns greetings AS WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

The Renault motorcar bounces along a one-track rut. Its rear rack loaded with LUGGAGE. A group of NATIVE YOUNG BOYS play something like soccer in the middle of the road, using a green fruit for ball. When the vehicle approaches, they lie or sit on the ground, forcing it to slow down.

INT. RENAULT - SAME TIME

Rosetti drives, Delafosse rides shotgun. Deveaux and Mme Delafosse in back. Rosetti waves the boys aside, good-natured.

ROSETTI
Want to get run over?!

DEVEAUX
(looking out his window, down memory lane:)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
No...Just see the machine work up close...

Rosetti finds him in his rear-view mirror.

The boys make way laughing, steal a caress from the shiny, gliding beast. Deveaux waves at them. They become very excited and run after the accelerating convertible.

MME. DELAFOSSE
I understand you spent part of your childhood in Congo, Governor. How does it feel to be back, after such a long absence?

DEVEAUX
Feels like yesterday, Madame. Time appears to have stood still. Part of Africa's charm, I'm sure you'll agree.

MME. DELAFOSSE
Indeed, I do... And will your family be joining you, Governor?

Delafosse darts her an alarmed glance.

DEVEAUX
Regretfully no.
(beat)
I lost my wife and son five years ago this coming Christmas, Madame.

MME. DELAFOSSE
Oh... I'm terribly sorry, Excellency, I [didn't know]--

DEVEAUX
That's quite all right...
(manages a smile)
I hold wonderful memories of them.

Rosetti watches Deveaux turn back to his window, suddenly must HONK THE KLAXON. Deveaux looks ahead.

A line of TWO DOZEN BLACK WOMEN tied round their necks by one and the same rope block the road. POLICE GENDARMES pull them roughly aside to make way for the Governor's automobile.

Deveaux follows the miserable-looking prisoners from window to window. One of them has a baby at her breast.

DELAFOSSE
Hostages for the Forestiere, Sir. Impossible to get willing labor otherwise these days...

CONTINUED:

Deveaux ponders this. Rosetti and Delafosse exchange uneasy glances. The hostages fall back on the track AS WE PULL AWAY AND...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - SUNSET

Once a grand manor, now gone sadly to seed. Nested between tall mahoganies and broad acacias. The Renault comes down the access road HONKING its horn.

A throng of RESIDENCE NATIVES runs up to greet it. A robust woman, NUAMBE, and two "boys" (DJO and MOKOKA) gather in a beaming -- if brief -- welcome party.

The Renault pulls up. Deveaux steps down, greets his constituency. They beam, surprised by the new governor's warm acknowledgement as he walks into the mansion.

INT. RESIDENCE, STUDY - SUNSET

Rosetti opens a set of shutters. The golden afternoon light invades a stately, handsomely furnished study. He then moves to open a sliding door leading onto a large...

LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

A CHICKEN is perched on the edge of an ornate, partially draped billiard table. It flutters out an open window.

Nuambe opens French doors leading to a big, checkered terrace overlooking the grounds. Djo and Mokoka carry LUGGAGE in.

ROSETTI
The rest will come by porters in the morning, Sir.

DEVEAUX
I am in no hurry, Mr. Rosetti...
(this trip has been long time coming)
No hurry at all...

He strolls out onto the...

TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Rosetti rolls up a rusty white awning. Deveaux leans on the balustrade, takes in the three bungalows across the vast lawn.

A faint TOM-TOM underscores the dying day. Deveaux turns to the sunset, interpreting...

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
"The new white commander has arrived."
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
(Rosetti smiles)
You'd think we're at war with this people.

ROSETTI
Yes, Sir.
(a pause)
Will that be all, Sir?

DEVEAUX
(nods)
Thank you.

ROSETTI
(re his bungalow:)
Anything you need, I'm just across, Sir...

Rosetti trots down the steps, starts across the lawn.

DEVEAUX
Philippe..!

Rosetti turns.

ROSETTI
Sir...

DEVEAUX
Have the Chief of Police join us for breakfast in the morning.

ROSETTI
Certainly, Sir. What time?

DEVEAUX
I like to begin my day a few moments before sunrise, Secretary.

ROSETTI
(beat)
Right... Sir.

He hurries off. Deveaux's eyes fall on a forest fire burning in the distance.

INT. LIBRARY - LATE NIGHT

The flame of an oil lamp. Casting its light on Deveaux, seated on the steps of a rolling ladder, surrounded by strewn files.

He replaces one of the folders on the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, takes out another one -- blue -- reaches for a glass of cognac next to a tray of dinner leftovers.

CONTINUED:

TIME CUT

Deveaux paces, thoughtful. He lifts the sheet draping over the billiard table, uncovers a large crimson stain on the felt. He studies it for a moment, carefully replaces the sheet, drains his cognac, blows the oil lamp off.

CUT TO:

THE SUN

Rising over the forest. REVEAL the mansion -- just a white speck on the blanket of green, tinted with the orange glow of sunrise. A GRINDING SOUND as...

EXT. RESIDENCE GROUNDS - DAWN

TWO SOLDIERS attempt to start the Renault under a broad acacia, half covered by a tarpaulin. Each grinding of the crank breaks the early-morning peace.

Rosetti and Dubois approach across the lawn.

TERRACE

Deveaux sits reading the blue file at a breakfast table set for three. Nuambe can be seen through the open library doors, washing the billiard table with brush and soap.

The sound of the Renault's CRANK breaks the silence one last time. The soldiers hold up their arms. Deveaux waves at them to desist, puts the file aside as Rosetti and Dubois climb the steps, stands to greet them.

DEVEAUX
Good morning, gentlemen.

ROSETTI
Good morning, Sir.

Dubois removes his soiled sun helmet, puts out his plump hand. He's obviously made an effort to look his best -- a bit of blood-stained toilet paper sticks to his shaved neck.

DUBOIS
Governor...

Deveaux ignores the intended handshake.

DEVEAUX
Thank you for joining us, Captain.

DUBOIS
An honor, Excellency.

He pulls his hand back, takes the seat opposite Deveaux.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
(beat)
Have a seat.

Dubois springs back up, embarrassed, glances nervously at Rosetti, then takes the seat once again.

Djo and Mokoka set down fruit platters, coffee, bread, etc. Deveaux thanks the boys, offers a platter to Dubois.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Papaya, Captain?

DUBOIS
(uneasy being first)
Ehr ... Thank you, Sir...

DEVEAUX
(another platter)
Bananas?

Dubois eyes Rosetti, unsure. Deveaux offers a third platter.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Have a dugulu, then... Very good for the memory...

Rosetti catches the irony, watches Dubois. Deveaux offers the first tray to Rosetti.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Secretary?

Rosetti serves himself a slice of papaya.

ROSETTI
Thank you, Sir.

Deveaux serves himself a mango and proceeds to peel it with knife and fork AS...

DEVEAUX
You know, Captain, being new at my post and all, there are certain matters I am going to require a bit of guidance with...

DUBOIS
Course, Sir... Whatever I can do to [help]--

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Good, good! Then, tell me... Yesterday, for instance, on my way here, we came across a most curious sight: a group of women - prisoners, I assume, since they were all tied up around their necks like beasts - was being led by some of your men, rather unkindly.
(Dubois knits a simian frown)
What was that all about, Captain? Pass the sugar?

DUBOIS
Ah, that...yes...
(passes milk)
Well...
(glances nervously at Rosetti who passes sugar)
You know blacks, Sir...

Deveaux fixes him.

DEVEAUX
I beg your pardon?

Dubois lowers tone, ostensibly to spare Mokoka pouring him coffee.

DUBOIS
Not too fond of work, are they, Sir? They run into the bush when we come for them.

DEVEAUX
Do they, indeed?

DUBOIS
Yes, Sir. Impossible to get any willing labor these days...

DEVEAUX
Hmmm... So we take their women and children?

DUBOIS
(pleased)
Works every time, Sir.

DEVEAUX
Does it...?

DUBOIS
Yes, Sir.

Deveaux puts down the sugar bowl with a startling CRASH, stands, picks up the blue file, paces behind Dubois.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Curious, though ... I've been going through my predecessor's files most of the night but found no document of any sort sanctioning recruitment of forced labor...

DUBOIS
(straining his neck to keep Deveaux in sight)
Well, it's been policy for some time, Sir... I mean...Governor Dulac had a, a...an understanding with the Baron--

DEVEAUX
(stops, looks at him)
Sorry?

DUBOIS
Baron de Fonseca, Sir.
(misreading Deveaux's stare:)
Major shareholder of the Companie Forestiere...?

DEVEAUX
Oh, I've heard all about the Baron as well, Captain!

Dubois' collar is suddenly choking him.

LONG: THE RESIDENCE GROUNDS

A zebu grazes placidly, Deveaux's voice cuts across the vast lawn crisp and sharp.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
This "understanding" between Dulac and the Baron was in writing, of course...

DUBOIS
Well, Sir...you see, my job was never--

BACK TO TERRACE

Deveaux slams the blue file on the table, jolting Dubois.

DEVEAUX
Come, Captain! Surely you must've been acting on some decree, fiat, dictum of some sort!

DUBOIS
Well, Dulac--

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Governor Dulac blew his brains all over that billiard table, must I remind you, Captain? And I will find out why!

DUBOIS
(panicky glance at Rosetti)
Yes, Sir--

DEVEAUX
(reading file)
"On the fourteenth of July, 1924, Chief N'Djara, whose village of Limoni was part of the Concession to the Companie Forestiere of Shanga-Oubangi, was fitted with a belt of dynamite sticks and one more up his rectum" - for good measure, I imagine - "and publicly blown up to celebrate Bastille Day!"
(slams report on table)
Governor Dulac had an understanding about this as well, Captain?!

Djo and Mokoka slowly unspool the shadow of the awning over the scene.

DUBOIS
(rising, praying to be elsewhere:)
Well, the Chief had been tried for rebellion, you see--

DEVEAUX
Sit down, Captain!

Dubois drops back in his seat, agitated.

DUBOIS
He had been sentenced ... He was scheduled to be decapitated three days later--

DEVEAUX
And you don’t see the difference, man?!

Dubois glances anxiously at Rosetti. Deveaux contains rage.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
We gave the world Montaigne, Captain! Danton, Rebelais!

Dubois has no clue what he’s talking about.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
(re file:)
Crimes like these have soiled the name of France and raised the International Community against our nation. I am here, empowered at the highest levels, to bring to justice whoever is behind these sickening reports. I will clear the name of France, Captain.

Dubois, nods, forces a swallow.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
I were you, I'd think twice before casting my next lot with the Baron. You might find yourself rotting in your own jail. Now, get out of my sight.

Dubois doffs his sun helmet, rears down the steps.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Excellency...

He stumbles, tips helmet at Rosetti.

DUBOIS
Secretary...

He walks away in haste, realizes he is taking his napkin with him, returns, dares not walk all the way back, leaves it on the balustrade. Deveaux watches him go. After a moment, Rosetti turns to Deveaux.

ROSETTI
With your permission, Sir, Baron de Fonseca will be informed of this interview before the sun sets.

Deveaux sees Major Delafosse outside his bungalow.

DEVEAUX
I’m counting on it, Secretary.

ROSETTI
Sir...?

DEVEAUX
Excuse me, I must have a word with the Major.

He starts off. Rosetti looks after him -- his job just became a lot more interesting.

EXT. DELAFOSSE'S BUNGALOW - DAY

Water rains on a flower bed. ANGLE WIDENS TO INCLUDE Delafosse, in sleeping gown, holding the watering can.

DEVEAUX (V.O.)
'Morning!

Delafosse turns in horror of being caught in his pajamas. He snaps to attention, still holding the watering can in one hand.

DEVEAUX
At ease, Major, at ease...

DELAFOSSE
(flushed)
Please allow me a moment, Sir.

He spirits himself into his bungalow. Deveaux admires the flowers.

DEVEAUX
Wonderful garden, Major!

DELAFOSSE (O.S.)
Credit my wife, Sir ... She is the one with the green thumb. I just do as I'm told and water the blasted things twice a day...

DEVEAUX
Twice a day?

DELAFOSSE (O.S.)
Lethal weather this for flowers, Sir... You'd think with all the rainfall...
(reappears buttoning up his uniform)
A miracle anything colorful grows at all.

DEVEAUX
Do carry on, Major, please... I didn't mean to interrupt your chores.

DELAFOSSE
Thank you, Sir.

Resumes watering plants.

DEVEAUX
Tell me, Major, are you familiar with the village of Boulima?

CONTINUED:

DELAFOSSE
Certainly, Sir. What's left of it, in any case ... Most of it was torched when the men were recruited for the Congo Ocean.
(gazes inland)
Two, three days march North. East of the mission.

DEVEAUX
Mission?

DELAFOSSE
Lutherans ... Swedish fellow by the name of Olsson runs it with his daughter. Settled there in 1905 or 6. His wife was taken from him by fever some years ago. Very fine people.

DEVEAUX
(beat)
Major, I wonder if I could impose upon you with a small, personal favor.

DELAFOSSE
Why, anything, of course, Sir. Anything at all.

EXT. VILLAGE OF BOULIMA, PANORAMIC - DAY

Smoke rises from the home fires beyond a recently planted banana patch. Goma, looking fit, polishes his bicycle, talking non-stop to Ampeti, who sucks at her cigar outside their hut. Suddenly Goma becomes quiet, cocks his ear. VOICES, he turns.

A half dozen soldiers come down the center of the village. Goma YELLS frightened at Ampeti, runs off in the opposite direction, slams into Delafosse's mule, falls, stunned.

INT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, LIBRARY - DAY

The billiard felt has been scrubbed, windows are open, sun pours in. Nuambe polishes the floors, talking to herself.

Deveaux unpacks one of the crates stenciled "Brazzaville, Afrique Équatoriale Française."

His hands loosen the strings of a soft suede bag, pour out eleven Negro lead soldiers on to the oak desk. He looks at them fondly, then picks up a leather envelope, shifts through a stack of old photographs, finds the one he is looking for.

PHOTO: A white man in flannels and sun helmet, smiling with several natives before a bush-house.

CONTINUED:

Two young boys -- one white and wearing shirt and knee pants, the other black and quite naked -- lean on the verandah. They are standing by a telescope with an arm around each other, grinning at camera.

Under the image, dated in bold handwriting: "BOULIMA, AOÛT, 1885."

A SPUTTERING ENGINE and a LOUD EXPLOSION. Deveaux puts down the photos, goes out.

EXT. RESIDENCE, ACCESS ROAD - DAY

Olsson's motorcycle drags a tail of smoke down through the grounds. Eva drives, the Reverend rides behind her. Both wear leather helmets and goggles. A throng of RESIDENCE NATIVES run to greet them, excited.

EXT. TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Deveaux emerges from the residence. The motorcycle comes to an explosive stop below the steps. Olsson dismounts, removes his goggles, offers his hand to Deveaux.

OLSSON
Gustav Olsson! The Swedish mission, Excellency...

DEVEAUX
(takes hand)
Gaston Deveaux ... Welcome, Reverend, welcome. Major Delafosse has told me all about you.

Eva sets the motorcycle on its stand.

OLSSON
All of it?
(winces at Eva)
I'm in trouble now...

Deveaux shares in a chuckle.

OLSSON (CONT'D)
This is my daughter, Eva.

Eva removes her gloves, goggles and helmet. Her athletic hair cascades over her shoulders. Something of a tomboy, but a strikingly beautiful woman. A strong current of attraction passes between them.

DEVEAUX
How...do you do, Miss Olsson...

He bends to brush her hand with his lips but Eva frustrates him pumping his arm vigorously instead.

CONTINUED:

EVA
Governor...

Deveaux holds on to her hand just a bit too long. She giggles, gives a few aimless, bouncy steps away.

Olsson regards her, puzzled.

OLSSON
I apologize for the informality, Excellency, but we had some business in Brazzaville and...well ...decided to pay our respects.

EVA
The whole truth is the mungungus said you had car trouble and father could not resist to get his hands dirty.

DEVEAUX
(laughs)
Well, in that case, twice as welcome!
(nods toward convertible)
I'm a hopeless mechanic and I'm afraid my men have not proven equal to the task. I hope you can stay for lunch.

OLSSON
With great pleasure.

Eva lets out a brief guffaw. Deveaux smiles. Olsson looks at her, mystified, then sees Rosetti cutting across the lawn.

OLSSON (CONT'D)
Ah, Philippe, dear boy! You don't deserve it - God knows you've been neglecting us - but, well, call it an early Christmas gift!

He produces a small glass specimen box from the motorcycle pouch, offers it to Rosetti. Inside is a fulgurant blue butterfly.

ROSETTI
(ecstatic)
A Charaxes Imperialis!
(to Deveaux)
Fastest flyer in Africa, Sir! Practically impossible to catch.
(to Olsson)
How did you--?

Eva elbows him fraternally, knocking the air out of him. Olsson regards her, worried.

CONTINUED:

EVA
I caught it, you silly thing!
(points to her cheek)
Give us a kiss!

Rosetti glances at Deveaux, embarrassed, complies swiftly. Eva pulls his helmet over his eyes, steals the butterfly case, runs off, laughing. Rosetti chases after her.

ROSETTI
Careful with that!

Olsson rubs his palms, gleeful.

OLSSON
So! Let's have a look at the patient, shall we?

DEVEAUX
If you're up to it, by all means...

He takes Olsson's arm, leads him across the lawn.

OLSSON
A Renault, is it not?

DEVEAUX
The tom-toms keep you well informed, indeed!

Eva's loud burst of LAUGHTER makes a concerned Olsson turn back once more AS WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, LONG - LATER

The air pulsates with a CHORUS OF CICADAS. The Renault sits with its mouth open at the shade of the trees.

ON THE TERRACE

Deveaux, Rosetti, Eva, and Olsson share an informal meal. Djo and Mokoka serve them, constantly talking and laughing amongst themselves, ignorant of all expected protocol. Eva eats with ravenous appetite, Olsson watches her disconcerted.

DEVEAUX
...It is essential that trust in our institutions be restored ... Without the cooperation of the native population this land will sink back into the stone-age.

EVA
Perhaps they'd be better off.

Deveaux smiles.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
How so, Miss Olsson?

They must wait till she dispatches a towering forkful for her reply. Olsson grins embarrassed. Deveaux watches her, fascinated, perhaps even aroused.

EVA
Mmmm...
(swallows)
Sorry ... Portage and ruthless recruitment have broken the backs of entire tribes...

OLSSON
My daughter does not think we've succeeded in our mission in Congo.

EVA
(loading fork again)
We are ready to impose our beliefs on the natives but not to protect them against the greed and the brutality of the white invasion.

DEVEAUX
I assure you that neither brutality nor greed are aims of my administration, Miss Olsson.

EVA
Glad to hear that, Governor. But for some time now, the de facto authority around here has been the Forestiere. The Baron bleeds these people dry while your predecessors at least looked the other way.

OLSSON
What my daughter wishes to say, Governor--

DEVEAUX
(in her spell:)
I fear Miss Olsson knows all too well what she means to say, Reverend.
(their eyes meet)
I find her frankness most refreshing ... If I could obtain the same candor from the native population, perhaps we could achieve change.

A comfortable silence settles in. Olsson slaps his knees.

OLSSON
Well, best get back to my tools.

CONTINUED:

Deveaux stands politely.

DEVEAUX
Have you already visited the mansion, Miss Olsson?

She darts Deveaux a cheeky glance, follows him toward the terrace in a bouncy mood.

EVA
No. Give me the full tour.

Rosetti looks after them.

MME DELAFOSSE (O.S.)
Mr. Rosetti!

Rosetti turns to see a flustered Mme Delafosse wearing a purplish creation of vaporous voile, with matching scarf, approaching with Cacavelli -- drunk and with the folded chess board under his arm.

MME DELAFOSSE (CONT'D)
Lend me a hand, won't you, young man? I think the good doctor could use some coffee...

Rosetti obliges.

INT. MANSION LIBRARY - DAY

Deveaux leads Eva in. She notices the stacked crates and personal objects on the desk.

DEVEAUX
Still unpacking... There are very few worthwhile treasures in this old house, alas ... Except perhaps this library.

EVA
With the amount of time Governor Dulac spent profiting from his position, I'm surprised he had any left for books at all.

DEVEAUX
Did you know Dulac well?

EVA
We met a few times. Official ceremonies, that sort of thing. But we stood in very different camps.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
I see ... I'm not sure he was responsible for this collection, actually ... Enjoy reading, Miss Olsson?

EVA
Very much so. Unfortunately our work in the mission leaves me little time to indulge.

DEVEAUX
That's a shame... I was going to propose a loan...
(searches upper shelves:)
Up here...somewhere...I spied some Ibsen you'd probably enjoy.

EVA
Hamsun is much closer to my heart.

DEVEAUX
Really?! You know, he's perhaps my favorite author these days. At least from your neck of the woods.

A short silence follows. It feels endless to Deveaux.

He leans slightly away -- as one would from a furnace too close from comfort. And yet...

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
I'm surprised, actually, that someone as full of life and beauty as yourself could enjoy Hamsun's bitter, dark and denigrating view of the world.

Eva shifts her weight back into biting range.

EVA
Perhaps it takes female intuition to realize Hamsun's true self lies between his lines. Hamsun is a poet. A poet of despair, perhaps, but a poet nonetheless.

Deveaux can hardly bear her proximity, her sweet breath. He reaches for a tome on a high shelf.

DEVEAUX
Well, I shall search for your friend Knut under all this dust. In the meantime, this early edition of Balzac's Splendors and Miseries might just--

CONTINUED:

Eva reaches for it, slips on the parquet, gives a SHRIEK, Deveaux grabs her elbow and her flushed cheeks brush against his lips.

Their eyes lock, she turns away -- then back to plant a shameless kiss on his mouth. Deveaux is stunned but finds himself responding.

FOOTSTEPS, they break off. Eva hurries out with coltish bounds. Deveaux replaces the book, flustered, realizes the book is inside out, turns it around, sees Nuambe watching amused from the door, leers at her.

EXT. IN THE SHADE OF THE ACACIA - LATER

Eva and Rosetti drink lemonade, watch Olsson work on the Renault. Cacavelli nurses a cognac and plays chess solitaire. Mme Delafosse serves coffees, then sits down to crochet.

The two boys follow Olsson's every move, eager to help. Deveaux approaches from the mansion, holding the Blazac. Eva darts him a glance.

OLSSON
So...Paris has decided to send more than greetings, this Christmas, we understand, Excellency..?

DEVEAUX
Don't tell me the tom-toms are spreading that too. It hasn't even been officially announced yet.

EVA
Dr. Cacavelli enjoys impressing us. His sister in Paris is married to the Vice-Minister of Finance.

DEVEAUX
Ah!

Cacavelli takes a bow, the rest wait.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Yes... Four million francs in gold should reach us before the rain season.

EVA
Gold will never solve the problems of the Congolese people, Governor.

DEVEAUX
(relieved by her renewed formality)
We're quite aware of that, Miss Olsson.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
But it might just help a bit... Paris' aims are to preserve the Congolese people. The investment is earmarked for health, education, jobs... Half the gold will ship upriver, to fund public works in the Chari.

CACAVELLI
Good God! What on Earth for?!

DEVEAUX
Alternative sources of employment will leave the Baron and the other concession heads no choice but to improve working conditions for the natives. Induced development, President Clemenceau calls it.

CACAVELLI
Aren't those fancy words...!
(empties his glass)
President Clemenceau would be well advised to take a trip up river to see what a wasteful drain on the public coffers those faithless savages would be.

DEVEAUX
I'd be glad to probe deeper into these questions with you, Doctor. When you're in condition to do so.

Cacavelli mumbles something and retreats to his chess board.

OLSSON
Pass me number seven, please child...

Eva reaches into the tool bundle, hands Olsson a wrench.

EVA
The natives will never accept government jobs for fear of reprisals... The Baron has the tribes North of the Sangha terrorized. Unspeakable crimes are committed every day by his Station Chiefs in the name of progress and a dubious set of self-serving laws.

Deveaux seeks Olsson who is nodding silently.

CONTINUED:

OLSSON
Yes... Just last month, armed men raided Mopambo and threatened to slaughter the children if the young men of the village did not accompany them.

EVA
The natives will deny it, of course but one of them - brutally beaten and left for dead - was brought to our mission. Doctor Cacavelli was forced to amputate both his legs to try to save his life.

Deveaux turns to Cacavelli.

DEVEAUX
I would very much like to speak to this man, Doctor.

OLSSON
Not as much as I would, I assure you.

EVA
He died from his injuries, without ever regaining consciousness.

An awkward silence. Olsson turns to the boys.

OLSSON
Give it a go!

The boys fight for the crank handle, finally turn it and the Renault ROARS to life.

DEVEAUX
Bravo!

All applaud. Olsson holds his tools up in modest triumph, wipes his greasy hands on a rag.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Show the Reverend to our washroom, Djo, please.

The boy leads Olsson toward the residence, yakking in Swahili. Olsson pats the boy paternally.

MME. DELAFOSSE
(springing to her feet:)
Good Heavens! Almost forgot ... I've a surprise in the oven for you, Governor!

She hurries across the lawn. Deveaux and Eva stroll off. Rosetti watches them, gets behind the wheel of the Renault.

CONTINUED:

ROSETTI
Drive you home, Madame?

MME DELAFOSSE
Me, climb in that thing with you!
In your dreams, young man...

She continues at a fast clip toward her bungalow.

DEVEAUX AND EVA

Moving toward the mansion.

DEVEAUX
Miss Olsson--

EVA
I'm not a child, I knew what I was doing--

DEVEAUX
The point is--

EVA
The point? You regret it?

DEVEAUX
Of course not... But--

EVA
Well, neither do I... If there must be a point, let it be that.

Deveaux shifts, almost bashful.

DEVEAUX
May I see you again?

Eva smiles, takes his arm, leads him on.

EVA
You should come by the mission. You'll enjoy it... Father is a man of many talents. And he has won the trust of the natives. Without gold.

Deveaux holds her gaze.

DEVEAUX
I'll look forward to it.

EVA
Is that a promise?

OLSSON (O.S.)
This house-call was free of charge, Governor!

CONTINUED:

They turn to see Olsson approaching in high spirits, washed and refreshed.

OLSSON (CONT'D)
But you now owe us a visit!

DEVEAUX
Your daughter has already made me promise it, Reverend.

Olsson is looking at them arm-in-arm.

EVA
(brazen:)
What?!

Olsson shakes his head, amused. Eva rolls her eyes in mock exasperation, bounds off toward the returning Renault.

EVA (CONT'D)
Philippe! Wait!

She hops on the moving vehicle and Rosetti drives around the lawn. Olsson and Deveaux look after them.

OLSSON
She's been in Congo too long.

DEVEAUX
She seems content.

OLSSON
Content? Happiness is what a father wishes for his child, Excellency... She should not go on living with a boring old man such as myself.

DEVEAUX
I can think of far worse company.

Olsson smiles his appreciation. The Renault comes around, KLAXON, Eva jumps off, joins them laughing.

EVA
(re Rosetti:)
He's mad!

A knowing look between the men. Eva puts on her helmet, mounts the motorcycle. Deveaux offers his hand to Olsson.

DEVEAUX
Thanks for the visit, Reverend.
(re Renault:)
And for bringing my friend back to life!

CONTINUED:

OLSSON
Keep him under cover, Excellency. Humidity here will kill any engine.

Eva lowers her goggles. Deveaux gives a courtly nod.

DEVEAUX
Miss Olsson...

They hold each other's gaze a moment.

EVA
You’re going to give me that naughty book, or what?

Deveaux remembers he is holding the Balzac, eyes Olsson a bit embarrassed, hands it over.

DEVEAUX
Course. Sorry...

She sticks the book in the motorcycle pouch, mouths a silent, cheeky "bye" and drives off.

Rosetti has parked the car under the acacia and waves the Olssons good-bye, then directs Deveaux's attention to something in the distance.

WHAT THEY SEE:

Delafosse's caravan of a dozen soldiers and several porters approach through a prairie. Goma pushing his bicycle along.

EXT. RESIDENCE TERRACE, SHORT TIME LATER

Delafosse joins Deveaux in the terrace. He looks like he just walked around the globe. He salutes.

DEVEAUX
Welcome home, major. Any problems?

DELAFOSSE
None we couldn’t handle, Sir.

They look at Goma, waiting by his bicycle.

DELAFOSSE (CONT'D)
A bit shaken at first, but I think he’s had time to realize we mean no harm.

DEVEAUX
Thank you, Major. Get some rest. You look like you could use it.

He starts toward Goma.

CONTINUED:

DELAFOSSE
There is one thing, Sir...

Deveaux turns.

DEVEAUX
Yes?

DELAFOSSE
A Manja native near Lukolela claimed one of Fonseca's station managers is holding a number of women until their men bring in their imposed lot of rubber. I sent Lieutenant LeClerc to verify the report, but the witness seemed quite credible, I'm afraid...

Deveaux nods gravely.

DEVEAUX
Thank you, Major.

He goes on to meet Goma, surrounded by natives gathered to admire his bicycle. When Goma sees Deveaux approaching, he stands up straight. Deveaux studies him.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Goma?

Goma stares, worried.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Are you Goma, from Boulima?

GOMA
Goma, Government.

Deveaux offers his hand. Goma looks at it, then flashes his white smile and shakes the tip of Deveaux's fingers.

DEVEAUX
Do you remember me? Gaston...

Goma stares intently, finally releases Deveaux's fingers, takes a banana leaf wrap from his rack, offers it.

GOMA
Gas-ton... You like pretty papillon?

Deveaux takes the package, unfolds the wrapping. Inside is a drawing of a three-winged butterfly.

DEVEAUX
Thank you, Goma.

CONTINUED:

GOMA
I take two pata for it.

DEVEAUX
Oh! I see...
(chuckles genially)
Well, in that case, come with me.

Goma hesitates, concerned about his bicycle.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
No one will touch it.

Goma considers, gently lays his bicycle on the grass, follows Deveaux inside the...

INT. STUDY - DAY

...stops at the door, intimidated by the rich appointments.

DEVEAUX
Come in, come in.

Goma tip-toes in. His gaze comes to rest on the eleven black lead soldiers standing guard on the shelf, lights up. Deveaux notices, picks one of them up, puts it in Goma's hand.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
They made Chief Bantu laugh.
Remember?

Goma studies the toy soldier for a moment, then returns it carefully to the shelf.

GOMA
Bantu dead. Everyone go to Heaven.

Beat. Deveaux smiles, jingles coins in his hand.

DEVEAUX
Here you are... Two pata.

Goma takes the two five-franc coins. Deveaux places the drawing on the shelf, next to the lead soldiers. Goma beams with pride, then takes in the painted high beam ceilings, the portrait of President Clemenceau, smiles at Deveaux.

GOMA
I go now, Government.

Mme. Delafosse enters carrying a chocolate cake on a platter.

MME. DELAFOSSE
Oh! Excuse me, Governor. I didn't realize you were [busy]--

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
It's quite all right, Madame ... This is Goma... A childhood friend from the village of Boulima. Just leaving.

Mme. Delafosse smiles at Goma.

MME. DELAFOSSE
How are you, Goma?
(offering cake to Deveaux)
I thought you might enjoy a treat for a change. Made it from local cocoa.

DEVEAUX
Most thoughtful of you, Madame. Most kind, indeed... Thank you.

MME DELAFOSSE
Pity the Reverend's left... He adores chocolate...

Goma is staring at the cake. Mme. Delafosse and Deveaux exchange a look. Deveaux nods his consent.

MME. DELAFOSSE
(holding platter to Goma:)
Will you stay and have some cake with the Governor, Goma?

Goma stares at Mme. Delafosse, then smiles broadly, stores the coins in his mouth and takes the entire cake in his hands.

GOMA
Mercibocu!
(to Deveaux)
I go now, Government.

And he is off. Mme. Delafosse is speechless. Deveaux chuckles.

DEVEAUX
Goma..!
(Goma turns back, Kikongo)
Mimi hitaji muanaume a madaraka.
(Goma registers)
I need men I can trust.

Goma takes that in, trots off. Deveaux and Mme Delafosse watch him wrap the cake in the banana leaf and squash it under the spring of the bicycle rack, then pedal away.

Deveaux looks after him.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
He didn't remember me.

MME. DELAFOSSE
Pardon?

Deveaux smiles at her, looks after Goma AS WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, LONG - NIGHT

Gleaming under a star-spangled sky. Warm light pours out of the library windows.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Deveaux unpacks the last of the wooden crates, extracts books, framed photos, an old ebony box with brass initials: "J.D." He opens the box under the oil lamp: inside lies a disassembled telescope (the same one we saw in the Boulima bush house photo). He runs his fingers along the polished brass shaft.

EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT, SHORT TIME LATER

Deveaux sets the assembled telescope on its stand, where it commands a clear view of the river. He cocks his head: a faint, SQUELCHING ELECTRICAL SOUND comes out of the night.

He starts across the lawn, puzzled. The sound leads him behind one of the large mahoganies, where Rosetti, hunched over the dial of a crystal radio nearly falls from the start.

ROSETTI
Christ! Sorry, Sir, I was just...

DEVEAUX
(chuckling)
At ease, Philippe ... Didn't mean to startled you ... Carry on.

ROSETTI
(switching radio off)
No, no, that's all right, Sir ... No night for radioing, anyhow.

He follows Deveaux back to the...

TERRACE

DEVEAUX
Tell me, what can you catch on that contraption besides static?

CONTINUED:

ROSETTI
(pats radio fondly)
Not a thing so far, Sir ... But what it promises is quite exciting.

DEVEAUX
An optimist! Well... I'm so glad.

Rosetti sees the telescope.

ROSETTI
Oh! That's a beautiful piece, Sir.

DEVEAUX
Have a look.

ROSETTI
May I?!

He sets his radio on the balustrade, eagerly aims the telescope at the sky. Deveaux takes two cigars out of his breast pocket and a lighter from his pants.

ROSETTI (CONT'D)
Wonderful...
(steps away from telescope)
It will certainly help kill many a long night, Sir.

DEVEAUX
(clipping cigar:)
I consider any form of killing a sad endeavor, Secretary.
(offering second cigar)
Cigar?

ROSETTI
Yes, Sir... No, I meant ... Thank you ... I don't smoke.

DEVEAUX
(stores away cigar)
Pity ... Local grown stuff. Strong but not half bad.

He lights up with relish, Rosetti admires the Ronson lighter. Deveaux notices, hands it to him.

ROSETTI
I'd heard about these, but never actually seen one.

DEVEAUX
Friend brought it to me from America... What will they invent next, huh?

CONTINUED:

Rosetti smiles, returns the lighter, Deveaux pockets it, draws leisurely on his cigar

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
You've a wife, Rosetti?

Rosetti grins, bashful.

ROSETTI
No, Sir.

DEVEAUX
Must get lonely around here for a young man like yourself.

ROSETTI
It can, Sir, yes...
(then, by way of clarification:)
I cross to Leopoldville occasionally, Sir.

DEVEAUX
Oh, well... Good.

They watch the night sparkle with fireflies.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Philippe is a French name, but Rosetti...?

ROSETTI
Corsican, Sir... Sotta. A village not far from Bonifacio.

DEVEAUX
And what brought you to Congo, if I may ask?

ROSETTI
Corsican life, I suppose...I wished to one day have more to pass to my grandchildren than village gossip.

DEVEAUX
As good a reason as any.

A light shines on one of the bungalows across the lawn. Rosetti follows Deveaux's gaze.

ROSETTI
Major Delafosse, Sir... Often up late.

DEVEAUX
Wife?

CONTINUED:

ROSETTI
Memoirs, Sir.
(Deveaux raises eyebrows)
And wife.

They chuckle comfortably. Deveaux smacks his lips, strides into the residence.

DEVEAUX
I found a very decent cognac among Governor Dulac's files... Can I offer you a drink?

ROSETTI
Ehr...No, thank you, Excellency. I don't drink.

Deveaux returns with a bottle of cognac and two sniffers.

DEVEAUX
Look, Rosetti, let me make one thing clear: I am not one too fond of protocol... Especially with someone I must quickly learn to trust.

ROSETTI
Governor Dulac insisted on it, Sir.

DEVEAUX
Yes, well ... Didn't do him much good, did it?

ROSETTI
No, Sir.

Deveaux pours two drinks, hands one to Rosetti. They sip in silence. Deveaux gives him an inquiring glance re: the cognac.

ROSETTI (CONT'D)
Yes, Sir... Very...fruity.

Deveaux's eyes smile. He likes the young man.

DEVEAUX
How well did you know Dulac?

ROSETTI
Never shared his cognac, Sir.

DEVEAUX
Someone must have...

ROSETTI
The Governor had few guests and far between... The Baron occasionally.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

ROSETTI (CONT'D)
But they hadn't seen each other for some time ... A disagreement of some sort.

DEVEAUX
Oh?

CUT TO:

INT. ROSETTI'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT (MONTHS EARLIER)

Rosetti sits at his desk, taking a butterfly out of the poison jar. The walls of the bungalow are covered with framed, rare specimens.

ROSETTI (V.O.)
One night, they had a terrible row... I couldn't make out what was being said but...

Rosetti hears SHOUTS, moves to the window.

Across the lawn, through the shutters of the Residence's study, can be seen the silhouettes of two men, one short, the other tall and brandishing a cane in anger.

ROSETTI (V.O.)
The Baron sounded most upset. Shortly after midnight, he left abruptly.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT

Rosetti stares at his glass.

ROSETTI
Next day, Governor Dulac...

His words hang, he looks away. Deveaux reaches for the bottle.

DEVEAUX
Anyone hear the shot?

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. ROSETTI'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Rosetti and Cacavelli play chess. A SHOT is heard -- distant but unmistakable. They look at each other, puzzled.

ROSETTI (V.O.)
We probably all did, Sir ... Rather quiet here at night...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT

Deveaux refills their glasses.

ROSETTI
Pretty awful... The Governor agonized for several days, with half his temple blown off.

DEVEAUX
He ever regain consciousness?

ROSETTI
No, Sir... But he kept muttering...

DEVEAUX
Muttering?

ROSETTI
Well, delirious... None of us could make out what he was saying.

INT. GOVERNOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Governor Dulac in his death-bed, his lips matching...

ROSETTI (V.O.)
Ta-na-to...Ta-na-ko.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT

Deveaux listens to Rosetti.

ROSETTI
Something like that ... The Doctor thought it sounded Japanese.

Deveaux turns his thoughts to the night. A concert of crickets and an undertone of frogs swell in the darkness. A comfortable silence settles between the two men. Delafosse's light goes off. Rosetti sighs deeply.

DEVEAUX
Yes, it's getting to be that time.
(finishes drink)
Good night, Philippe.

ROSETTI
Good night, Sir. And thank you.

He goes, Deveaux watches the night swallow him.

EXT. BRAZZAVILLE PORT MARKET - DAY

A seething crowd mills through the stands, yelling and trading: plantains, ivory tusks, fly-infested hippo flanks. Great deal of bargaining and quarreling.

Deveaux, on horse-back with Rosetti, escorted by two black soldiers on foot -- on a tour. As they pass, the natives salute: an odd nod to one side, as their opposite foot moves slightly back -- like an ill-conceived, courtly bow. SHOUTS, Deveaux turns, lights up at the sight of...

Eva, astride her motorcycle, argues with DAROSA, an oily Portuguese wearing a Navy cap, owner of the store-food-stand-trading-post-mail-delivery-service next to the Ministry of Health Dispensary, a shabby looking building bearing a red cross.

She is surrounded by several natives with prescriptions written on their torsos. DaRosa is being rude. A crowd has gathered.

DEVEAUX (O.S.)
Miss Olsson!

EVA
(turns)
Governor!

DEVEAUX
Can I be of assistance?

DaRosa shrinks, Deveaux dismounts, the crowd makes way.

EVA
(livid)
This thief! He knows the mission pays the Dispensary once a month! But he pretends to forget! Demands a second payment from the natives!

DAROSA
No, no, no, Mr. Governor ...These men speak only Kikongo, you see--

EVA (CONT'D)
Oh, please!

DAROSA (CONT'D)
I had no idea they were sent by the doctor--

EVA (CONT'D)
Of course you knew...!
(points to men's torsos:)
Who else writes prescriptions this way besides Dr. Cacavelli?!

DAROSA (CONT'D)
It's all a misunderstand--

Eva lunges at him, Olsson holds her gently back.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Please, Miss Olsson...
(to DaRosa)
You're a Portuguese subject, are you not, captain?

DAROSA
Well...only by birth, Excellency... I've been a faithful French subject for over twenty-five years!

DEVEAUX
Then, in the future, behave accordingly. Dispense the medicines exactly as agreed.

DAROSA
Of course ... I shall fill their prescriptions myself. Personally, Excellency!

Eva kick-starts her motorcycle, furious, fastens leather helmet.

DEVEAUX
Have you had lunch, Miss Olsson?

EVA
I'm sorry ... This ruffian has made me lose the entire morning! Father has been expecting me for hours! I must go.

She speeds away.

DEVEAUX
But...

Eva turns, calls back, flashing a saucy smile.

EVA
Come around Sunday evening!

Deveaux, speechless, can only watcher her go AS WE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SWEDISH MISSION, WIDE - MAGIC HOUR

A moment in time only Africa can paint with such majesty: the sinking scarlet globe of the sun; the high, violet-green voile of suspended cirrus; the strident CONCERT OF FROGS; the parked Renault overrun by curious monkeys; the light shaft of a movie projector dancing in the twilight; the singing CHOIR.

CHILDREN lie on the ground, looking up at the flickering images of a motion picture.

CONTINUED:

CAMERA RISES and we realize they are watching the rear of a makeshift screen -- a sheet stretched between two trees.

On the other side of the projection, in orderly rows, the MISSION NATIVES watch enraptured.

Olsson runs the projector in the center of the gathering. Deveaux and Rosetti sit on folding chairs beside him, also in awe. Eva conducts the choir to the action on the screen, which we now can appreciate fully for the first time:

IMAGES OF POETIC SIMPLICITY, YET ODDLY POWERFUL, SUCCEEDING EACH OTHER IN MASTERLY STYLE: NATIVES AT WORK; DISEASED NATIVES BEING TREATED; SAD; HAPPY; CRYING; LAUGHING; WAITING; MARCHING; A VILLAGE IN FLAMES. AN ODE TO COLONIAL RULING WITH ITS GOOD AND EVIL. WHEN ONE OF THE LOCALS APPEARS ON THE SCREEN, THE AUDIENCE GOES WILD.

Deveaux looks at Eva. Eva feels it, glances back, then turns once more toward Deveaux and now holds his gaze.

The choir; the flickering projection light; the first stars on the dying sky; the mission building in the gathering darkness.

LATER

Deveaux, Rosetti, Olsson, Eva and a few other EUROPEANS chat around a crackling fire, sipping tea. The mission natives carry on in a playful mood. Olsson lights a pipe.

OLSSON
I am so pleased you could share this time with us, Excellency...

DEVEAUX
It's been a real treat, Reverend. Your daughter mentioned you were a man of many talents but this exceeded all my expectations. If only the rest of us could reach the natives the way you have ... For my part, I'll be touring the colony after our national holiday ... We need to assess where we stand with the various tribes.

EVA
Best take an army with you, Governor.

DEVEAUX
(smiles)
I will do nothing of the sort, Miss Olsson.
(to Olsson)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
But I was going to suggest you and your daughter come along, Reverend. I could use the good will.

OLSSON
You honor me, Governor, but I'm afraid I couldn't leave the mission unattended for so long.

DEVEAUX
We would be back before the rains.

OLSSON
Sorry ... You should take Eva along, though. Most definitely.

EVA
I wouldn't dream of leaving you alone, father.

OLSSON
I can take care of myself ... Requisition her, Governor! You have my blessing ... She speaks six native dialects including Yaka, Bokoto and Lingala ... She would be of invaluable assistance to you.

Deveaux looks at Eva.

DEVEAUX
Well, Miss Olsson?

EVA
(clearly eager:)
We'll see...
(dashes off)
Letti, don't pull!

She joins Letti and Namu taking down the projection sheet. Olsson smiles at Deveaux mischievously.

OLSSON
She won't miss it for her life, Governor ... Trust me, I know a thing or two about my girl.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRAZZAVILLE PORT - DAY

The yellow postal truck pulls up at the docks. Goma unloads his bicycle with two piglets in the cage on its rack, thanks the driver, pushes along the wharf, attracted by the Four Mandara Natives SINGING and scrubbing the bottom of their overturned catamaran.

CONTINUED:

LOPEZ, a sleazy Spanish river rat with dark, pockmarked complexion, is painting over the name on the stern of a rust-streaked steamer with electric-blue paint: "BOTAFOGO." SHOUTS, Goma and the Mandara turn:

An old Russian wearing the tattered uniform of an Imperial Russian Navy Admiral and a four-day stubble, holds an open bottle of vodka, demanding his money back from DaRosa, who eats a big meal under his store awning. A small audience has gathered to hear his shouting match with the crazy, old man.

RUSSIAN ADMIRAL
You put vuater in vodka, you cheat Portuguese bastard! Geef money back!

DAROSA
Go away before I shove that bottle down your throat, *General*!

RUSSIAN ADMIRAL
Nyet! Nyet! Ad-mi-ral, you stoopit beest! Emperor Nicolai II's Imperial Navy!

DaRosa dismisses him.

RUSSIAN ADMIRAL (CONT'D)
(near apoplexy)
There is tree kind of Portuguese: Real Portuguese who stay in his country! Filthy Portuguese! And...
(hurls bottle at wall, points at DaRosa)
Portuguese filth!

He stalks away, cursing in florid Russian.

DaRosa berates the TWO NEGRO WOMEN serving him in a mix of Portuguese and Kikongo. We do not need subtitles to know he is abusing them. They take the ill-treatment submissively. DaRosa sees Goma.

DAROSA
Macaco!

Goma smiles at the insult, approaches.

GOMA
Bonjour, Capitaine!

DAROSA
How much for those sick pigs?

Goma counts with his fingers. When he runs out of fingers, he continues with his toes.

CONTINUED:

DAROSA (CONT'D)
Keep your dirty toes. Here's five francs!
(tosses coin at Goma's feet)
Take them to my man Lopez round the back.

Goma picks up the coin, takes a drawing of a three-headed snake from the rack.

GOMA
You buy magic snake, Capitaine? Two pata.

DAROSA
Next time you show me one of those stupid drawings, I swear I'll feed you to the crocodiles! Va im bora, mal parido!

Goma pushes off, crestfallen.

NEW SHOT

Lopez puts the final touches on the paint job. Goma approaches and his eyes open wide with wonder, the DaRosa episode a thing of the past.

LOPEZ
(eyeing piglets)
Pretty blue, si?
(dangles paint can)
Want good deal with piggies?

Goma feels DaRosa's coin in his hand, steals a half-guilty, half-cunning glance toward the captain who's already paid for the pigs and is going at the women again. He smiles at Lopez AND WE...

CUT TO:

EXT. YOUNG CASAVA FIELD - AFTERNOON

Goma's bicycle -- electric-blue down to the spokes -- cuts through the green canvas (RIGHT TO LEFT). The cage is empty. Goma sings happily. He rides down a steep hill.

PULLING GOMA. The rush of wind bring tears to his eyes. He laughs. PUSH TO CLOSE UP AND

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

YOUNG GOMA, age eight, teary-eyed, laughing and screaming, exhilarated.

CONTINUED:

PULL BACK TO REVEAL he is holding on to YOUNG DEVEAUX, also eight, riding a large-wheeled tricycle down a hill. They speed toward the bush house we saw earlier in Deveaux's photograph.

The tricycle hits a bump and the two boys fall and roll on tall grass. A native woman -- GOMA'S MOTHER -- sweeping the verandah starts toward them, alarmed, then stops realizing...

The boys roll on the ground, breathless with laughter. The lead black soldiers fall out of Young Deveaux's pouch.

Young Goma helps pick them up. Young Deveaux reads his desire, offers him one of them and Goma's face lights up.

SMASH CUT BACK TO:

EXT. YOUNG CASAVA FIELD, PRESENT - DAY

As Goma skids to a halt, stunned by the sudden recall. He takes the amulet from around his neck unwraps the leather covering it, revealing a discolored black lead soldier. He stares at it. WE PUSH IN ON HIS LIQUID EYES AND...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RESIDENCE, TERRACE - DAY BREAK

Goma's lead soldier stands guard on the balustrade.

Deveaux, buttoning up his jacket, steps onto the terrace. He greets Djo and Mokoka setting the breakfast table, then stops at the sight of the soldier.

In the direct light of sunrise, the figurine glitters with life.

Deveaux scans the lawn.

Goma stands by his blue bicycle with Ampeti on the rack. Deveaux's eyes smile AND...MARCHING MUSIC LEADS THE

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN BRAZZAVILLE, SEVERAL SHOTS - DAY

Goma -- in blue, red and white, private's French Army uniform - marches proudly with a company of Delafosse's riflemen, part of July 14th's, Bastille-Day Parade.

France's flag flies everywhere. CHEERING NATIVES out in mass. The BAND OF WIND-BLOWERS hack out the MARCHING TUNE.

In the official box, Deveaux, Rosetti, Delafosse, Olsson, Eva, Dr. Cacavelli, Mme. Delafosse, OFFICIALS follow the festivities. Delafosse's riflemen parade past the Governor's stand. Goma eyes Deveaux, hopelessly out of step. Eva and Olsson laugh and wave at him. Goma flashes a beautiful smile.

CONTINUED:

Dubois' Police contingent is next, led by the rotund Dubois. His men attempt a goose-step and draw enthusiastic APPLAUSE.

Rosetti leans into Deveaux, says something in his ear. Deveaux looks toward a stand across the way.

Baron de Fonseca among NOTABLES and VISITING GUESTS, nods politely. Deveaux replies in kind.

A LOUD TAM-TAM leads a TROOP OF CONVULSING DANCERS -- a colorful contingent. Those in the official box applaud.

Delafosse's cavalry of eight mules lead by LIEUTENANT LECLERC on horseback follows next. The soldiers wear towering, feathered helmets -- a flamboyant if brief patch.

One of the beast lets out a heavy load of dung under Deveaux's nose and a ripple of LAUGHTER runs through those across the way. Fonseca seems especially amused. Deveaux surprises everyone by laughing himself, drawing approval.

DEVEAUX
(beaming at Delafosse)
My compliments, Major. You have those mules remarkably trained!

Delafosse's face falls. The parade treads on AS WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OFFICIAL CANOPY - LATER

Deveaux greets the line of guests. Goma stands proudly by his side. Refreshments are served. Rosetti introduces an anxious-looking LEGAT and his wife, MME LEGAT.

ROSETTI
Monsieur Legat represents the shipping company charged with transporting the gold to Brazzaville, Sir.
(Deveaux beams)
First time in Africa.

DEVEAUX
Madame ... Mr. Legat. I wish you both a wonderful stay among us.

Goma is fascinated by Legat's sparkling patent leather shoes. He practically has his nose on them.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
This is...Goma.

Legat is surprised by the introduction to a simple native. Uninhibited, Goma shakes Legat's fingers.

CONTINUED:

GOMA
Merci-enchanté, Government.

DEVEAUX
Goma is a childhood friend.

LEGAT
Oh, I see ... So you've been in Congo all your life, Excellency?

DEVEAUX
Oh, no, I was forced back to Europe, during the '87 sleeping sickness epidemic, when I was still a boy, alas. I've only recently returned.

Baron de Fonseca approaches with his entourage. The natives part before him, as bait fish from a shark.

Goma suddenly reacts with fear to the sight of his ivory snake handled cane. Deveaux notices.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Well, I look forward to fresh news from the Metropole, Mr. Legat. Madame...

The Legats move on, Rosetti motions to Fonseca.

ROSETTI
Baron Casimiro de Fonseca, Sir.

FONSECA
Congratulations on a most successful parade, Governor.

DEVEAUX
(nods politely)
Baron...

FONSECA
Allow me to introduce to you my good friends from America: Mr. and Mrs. Preston Luddy, from Texas ... In Congo on a hunting trip.

LUDDY, an oil-millionaire, a stout, red man with a wide, fixed smile, doffs his Stetson, pumps Deveaux's arm.

LUDDY
Hellu'va show, Gov'ner!

SALLY-ANN
Yes, a vrai mar-vai-llaise, Ex'lensy!

CONTINUED:

His wife, SALLY-ANN, does a plié more suitable for The Queen of England.

DEVEAUX
(helping her up:)
I beg you, Madame...
(to Fonseca:)
I hope you can join us with your friends for the fireworks, Baron.

FONSECA
Fireworks! Well, I'd heard you were a man with new ideas, but you truly mean to revolutionize our dear Congo!

Deveaux nods politely as Fonseca and his party move on.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

FIREWORKS weep colors against a black, velvety sky. They take our view to the happy faces of a multitude of NATIVES -- only half of them CHILDREN -- squatting on the lawn.

Goma, aided by Djo and Mokoka, is in charge of firing the rockets. The next set shoots up and sprinkles the treetops with purple and red. The natives cheer the BOOM! excited. Ampeti smokes her cigar, agape with wonder.

TERRACE

Deveaux, Eva, Delafosse, Mrs. Luddy, Olsson, Cacavelli, Luddy and Mme. Delafosse sit at one end of a large, beautifully set, well garnished banquet table.

On the other end, Fonseca sits among an assortment of OFFICIALS and GUESTS, chatting with the Legats.

Servants refill Champagne glasses. Cacavelli drinks heavily. A new burst of green and yellow floods the sky, followed by the loud BOOM. The servants gawk at the shower of fire.

LUDDY
(clapping loudly)
Holly Toledo! 'minds me the ones we seen in Sing'pore 'fore the war. 'member, suggar-pie?

MRS. LUDDY
(to Deveaux:)
Not half as pretty as these, Gov'ner. And that's God's truth.

DEVEAUX
You're most kind, Madame...

CONTINUED:

LUDDY
(still in Singapore)
God-forsaken place ... Went there for tiger ... Caught fever!

He laughs boisterously at his irrelevant crack, reaches for the champagne bottle to refill his own glass.

LUDDY (CONT'D)
'course, Texas fireworks, they're--

Suggar-pie gives him a smart shin-kick under the table, causing him to spill his champagne, red as a beet.

LUDDY (CONT'D)
Ugh!...lier than a mud fence!

Deveaux meets Eva's amused glance.

Goma releases another set of fireworks.

LUDDY (CONT'D)
And some handy niggers you've got here too, Gov'ner.
(points at Goma)
Look at that one, Sally-Ann!

He gawks as if witnessing a remarkable feat by a trained ape.

LEGAT
(genial)
Governor, there is a rumor going around that you've sought Paris' acquiescence to a Negro guarding our gold this year.

Deveaux glances at Cacavelli -- the likely source of the leak. Cacavelli downs his champagne to avert his eyes.

DEVEAUX
The time has come to show some faith in the people whose respect and obedience we demand.

FONSECA
But, Governor ... Have you considered the threat such gesture poses to the authority we've only secured after years of blood and treasure?

DEVEAUX
I believe, Mr. Fonseca, that we must signal the native population that we're not here to take away their dignity but to improve their lot. I regret you consider this a threat.

CONTINUED:

FONSECA
A matter of taste, rather...

EVA
Afraid black hands might turn the gold into coal, Baron?

Heads turn to Eva. Fonseca deigns her his attention while he lights a large cigar.

FONSECA
Nothing would please me more, mademoiselle, than to see Congo develop under her own steam. But those of us who've been laboring here long enough know that nothing ever comes of giving Negroes credit for smarts they have not.
(chuckles from some of the colonists)
The gold, you see--

OLSSON
Excuse me, Baron, but in my experience - and I've been in Africa since you were still in knee-pants - when a Congolese sees the purpose of the task he is being asked to perform - by that I mean the benefit to his own condition - he shows a remarkable disposition toward hard work. In that regard they're very much like the rest of us, wouldn't you agree?

FONSECA
Well, that may very well be your experience, Reverend. But we're not talking about getting them to say their Hail Marys...
(more chuckles)
Asking these creatures to value gold as we do is like asking them to comprehend the sacrifice of our Christ.
(to Deveaux)
Men like the Revered have the illusion that they can change these people...

Goma teaches another native soldier how to set up and fire the fireworks. They laugh like children.

FONSECA (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
Set them on a better path to salvation ...
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

FONSECA (CONT'D)
But salvation from what? They are happiest ruled by the White Man.

Fonseca refills his Champagne glass, eases back,

FONSECA (CONT'D)
They feel protected ... They expect to be punished when they don't perform ... Take away this fear and they are lost.
(draws on cigar)
No...putting the gold in the hands of one of these creatures is a meaningless gesture ... Our Negroes can only be extricated from their sad predicament through the wisdom of well applied rigor.

Deveaux is toying with a champagne cork. Eva watches him, expecting a reaction. She is about to demand it when...

MRS. LUDDY
Well, you've kept nice'n quiet, Gov'ner ... What's your opinion as regards all this highbrow?

Deveaux smiles at Mrs. Luddy, then looks intently at Fonseca.

DEVEAUX
I believe the less intelligent the white man, the more stupid he thinks the black, Madame.

Fonseca darkens, Eva trains her challenging glare on him.

LEGAT
And have you already chosen the man for such a delicate assignment, Governor?

Deveaux's eyes take our view to Goma, running among the children, drawing fleeting figures with the incandescent end of a smoldering firework shaft.

DEVEAUX
The rain season is still a ways off, Mr Legat ... I am sure I shall find a suitable candidate before then.

Delafosse clears his throat and produces a long, precious box of polished dark wood, holds it out to Deveaux.

DELAFOSSE
Excellency, Mr. and Mrs. Luddy would like to present you with this gift as token of their friendship.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Oh..?

He opens the box. Inside, nestled in velvet, lies the high-powered Remington rifle with telescopic sight seen in the opening sequence. Deveaux picks it up.

A murmur of admiration ripples through the guests.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
I appreciate your thoughtfulness, Mr. Luddy, it's a superb piece, indeed.
(replaces it in box)
However, it would be improper for me to accept such a precious gift.

LUDDY
Nonsense! Consider it compliments from Texas to France ... Hell, I once sent Governor Higgins, of Mississippi, a brand-new Cadillac automobile and the man didn't even call to say thanks or dared ask what it was for! Sally-Ann won't let me lie ... Ain't that so, sugar-pie?!

Mrs. Luddy clears her dainty throat.

MRS. LUDDY
Well, that's a whole nuther thang ... What my Preston wish' to say, Ex'lensy, is that it'd give us folks back home great pleasure if you'd accept this modest gift in the name of France -- a source of inspiration to all Texans we know.

Deveaux glances at Eva who follows the exchange with interest.

DEVEAUX
Since you insist with such kind words, Madame, I shall be delighted to add this magnificent piece to the residence's - I'm sad to say - most limited art collection. Thank you.

Courtly APPLAUSE from the guests. Deveaux signals Goma to approach. Goma trots over from the lawn.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Please put this in my study, soldier.

CONTINUED:

GOMA
Yes, Government.

LUDDY
Top'o the line ... Shoot the beak off a turkey a mile away with that thang...

Deveaux forces a smile, Goma registers Luddy's words, ogles the rifle, closes the box and hurries to the residence.

Fonseca draws on his cigar, studies Deveaux from behind the thick cloud of blue smoke.

A new set of fireworks shoots up. All look up to watch the green-yellow lights cascade in SLOW MOTION AS WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESIDENCE, STUDY - LATE NIGHT

Deveaux, CLOSE, at his desk, in his pajamas, dipping a tiny brush into miniature bottles of enamel, painstakingly restoring the tricolor uniform in Goma's lead soldier.

Satisfied, he sets it to dry on the shelf, next to its eleven companions.

EXT. RESIDENCE GROUNDS - EARLY MORNING

Nuambe and a YOUNG GIRL rake the littered lawn. Goma makes his way across it, at a fast clip.

TERRACE

Deveaux stands by the breakfast table, pouring two cups of tea. Goma climbs the steps.

GOMA
You call me, Government?

DEVEAUX
Yes... Good morning, Goma.
(offers cup)
Tea?

Goma takes it, sniffs contents suspiciously.

Deveaux smiles, puts a spoonful of sugar into Goma's cup, strolls to the balustrade.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Do you actually remember when we were boys, Goma?

Goma stirs his tea -- just like Deveaux.

CONTINUED:

GOMA
Good times, Government.

DEVEAUX
Yes...

He sips his tea. Goma does likewise but does not like it.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Those were the happiest days of my life.

Goma grapples with the concept, Deveaux smiles.

Delafosse appears outside his bungalow to water his plants. Deveaux raises his hand in greeting.

Goma profits from his distraction to toss the contents of his tea cup over the balustrade.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Remember what you used to call me when we were little?

Goma stares. Deveaux sips his tea, Goma pretends to do the same.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Ton-ton ... You recall?
(smiles)
You couldn't say Gaston.

Goma scrapes the bottom of his memory barrel: he very much would like to remember; his desire almost conjures it up.

GOMA
Ton-ton...

The bit yields to laughter, Deveaux notices Goma's empty cup.

DEVEAUX
More tea?

Goma shakes his head adamantly.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
I would like it...if you called me that again.

GOMA
Yes, Government...
(quietly)
Ton-ton.

Deveaux sets their cups on he table, digs into his pocket, brings out Goma's restored lead soldier.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
This one was yours to keep ... I've given him new clothes.

Goma inspects it, laughs delighted, takes it back. Deveaux fixes him until Goma's smile fades.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Fonseca...the Baron. You've seen him before, haven't you?
(Goma shifts)
Where?

GOMA
The machine, Government.

DEVEAUX
(puzzled)
The railroad works?

GOMA
He bring many prisoners to white chief in Mayombe ... Killed one with his stick.

DEVEAUX
(beat)
You saw the Baron kill a man?

Goma stares.

FLASH: WHACK! FONSECA BURIES THE MASS OF HIS CANE ON THE LABORER'S SKULL.

GOMA
I see, Ton-Ton ... I see him kill this man.

Deveaux ponders, then...

DEVEAUX
I need you to become the very best soldier I have, Goma ... Will you do that?

GOMA
Yes, I do that, Ton-ton.
(beat)
How much times?
(Deveaux frowns, puzzled)
Bakongo are Bakongo, Ton-ton ... White are White.
(touches lead soldier)
I like French uniform ... But this uniform is hot.

Something akin to embarrassment takes Deveaux completely by surprise.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
I...understand.

GOMA
One day I put it off.

DEVEAUX
Of course...

Goma suddenly breaks into a smile.

GOMA
Today I help you ... Ton-ton.

EXT. THE CONGO RIVER, AERIAL - DAY

Not a wrinkle on the immense sheet of widening water; it holds the smiling reflection of the purest sky. AS WE PULL BACK, the prow of the "L'AURORE DU CONGO" comes into view, cutting a wide, inverted "V" upstream.

NAKED NATIVES

High on fishing rigs built in mid stream, cheer and wave at the passing vessel.

EXT. STEAMER - DAY

Deveaux, Rosetti, Delafosse, Dubois and a few notables we have seen earlier, rest on the port railing -- the official delegation touring the colony. Goma is part of the armed escort of a dozen SOLDIERS.

Deveaux returns the natives' greetings, provoking wild euphoria in their ranks.

DELAFOSSE
I don't recommend waving back,
Sir ... It's...unsettling to them.

Deveaux continues to wave back.

DEVEAUX
So I've been told.

Deveaux smiles at Delafosse, trims a cigar, Delafosse takes this as license to elaborate.

DELAFOSSE
Well ... Sends out the wrong
message doesn't it, Sir?

DEVEAUX
And what message is that, Major?

CONTINUED:

DELAFOSSE
That we are their equals, Excellency ... Our superiority is reassuring to them.

Deveaux lights the cigar with his Ronson. Beat.

DEVEAUX
How long have you been in service, Major?

Delafosse's straightens his back -- a reflex.

DELAFOSSE
Going on twenty-seven years, Sir ... The last eighteen in Congo ... Morocco and Chad before that.

DEVEAUX
A life.

DELAFOSSE
A good life, Sir. Yes.

Deveaux takes a thoughtful drag on his tobacco.

DEVEAUX
We shall lose this colony, Major ... Possibly in our lifetime ... We treat these people worse than dogs and wonder why they flee into the forest when they see us approach. Even the most loyal dog will turn against you if you beat him enough times.

Deveaux resumes waving as they pass a new group of natives.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
I'm quite aware that I may not be best served by my rather...romantic view of Africa, Major ... And there is much I can learn from your experience ... But I believe we still have a fighting chance to leave a legacy we will one day be proud of ... A hand in friendship won't set us any further back in their esteem than we already are.

DELAFOSSE
No, Sir.

Deveaux's tone is not commanding but Delafosse brings himself to lift his hand in greeting. The natives respond excitedly, Delafosse cannot contain a blushed grin of sheer pleasure. Deveaux draws on his cigar -- and the share a laugh.

CONTINUED:

Eva emerges from her cabin, leans on the railing near the bow. Deveaux joins her.

EVA
What a glorious day!

Deveaux smiles. They watch the river glide past for some beats. Noisy parrots and monkeys fight for attention on the towering trees lining the shore.

DEVEAUX
I am very pleased you decided to come along.

EVA
Father threatened to shave my head if I refused.

Deveaux studies her luscious mane.

DEVEAUX
There's an idea...

She laughs. A bit too brightly, perhaps.

EVA
You knew I would come.

Deveaux draws on his cigar, studies her. She blushes.

EVA (CONT'D)
Didn't you?

DEVEAUX
We both knew.

They turn back to the river. Their hands touch. Neither removes it.

SHOTS, LATE AFTERNOON

A troop of hippos on a sandbank bask in the setting sun.

The steamer glides effortlessly on the wide river.

The crimsoning sunset shimmers in the smooth water.

The engine taps gently on.

In rhythm with the fugitive puffs of white smoke.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PORT OF LIRANGA - DAY

Deveaux leads the delegation down the docked steamer's plank. Noisy natives hover about, pushing wares and edibles -- or just curious. Several elderly women fan the white visitors, sweep the ground before them with fronds.

Dubois appears through the crowd, agitated and flanked by Goma and one GENDARME.

DUBOIS
We've no porters, Major!
(Delafosse meets him)
The ones we had requisitioned fled into the bush last night.

Deveaux strides past, leading Eva down the plank.

DEVEAUX
Now, why would they do such a thing, I wonder?

DUBOIS
(innocently)
They wanted wages!

DEVEAUX
Well, no lame among us. We can walk!

CHUCKLES ripple through the delegation, spirits rise.

EXT. FORESTIERE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Deveaux, Eva, Rosetti, Delafosse, Cacavelli and the rest of the delegation wait outside a jumble of rancid looking shacks and roofings, stacked high with elephant tusks and rubber cakes. Obviously they have traveled for hours: everyone is soiled, soaked in perspiration, swatting flies.

Deveaux pauses beside several dozen SICK NATIVE MEN lying prone in various states of infirmity. He turns to Cacavelli.

CACAVELLI
Gonorrhea, mostly ... The rascals contract it on purpose to avoid recruitment.

Deveaux notices several of them have had their right hand amputated.

DEVEAUX
That's how they lose their hands as well, Doctor? On purpose?

Cacavelli shrugs -- What can one do?

CONTINUED:

Eva kneels beside an EMACIATED LOOKING GIRL, swats the flies roaming her face, bristling.

EVA
Actually, these are the lucky ones ... Isn't that so, Doctor?! Most who miss their rubber quotas are simply murdered and left to rot in the bush!

DEVEAUX
Do what you can for them.

CACAVELLI
Not much I can do, Governor...
(off Deveaux's searing look:)
I'll try my best, Sir. But don't expect miracles.

Rosetti exits the main building holding an open letter, trailed by an excited throng of CHILDREN.

ROSETTI
Deputy-Governor Gentile was called on an urgent matter to Faroumbala, Excellency. He sent word from Bangui, asking if you would kindly stand in for him at a capital trial that has grounded production in most of this circumscription to a halt.

Deveaux turns to Cacavelli who is unable to conceal his apathy.

CACAVELLI
I'll need at least two bloody days here.

DEVEAUX
Send word back that we shall be there in the morrow, Secretary.

Rosetti goes. Goma tows in a large pig tugging at a rope.

DELAFOSSE
(impressed)
Good man, Goma!

Goma finds Deveaux's eyes, flashes a proud smile.

DEVEAUX
Soldier, see what you can do about porters for tomorrow ... Offer proper wages, meals and my personal thanks to any volunteers.

CONTINUED:

GOMA
I see-to-it, Government.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

The dressed pork roasts on a stake. Delafosse, Cacavelli and the others sit around a fire, eating off banana leaves.

Eva, knife in hand, and looking ravishing in her tomboyish way, cuts and distributes portions, and sergeants the boy helpers in Lingala -- this while holding a relentless discussion with Cacavelli, who sips liquor and obviously enjoys roiling her. We catch snippets of their fisticuffs: Cacavelli's "Purgatory! That's a convenient one...!" Eva's: "Reason is the enemy of faith," and the sort. Finally, Eva rolls her eyes, takes his dinner to Deveaux who writes at a folding table outside his tent.

DEVEAUX
The good doctor giving you a hard time?

EVA
(fuming)
Sometimes I'd like to strangle that man!

DEVEAUX
Strange fellow ... Don't quite know what to make of him yet.

EVA
I think he's just bored.

DEVEAUX
Well, still hope for him, then ... Boredom is a sign of unused potential.

EVA
Or plain stupidity!

Deveaux chuckles, tastes food.

DEVEAUX
Uhmmm, my compliments to the chef ... Don't you eat?

EVA
I've been stealing with the boys straight from the rack.

DEVEAUX
Your father believes you've been too long in Congo ... I'm beginning to see his point.

Eva laughs. Deveaux pours two glasses of wine.

CONTINUED:

EVA
Father imagines everything that happens to me a calamity.

DEVEAUX
Your father wishes your happiness.

EVA
I am happy.

DEVEAUX
I think he worries about your future.

EVA
You mean family and all that?

DEVEAUX
All that is important to most women.

EVA
Being useful is important too ... There is so much a woman can do here...

DEVEAUX
Still ... He worries...

EVA
Father's only concern is I haven't yet bore him grandchildren.

DEVEAUX
And ... Will you?

EVA
(shrugs, then, direct)
I'd enjoy raising a family...here.

DEVEAUX
(beat)
I'm not sure I'd be good at it anymore...
(she waits)
Something dies inside you when you lose a child.

Eva takes his hand. They feel drawn. The cooks laugh -- probably not at them, but the spell is broken.

ROSETTI
(approaching)
Goma's managed to convince a dozen carriers to join us, Sir!

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Did he...? Grab some dinner, Secretary.

ROSETTI
I must see about mules, too, Sir...

Eva unsheathes her knife, threatens Rosetti's ribs.

EVA
Don't argue with the Governor, you silly thing!

Rosetti holds up his hands, precedes her toward the grill.

EXT. A LOADED SKY. DAY

Distant THUNDER ROLLS.

EXT. BANGUI TOWN - DAY

A NATIVE sits strapped to a heavy chair anchored to the ground, with a tight noose around his neck. The rope is tied to a strong, bent sapling that stretches his neck. Beside him stands a large EXECUTIONER holding a lethal looking machete.

The VILLAGERS look on dully as the CHIEF recites a litany of accusations against the man on trial. The accused denies the charges and begs for his life but the tension of the chord makes forming words distressing to behold.

Deveaux presides from under an improvised tent. Eva, Delafosse and Rosetti sit beside him. Finally, the village Chief has had enough. He signals and the Executioner raises the machete. Birds chirp incongruently on the trees. Children play with a dog a short way off.

Eva can bite her lips no longer, hisses through her teeth:

EVA
Are you just going to sit there and do nothing?!

DEVEAUX
(calmly:)
You can't defend these people's traditions with one hand and damn them with the other.

EVA
Traditions?!

DEVEAUX
He killed a man and raped his daughter ... He was tried and sentenced by his tribe.

CONTINUED:

EVA
But ... This is barbaric!

Deveaux remains immutable. Eva storms off. The Chief looks after her, then at Deveaux. Holds his gaze a moment, then lowers his scepter.

The machete whistles through the air. The branch, in its violent upswing, rips off the head.

Tiny droplets of blood spray Deveaux's white uniform. He casts his eyes.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

A steady DRIZZLE is falling. Several large tents are pitched around a bonfire. Goma distributes food to the PORTERS.

Soldiers eat the winged white ants circling the lamps - enormous wings and all -- a delicacy judging by their delight.

Huge black beetles swarm over an improvised lavatory, outside Deveaux's tent. Deveaux washes himself.

EVA (O.S.)
You were right, I behaved like a fool.

Deveaux does not turn. Eva stands a few steps away, hands stuffed into her pockets, looking sorry.

EVA (CONT'D)
I can't have it both ways ... But we have a moral obligation to--

Sees Deveaux looking at her, amused.

DEVEAUX
And I thought you'd come to say you were sorry.

EVA
I did ... I am ... Saying it... But if father was able to achieve--

DEVEAUX
Your father holds the moral high ground Dulac lost me with these people! I can't earn it back overnight.

ROSETTI (O.S.)
Excellency!

They turn, Rosetti approaches urgently.

CONTINUED:

ROSETTI (CONT'D)
Better come have a look, Sir...

EXT. A FOREST FIRE - NIGHT

Raging miles away. PULL BACK TO REVEAL Deveaux, Delafosse, Rosetti and Goma watching the burn.

ROSETTI
The Bongo Station is my guess.

Deveaux considers. A FLASH OF LIGHTNING floods the distant mountains.

DEVEAUX
Request an audience with Chief Pongwe ... But have him come to us.

ROSETTI
Yes, Sir.

INT. DEVEAUX'S TENT - NIGHT

Deveaux enters. Three soldiers can be seen outside, chuckling beside the fire. Deveaux, draws the flap door, removes his shirt, picks up an oil lamp, lights his Ronson.

EVA (O.S.)
Don't.

Deveaux turns. Eva, her skin golden in the flickering light, stands in a corner, wrapped in a blanket. Deveaux puts down the lamp, approaches her, holds the lighter’s flame close to their faces. The VOICES of the soldiers reach from outside...Deveaux begins to allude to them.

EVA (CONT'D)
I don't care.

She holds his gaze. Deveaux kisses her, Eva responds with awkward eagerness. Deveaux puts out the lighter, eases her gently onto his cot. They make love. Eva becomes anxious, still keen but uncertain, then, suddenly, pain.

Deveaux eases up, gentle. Eva hides coyly in his embrace. He lifts her face.

EVA (CONT'D)
Yes... So?!

He kisses her. She pulls him closer, hungrily.

EXT. THE CAMP - NIGHT, WIDE

The fire embraces the circle of tents with warm light. Clouds part revealing above a velvety sky, heavy with stars.

INT. DEVEAUX'S TENT - NIGHT, LATER

Moonlight filters through the flaps. Eva and Deveaux lie naked in each other's arms. An undertone of FROGS fills the night.

EVA
Father always says Mother made him happy ... But he can never explain to me how?

He turns to her.

DEVEAUX
Well, it's not easy to put into words ... It comes from a sense of...having it all.
(caresses her temple)
Longing for nothing more.

EVA
Did you have that with your wife?

DEVEAUX
(a beat)
Yes ... We did.

EVA
(OK with it)
Was she French as well?

DEVEAUX
No, Margaret was British ... We met while she studied art, in Paris. We had a son ... Gabriel.

EVA
How did they...?

DEVEAUX
I was stationed in Laos ... Five years ago ... Prefect of a Hmong township, in the outskirts of Vientiane. A rebellion broke out--

EVA
La Guerre du Fou ... My God, you were there?

DEVEAUX
Hell cannot be much worse ... Rebel leaders decapitated in public squares, children forced to watch ... One hundred thousand natives slaughtered by our forces ... A few days before Christmas, someone set our home on fire ... I was away ... My son and wife were not.

CONTINUED:

Eva's eyes have flooded.

EVA
I'm so sorry...

Deveaux holds her gaze, thoughtful, then lets the FROG SONG lull him to sleep.

EXT. CAMP, WIDE - DAY

The sun is shining high. An old engine-less Citroen carcass mounted on a strong tipoye rests in a clearing. A pulsating CHORUS OF CICADAS fills the air.

A large group of MOJEMBO -- proud natives with wide, red, knitted rings around their ankles -- loiter about.

The audience is taking place in the shade of a lush tree. FLIES BUZZ. A reeking hippopotamus head sits on a platter.

Deveaux, Eva, Rosetti, Delafosse, Dubois sit in folding chairs across CHIEF PONGWE, an imposing man with a medal pinned on a Napoleonic jacket several sizes too small for his massive frame. His INTERPRETER, a smallish black man with empty spectacle-rims over his ringed nose stands beside him, holding a dainty, damaged parasol over Pongwe's royal coif.

Pongwe frowns, slaps his fat belly.

PONGWE
Mafuta menguhi!

Deveaux turns to the Interpreter who shifts nervously and interprets in a fast, impossibly accented English.

INTERPRETER
"I ad-mire all I see ... But-what-I most ad-mire is the work the Gover-nor is do-ing for-the enter-prising of ci-vil-i-zation..."

Deveaux nods, eyes Eva for a more candid translation.

EVA
Chief Pongwe feels that for a great commander you do not possess enough fat.

Deveaux pats his stomach, beams at Pongwe.

DEVEAUX
(re hippo head:)
Well... Tell Chief Pongwe that thanks to his most thoughtful gift I should soon be on my way to becoming a very great chief, like himself.

CONTINUED:

Eva relays the message, Pongwe beams with delight.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Now, ask His Highness why his men set fire to the Forestiere station?

Eva translates. Dubois follows the exchange worried. Pongwe listens with his hands crossed before him exactly as Deveaux's, then throws up his arms and plunges into a loud, angry exposition, at the end of which he rises from his throne, aims a loud FART at Dubois and sits back down.

An awkward silence. Deveaux turns to Dubois...

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Well, Captain, you don't seem to be very popular with our friends, the Mojembo.
(to Eva)
Why is the Chief upset?

EVA
Hundreds of women and children from his tribe are being held by the Forestiere ... Impossible ransoms in ivory and rubber are demanded by the Baron ... Entire villages have been set on fire ... Live stocks taken. His people are dying of hunger and the police do nothing about it.

Deveaux glances at Dubois.

DEVEAUX
Tell the Chief I am looking into these allegations already ... Those guilty will be severely punished.

Dubois shifts in his seat.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
And again, thank Chief Pongwe for his gift.

Eva complies. Pongwe is satisfied. Deveaux stands and bows. Pongwe's men stir to readiness and prepare to carry the royal tipoye, all the time avoiding to look their Chief in the eye.

Pongwe pumps Deveaux's extended hand several times, takes a seat in the Citroen and is carried away.

The Interpreter hurries beside him, holding the long parasol over Pongwe -- a barely symbolic gesture for the shade falls anywhere but on his royally coiffed head.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
(re hippo head:)
You've plans for dinner, Secretary?

ROSETTI
I'm on a diet, actually, Sir ...
Thanks for asking, all the same.

EXT. CONGO RIVER - DAY

The steamer sails smoothly up-river, under clear skies.

EXT. STEAMER - DAY (SEVERAL SHOTS)

A working lunch under a gently flapping awning on the bow deck. Deveaux, Delafosse, Rosetti, several DELEGATES pour over paperwork. Deveaux listens intently to one of the delegates. Goma follows the scene with interest from his perch at the shade of the smokestack.

Deveaux's attention is directed to a map of the Congo basin. He catches sight of Eva watching him from the bridge. She smiles, walks away. Deveaux does a double-take: Cacavelli teaches chess to a NATIVE KITCHEN HELPER -- is actually laughing with him!

The Aurore steams ahead, toward a luminous sky AS WE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER - ANOTHER DAY

The steamer anchored in mid stream. An army of natives wash the deck in good, singing spirits. Rosetti and Eva chat at the railing.

EXT. GRASSLAND SAVANNA - DAY

Majestic, endless. Fonseca, on horseback, leads a column of porters carrying a haul of ivory tusks. Two FORESTIERE AGENTS escort him, as well as two tall, beautiful Hausa young women, also on horseback, clad in fulgurant robes and colorful turbans. Their body language denotes concubinage familiarity with Fonseca.

ROSETTI

Looking at this expedition through field glasses from across the plain. Behind him, Deveaux's delegation can be seen filing into the...

EXT. VILLAGE OF LIRANGA - LATE

Distinct, circular thatched huts, palm oil plantation.

CONTINUED:

Cacavelli and Eva examine a long line of sleeping sickness victims -- many children -- under the watchful eye of the village CHIEF. Deveaux approaches through the huts, appalled by the sheer number of natives lying prone on mats.

DEVEAUX
Sleeping sickness?

Cacavelli nods.

CACAVELLI
Never seen anything this widespread before.

EVA
Can you help them?

CACAVELLI
Not here, I'm afraid ... The Suramin I'm carrying would be wasted on these people ... Most are advanced second stage cases.
(to Deveaux)
They require Tryparsamide ... What little we have of that drug is stored back in Brazzaville.

Fonseca and his convoy enter the village. Fonseca rides up to Deveaux. The Hausa women with him.

FONSECA
Well...Governor! Never expected to run into you this far in country!

DEVEAUX
Baron...

FONSECA
Your predecessor seldom left the residence, let alone the comforts of town!
(doffs hat at Eva)
Miss Olsson.
(Eva allows a perfunctory smile)
No more idle days for you, under the new regime, hey, Doctor?
(caressing one of his women with his whip)
My Liranga station is but an hour from here, Governor ... Let me extend you some true Congo hospitality.

DEVEAUX
I'm afraid we still have work here, Baron ... And a very long road ahead ... Good day.

CONTINUED:

He turns back to his inspection. Fonseca grins at the slight.

FONSECA
Yes ... Well ... Perhaps some other time.

He snaps his mount around, gallops back toward his convoy. The Hausa women look at Eva with a cryptic smile on their lips, then follow Fonseca. Deveaux turns to the natives.

DEVEAUX
Please tell the Chief that the government would like to transport the worst afflicted children to Brazzaville for treatment ... With his permission, of course.

Eva translates. Deveaux looks darkly after Fonseca.

EXT. BODA PRISON - DAY

Several local soldiers lead Deveaux and the official delegation toward a thick-walled, rust-streaked building, with a massive iron gate. A sign above it reads:

"PENITENCIERE, BODA"

The PRISON WARDEN, a gaunt man in a soiled Captain's uniform, meets Deveaux at the gate. They exchange terse greetings.

INT. BODA PRISON - DAY

SUBJECTIVE past filthy, overcrowded cells. Flies everywhere. Expressionless CONVICTS stare out through iron bars -- some women and children.

Now, PULL Deveaux, striding through the dilapidated building, hands clasped in back, glancing left and right, disgust and anger building inside. The Warden, Rosetti, Delafosse, Cacavelli, Dubois and officials trail him.

DEVEAUX
How many prisoners you're holding here, Captain?

WARDEN
The judge's been on sick leave over three months, Excellency.

Deveaux stops, drills him.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Just...over five hundred.

Deveaux's eyes lock with the serene gaze of a shackled, OLD CONVICT of powerful shoulders and noble bearing.

CONTINUED:

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Many, like that one, have committed treason...

DEVEAUX
And the others?

The Warden hesitates, uneasy.

ROSETTI
Most men are here for refusing to work for the Forestiere, Sir.

WARDEN
Well, technically...
(glance at Dubois)
In fact, we--

DEVEAUX
Release every man, except those who've been charged with a capital offense.

WARDEN
Sir...?

DEVEAUX
You suffer from a hearing impediment, Captain?

WARDEN
No, Sir, but--

DEVEAUX
Then do it.

He stalks off, trailed by Delafosse and Rosetti. The prisoners look after him, expressionless.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
We're sailing back, Major, I've seen enough.

EXT. MAYOMBE FOREST - DAY

A loaded sky hangs like a dark, wet blanket over the Mayombe mountains. Scoops of dark cumulus boil ominously over the dull green jungle.

Gradually, A STEAM-ENGINE is HEARD approaching. Smoke rises through the tall tree-tops like the dark breath of a monster.

CAMERA SINKS below the roof of vegetation, framing the dimly lit, eerie stillness below.

The SOUND BUILDS until a black locomotive with a ferocious, red grill bursts out of the thick of the forest. SOLDIERS armed with rifles ride on its rooftop.

INT. RAILROAD CAR - DAY

Four wooden crates with the official seal of the French Treasury Department defy the heavy rocking, secured down with ropes to the center of a reserved, passenger car.

A half-dozen SOLDIERS and a white ARMY OFFICER guard the precious cargo in the SHRILL OF RAILS AND PISTONS.

A wiry, monocled T. INSPECTOR GILBERT, prisoner of a stiff collar, gazes through an open window at the whipping wall of vegetation. He exchanges a weary look with a TREASURY OFFICER. The train blows its WHISTLE and a gust of WHITE STEAM invades the car.

EXT. LOCOMOTIVE - DAY

The MACHINIST leans out the engine cabin, pulls the whistle cord as the train speeds into a tunnel and ALL GOES BLACK.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST - LATER

The idle train STEAMS, PUFFS and GROANS. A fallen tree lies across the tracks. Natives are busy hacking branches, clearing the way. Inspector Gilbert, the Treasury Officer and the Army Officer chat and watch from the shade of the forest. The Inspector checks his watch. The tree is finally dragged out of the way. All climb back on board. The Machinist blows the whistle and the engine painfully gets the convoy moving again.

EXT. END OF THE RAILROAD LINE - LATER

A forest clearing in the middle of nowhere. A few sand bags cushion a thick beam marking the end of the tracks. Silence except what sounds like a thousand continuously falling pins.

Goma and NINE SOLDIERS retain four cargo mules. The hand-written chalked sign reads: "Km. 205". Delafosse and an OFFICER rest under grounded tipoyes, dripping with perspiration, swatting mosquitoes. Three dozen PORTERS wait crouched beside them.

GOMA

Murmurs soothingly to the nervous mules. He turns back and CAMERA REVEALS the legion of LABORERS extending as far as the eye can see. A chill runs through his bones. The faint TRAIN WHISTLE rescues him from his reverie.

EXT. FOREST TRACK - DAY

A TROOP OF MONKEYS gallops across tree-tops, forty meters above ground. Leaping wondrously across the narrow corridor cleared through the jungle. The RATTLING train speeds past below.

CONTINUED:

WITH THE LOCOMOTIVE

The Machinist pulls the STEAM WHISTLE.

INT. GOLD CAR - DAY

The Inspector and Officer stick their heads out the window.

Undergrowth and overhanging ferns whip by.

EXT. END OF RAILROAD LINE - SAME TIME

THE TRAIN WHISTLE APPROACHES. Delafosse comes from under his tipoye, makes his way up to the tracks, buttoning up his jacket. Goma and the soldiers pull up the mules.

AERIAL

The train snakes through the forest, like a smoking toy.

EXT. END OF RAILROAD LINE

The engine emerges from the forest, slowly comes to a stop engulfed in clouds of steam and the SHRILL SCREECH of braking steel. Goma restrains the restless mules.

The Army Officer steps down from the train, shakes hands with Delafosse. Inspector Gilbert follows, swatting mosquitoes with his sweat-stained hat. Everyone streams with perspiration.

ARMY OFFICER
Inspector Dominique Gilbert,
Treasury Department, Major.

Delafosse salutes.

DELAFOSSE
Welcome, Sir.

They shake hands. Soldiers unload the first gold crate. Goma brings up the mules, glances at the loaded skies as HEAVY THUNDER rolls.

DELAFOSSE (CONT'D)
Pleasant trip, I trust, Inspector?

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
(re Km 205 sign:)
Eleven hours for this? Not quite
the Orient Express, is it?

DELAFOSSE
Well..we'll try to make the rest of
your journey more comfortable, Sir.

Gilbert moves ahead, at war with the mosquitoes.

CONTINUED:

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
I certainly hope so...

EXT. FOREST TRACK - HOURS LATER

TORRENTIAL RAIN. Gilbert and the Treasury Officer hold on to their rocking tipoyes. The porters make arduous progress, knee-deep in mud. Delafosse, in the leading tipoye, glances back at them, mortified.

Goma follows with the gold. The soldiers bring up the rear.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, LIBRARY - NIGHT

RAIN DRUMS on the roof of the residence. Water drips into a bucket on the billiard table. Deveaux closes a file he has been reading, climbs the ladder, returns it to its shelf, frustrated.

His attention now falls on the spine of a volume on an upper shelf. Gilded lettering reads: GREEK GODS ENCYCLOPEDIA. It joggles his mind.

FLASH: ROSETTI TALKING TO DEVEAUX ON THE LAWN AT NIGHT.

ROSETTI
He kept muttering...

FLASH: DULAC IN HIS DEATH BED, MOUTHING THE WORD...

DEVEAUX (V.O.)
Tha-na-tos...!

BACK TO SCENE:

Deveaux pulls down the heavy tome, it opens directly on the "T's," marked by a thin, red file. He takes it out, reveals an illustration: "Thanatos, god of death."

Deveaux spreads the file on the billiard table, reads, galvanized by the momentous finding. PUSH.

EXT. A LARGE MOON - NIGHT

Racing behind low clouds above the Mayombe. It has stopped raining.

REVEAL

Delafosse's party crossing on a raft. The ghostly glow of moonlight washes all to black & white.

CONTINUED:

ON THE RAFT

The Soldiers drag on the rope-and-pulley rig, SINGING in low tones. Goma holds his jacket over the eyes of the lead mule.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESIDENCE, STUDY - DAY

Deveaux can be seen on the terrace, stirring a cup of tea, watching Djo polish the Renault, in apparent dialogue with the vehicle.

REVEAL

Cacavelli reading the red file at Deveaux's desk. He flips it shut.

CACAVELLI
I knew sooner or later this would catch up with me.

He pours himself a cognac. Deveaux ambles back into the study.

DEVEAUX
You could've reported the killing, Doctor ... You could have reported the whole sordid affair.

CACAVELLI
(a sardonic chuckle)
To whom?! Dulac?! The Baron was paid 5,000 francs for every man delivered in good health to the Congo Ocean ... And he split that with the Governor!

DEVEAUX
After your cut...

CACAVELLI
Someone had to sign the bloody bill of health!

His sarcasm leaves Deveaux cold.

DEVEAUX
Bloody indeed, Doctor ... Most of those men never came back.

CACAVELLI
Over twenty thousand natives have lost their lives on that damned machine! Don't pretend France gave a hoot as long as tracks were being laid!
(beat)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
What difference one more dead Negro makes?

DEVEAUX
That man was murdered, Doctor ... That makes all the difference in the world.

CACAVELLI
Yes, I suppose the other twenty-thousand died of natural causes...

This one has bite; Deveaux swallows the nut.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
We're all part of the same hypocrisy, Governor...
(downs drink)
Am I under arrest?

As Rosetti rushes in.

ROSETTI
Scouts have spotted the convoy an hour away, Sir!

Deveaux assents in silence.

Rosetti realizes he has stepped into the eye of a storm, turns on his heels. Deveaux picks up his sun helmet to follow, looks at Cacavelli.

DEVEAUX
It's the Baron I'm after, Doctor. Testify against him and I will recommend leniency for you.

He stalks out. Cacavelli calls after him.

CACAVELLI
He'd get a slap on the wrist and then where would I be? As good as dead! What would be in it for me?!

Deveaux does not turn back. Cacavelli downs his cognac, disgusted, SLAMS down his glass AND WE

MATCH SOUND CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST TRACK - DAY

A CRACK OF THUNDER. Delafosse, Inspector Gilbert and the Two Officers rock with the motion atop the tipoyes. Soaked, soiled, exhausted under loaded skies.

Goma leads the gold mules flanked by the soldiers. DOGS BARK, children appear ahead -- like seabirds announcing land.

EXT. PORT - LATER

Deveaux, Rosetti, Legat and the rest of the reception party wait under a fine drizzle. The MUNGUNGUS fill the air. The Botafogo rolls on the tide. The muddy convoy emerges from the forest, Goma leading the mules.

The multitude of COLONIALS break into APPLAUSE, the NATIVES SING and dance convulsively. Eva and Olsson hold Ampeti up so she can watch.

The PORTERS put the white men to ground.

DEVEAUX
Welcome back, Major.

DELAFOSSE
Sir.

Treasury Inspector Gilbert shoves to the fore, fits his monocle.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Dominique Gilbert, Excellency.

Deveaux takes his extended, eager hand.

DEVEAUX
Inspector... This is Mr. Legat ...
With the shipping company.

LEGAT
Did you have a pleasant trip, Inspector?

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Pleasant would be a stretch, but I am glad we got the gold here safely.

Deveaux turns to Lieutenant LeClerc.

DEVEAUX
Lieutenant, take the men you need and transport two crates to the bank... Monsieur Rousselot will be expecting you.
(turns to Goma)
Soldier, see to it that the other two are loaded in the hold right away.

GOMA
(at attention)
I see-to-it, Government!

He quickly commands the gendarmes who begin to move the crates onto the Botafogo.

CONTINUED:

But they resent being ordered around by a Bakongo and it shows. Goma ignores their protestations, the crates make their way into the hold. Distant LIGHTNING.

DEVEAUX
(eyes skies)
Major, carry on before it starts pouring down.

A soldier loses his grip on one of the crates. It hits the ground with a heavy JINGLING OF COINS. The crowd reacts.

DELAFOSSE
Soldier Goma from Boulima!

Goma breaks ranks, Rosetti extracts two sergeant bars from a small box. Deveaux attaches them to Goma's proud shoulders.

DEVEAUX
By the authority vested in me, I hereby elevate soldier Goma from Boulima to the rank of Sergeant Second Class!
(smiles, under his breath:)
Chief Bantu would be very pleased.

Goma's eyes shine with emotion. The natives CHEER. The Colonials CLAP uncertainly. Goma beams nonetheless. Dubois exchanges looks with TWO FORESTIERE GUARDS we have noticed before in Fonseca's entourage.

Cacavelli leans into Olsson.

CACAVELLI
Proud of your boy, Reverend?

OLSSON
Today, proud of Congo, Doctor.

The last crate is loaded. Deveaux addresses the crowd.

DEVEAUX
It is with the full conviction that he will discharge his duties with utmost dedication, that I entrust Sergeant Goma from the village of Boulima with the well-keeping of this year's development funds.

More APPLAUSE. The Mandara watch from a hill, hands crossed over their heads, stomachs out, like overdeveloped children.

Gilbert leans into Deveaux.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Are you sure about this, Governor?

CONTINUED:

Deveaux ignores him, nods at Delafosse.

DELAFOSSE
Sergeant...

Goma stands at attention, Delafosse hands him a key.

DELAFOSSE (CONT'D)
This is the key to the hold, Sergeant ... You will open to no one - no one - until you are relieved from your duties in the morrow.

GOMA
Yes, Major.

DELAFOSSE
(motions to Dubois)
Captain Dubois is putting six of his men under your sole command.

Dubois leads six black GENDARMES who take position behind Goma, severely chastises one who does not move quickly enough.

Goma eyes Deveaux with a mixture of pride and worry. Delafosse hangs a whistle around Goma's neck.

DELAFOSSE (CONT'D)
In case of an emergency you will sound this alarm ... Have you understood, Sergeant?

Goma turns to Deveaux.

GOMA
(quietly:)
I watch Government gold, Ton-ton?

DEVEAUX
I'm counting on you.

Goma sees Ampeti, Olsson and Eva in the crowd.

GOMA
I watch good.

DEVEAUX
I know you will, Sergeant ... Carry on.

Goma salutes, orders FOUR GENDARMES to take positions along the jetty and the other TWO GENDARMES to follow him on board. He posts them on deck, outside the door, descends into the hold, slams the door behind himself. SOUND OF LOCK BEING TURNED.

CONTINUED:

Deveaux notices the Forestiere Guards stalk off the quay.

INT. HOLD OF BOTAFOGO - DAY

Goma stands inside the heavy door. The SOUND OF THE TIDE slapping the boat ECHOES in the hull.

A storm-lamp hangs from the ceiling. A little more light comes in through a small porthole. The gold crates sit together in the center of the hold.

A cracked mirror is held to the wall by two bent nails. Goma walks up to it, looks proudly at his new sergeant's bars on his shoulders, hangs the door key on one of the nails.

He notices a water barrel, drinks from the ladle, then puts his service rifle on his shoulder, looks out the porthole.

EXT. WHARF - DAY

RAIN begins to fall. The crowd disperses. Olsson and Eva help Ampeti into the Renault.

Deveaux pulls Delafosse aside.

DEVEAUX
Major, post a dozen men on the access road ... They're to intervene only in case of an emergency ... It is essential that Sergeant Goma be perceived as being fully in charge of this detail.

DELAFOSSE
I understand, Sir.

He leaves with his men in the army truck. Rosetti drives up in the Renault, Deveaux climbs in and they drive away.

EXT. HARBOR, WIDE - SUNSET

The steamer bounces gently against the pier. The sun is going down -- a misty, mauve gauze descending on the land. LIGHTNING floods the horizon.

GOMA

Peers out the porthole, his liquid eyes wide open AS WE...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, LONG - NIGHT

It has stopped raining, yet the occasional flare of distant LIGHTNING exposes a heavy sky.

CONTINUED:

OLSSON (O.S.)
Interesting reading, Excellency. Still, all you have is one black man's word.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Deveaux gazes out the open terrace doors.

DEVEAUX
Good enough for me, Reverend...

Olsson shuts the red file.

OLSSON
I don't doubt it, but--

Deveaux takes the file, slaps it on the desk.

DEVEAUX
Seven hundred and fifty-two men were delivered to the Congo Ocean during that month of May alone! One was murdered by the Baron's own hand! Goma's testimony perfectly concurs with Dulac's dossier.

OLSSON
A dead man's notes and the word of one illiterate native.

DEVEAUX
Dulac was murdered! He was about to expose Fonseca’s crimes and he was killed!

OLSSON
The Baron was in Leopoldville the night Governor Dulac died, Governor ... That's a well established fact.

DEVEAUX
That only proves he didn't pull the trigger.

OLSSON
Still ... Without the doctor's testimony I doubt you can make a case in a white court, Excellency. I think you know that too...

Deveaux does. He turns in frustration to the terrace as a bolt of LIGHTNING fractures the night, followed by a powerful CRACK OF THUNDER.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. BRAZZAVILLE HARBOR - NIGHT

The same flash of endless LIGHTNING floods the port, revealing the Botafogo in eerie detail.

EXT. BEACH, WIDE - NIGHT

The RUMBLE OF THUNDER reaches the beach where the Sorcerer's firelight burns a hole in the dark screen.

THE SORCERER

Arms akimbo outside his hut -- eyes frozen in a white stare. He lifts his arms to the thundering sky as if willing the sheet of RAIN that now begins to fall.

INT. HOLD OF THE BOTAFOGO - SAME TIME

Goma peers through the porthole. The electric night floods his worried face. LAUGHTER, TINKLING of bottles come from the quay.

HIS POV THROUGH PORTHOLE: THE GENDARMES ON DECK EXCHANGE UNEASY GLANCES.

BACK TO Goma: he opens the porthole glass, angry.

GOMA
Kumbuka etu madaraka! Gambasi!
Remember our responsibilities!

EXT. QUAY - NIGHT

The Four Gendarmes inside a shed LAUGH. One passes a bottle.

FIRST GENDARME
Nywa, Goma! Dhahabu mzungu matata!
Drink, Goma! Gold is white man's problem!

That gets a louder laugh. Goma shouts back through the porthole, furious.

GOMA
Sambo kuwa kiaskari! Ninyi kuwa adhabu!
Act soldier-like! You will be punished!

INT. HOLD OF THE BOTAFOGO - CONTINUOUS

Goma slams the porthole shut.

GOMA
Mpumbavu!
Stupid persons!

CONTINUED:

He picks up his rifle, begins to march around the crates, talking courage into himself: one, two, one, two! A BOOMING CRACK OF THUNDER silences him.

EXT. WHARF, WIDE - CONTINUOUS

As a monstrous three-prong flash of LIGHTNING electrifies the night, storehouse and shed. More THUNDER CRACKS time and again, like massive falling timber. Nature unchained. Awesome, terrifying.

EXT. BEACH - SAME TIME

The Sorcerer outside his hut, holds a snake in each hand, arms raised to the thundering skies -- as if commanding the BOLTS OF LIGHTNING that flood his beach.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

A strong gust of wind buffets the tarpaulins off the roof of the Gendarmes' shed. The Gendarmes move jokingly to the more sturdy storehouse. A BOTTLE SHATTERS. One of them calls back toward the ship.

SECOND GENDARME
Ishi amka, Goma!
Stay awake, Goma!

They laugh.

DECK OF THE BOTAFOGO, CONTINUOUS

The Two Gendarmes abandon ship down the plank.

INT. HOLD OF THE BOTAFOGO - NIGHT

Goma hears the departing FOOTSTEPS above, hurries to the porthole. A heavy barrel rolls menacingly on an overhead rack.

GOMA
(furious)
Smejali gombi sankuy! Jalmili!
Come back here! It's an order!

The LAUGHTER of the two Gendarmes join the others. The Botafogo's MOORINGS SQUEAK under an enormous, unseen force.

Goma grabs his whistle, considers, glances at the crates sliding on the floor, then BLOWS, sounding the alarm.

EXT. WHARF, WIDE - NIGHT

Debris flies toward the riverbank. The WHISTLE BLOWS are drowned by the WIND.

CONTINUED:

GOMA

He shouts through the porthole.

GOMA
Jambo! JAMBO!
Help! HELP!
TON-TON!

He BLOWS THE WHISTLE louder.

Suddenly, the wind dies. The tarpaulins hang limp. A rachitic dog slinks across the pier.

INT. HOLD OF BOTAFOGO - NIGHT

Goma peers out the porthole. Puzzled. Fearful.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The Sorcerer chants THE THREE PHRASES under his breath, as if murmuring at the snakes in his grip, glass-eyed, waiting.

INT. HOLD OF BOTAFOGO - NIGHT

Goma listens. A stifled RUMBLING SOUND grows near. He shuts the porthole, in dread.

EXT. PORT, WIDE - NIGHT

As a fantastic FLASH OF LIGHTNING exposes the speeding clouds, AND NOW...

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

The TYPHOON hits with unimaginable force. Uprooting trees, shattering windows, lifting rooftops. RAIN falls in sheets. Golfball-size hail bounces about wildly, shattering glass, denting metal. Trees bend at impossible angles. The Botafogo keels deeply.

INT. HOLD OF BOTAFOGO - NIGHT

Goma is hurled against a wall. He takes the key from the nail, the barrel falls from the rack, knocks him out. The key slides into a corner.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

The Botafogo bounces on the jetty. The wind slaps her violently, snapping the bow moorings with such force that the backlash of the thick rope shatters the shed to pieces. The last Gendarme flees into the night.

INT. HOLD OF BOTAFOGO - NIGHT

Goma lies unconscious.

EXT. PORT, PANORAMIC - NIGHT

Hell on Earth. LIGHTNING short-circuits the forest to its confines.

EXT. BEACH - SAME TIME

The Sorcerer in the glare of LIGHTNING, spins -- in a trance. The snakes biting on his neck, spin with him, like spokes on a wheel.

EXT. PORT - NIGHT

The storm rages. Uprooted trees and debris blow like dust toward the river. The small steamer bounces off the wharf, the last mooring SNAPS and she drifts, light as a paper boat.

INT. HOLD OF BOTAFOGO - NIGHT

The storm-lamp swings wildly. The gold crates slide across the floor, with a HEAVY JINGLING OF COINS.

Goma bounces against the wall. A BOOMING CLAP OF THUNDER seems to start him back to consciousness. He gropes for the key, cannot find it, staggers up the stairs, shakes the door handle uselessly.

The boat rocks, the key slides into view, Goma dives for it, rushes to unlock the door. The door swings open and a gust of wind and water slaps him aside, blowing off the ceiling of the hold. LIGHTNING and RAIN flood the enclosure.

Goma cries out in terror, pulls himself up the steps to the...

EXT. DECK OF THE BOTAFOGO - CONTINUOUS

Goma holds on to the railing. His raven skin glistens wildly with each new bolt of LIGHTNING. He moves around the stern, realizing in horror that he is adrift with the steamer -- the wharf nowhere in sight. Huge WAVES CRASH through the galleries, sweeping off everything in their path.

Goma cries to the Heavens but not a word is heard over the ROAR of the storm. The ship rears, the stern-wheel back-paddles noisily, shatters into pieces. Goma is tossed across the deck like dead weight. He barely holds on to loose ropes. A FLASH OF LIGHTNING flares up his terrified eyes.

HIS POV: THE LIVINGSTONE FALLS COMING UP QUICKLY AS THE STEAMER IS SUCKED TOWARD THE RAPIDS.

Goma holds onto the railing, calm -- this is God's will.

WIDE: THE SHIP SLIPS INTO THE FALLS

CONTINUED:

BACK TO GOMA ON DECK (143)

His face relaxed. He braces himself for the inevitable, at peace with himself.

GOMA
Bless me, Tata.

It is mostly lip-reading; a deafening CLAP OF THUNDER explodes overhead as the steamer rolls on its starboard into the luminous, roaring fall. Goma leaps OUT OF FRAME. The clouds drifting madly AS WE...

FADE OUT AND CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIVER, WIDE - DAWN

The sky is cloudless and yet not blue. A kind of superior moonlight drapes over the undefined horizon.

EXT. BEACH - SAME TIME

A DOG sleeps outside what's left of the Sorcerer's hut. A distant SOUND IS HEARD. Hollow, faint -- a vocal quality. Wind, perhaps. The DOG lets out a low, aimless BARK.

INT. SORCERER'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

The Sorcerer. Asleep with his cataract-blinded eyes partially open. The VOICE-LIKE SOUND is heard again, the Sorcerer stirs.

WE PULL him out of the hut, ear cocked, alert, down the beach, to water's edge. He begins to intone his familiar CHANT under his breath.

His Boy points to the river, begins beating on the tom-tom.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE GROUNDS - SAME TIME

A RESIDENCE NATIVE responds beating on another tom-tom.

INT. AMPETI'S HUT - SAME TIME

We PULL Ampeti as she makes her way to her yellow door.

INT. ROSETTI'S BUNGALOW - SAME TIME

Rosetti peers out his window. Something is up: NATIVES run excited through the grounds. Rosetti leaves his bungalow -- a number of trees have been fell by the storm -- hurries toward the residence, tucking his shirt in. Delafosse joins him.

DELAFOSSE
What's the ruckus?

CONTINUED:

ROSETTI
Not yet sure, Major...

EXT. RESIDENCE TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

They climb the steps, Rosetti removes the telescope's protective cover, peers through it AS

Deveaux emerges from the residence, takes in the tree devastation.

DEVEAUX
Major, send some men to check on the ship.

DELAFOSSE
Right away, Sir.

He takes off. Rosetti stands back from the telescope, speechless.

ROSETTI
You... Morning, Sir... You better have a look... On the island ... Below the falls.

Puzzled, Deveaux puts his eye to the telescope.

VIEW THROUGH TELESCOPE:

Finds the falls -- cascading silently into the void -- settles on a minuscule island - little more than a large, flat rock -- immediately after the boil.

FOCUS RACKS ON Goma beside the wreck of the Botafogo, looking helpless. Framed by the rushing stream, he seems to be sailing upriver.

BACK TO SCENE: Deveaux pulls away from the eyepiece, blanched.

EXT. MISSION - DAY

Leti runs breathless through wild-cackling turkeys.

LETI
Goma anguka katika Congo-mto, Tata!

Olsson and Eva repair the mission roof. They turn.

LETI (CONT'D)
Goma isango olumo dingai!

Olsson listens to the distant tom-toms, puts down his tools, starts down the ladder in a hurry.

EXT. CORNFIELD, LONG - DAY

Olsson's smoking motorcycle cuts through the green field (RIGHT TO LEFT). Eva is driving, Olsson rides behind her.

EXT. CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE RIVER - DAY

Deveaux, Rosetti, Delafosse, Cacavelli, Gilbert, Legat and several soldiers stand on the edge of a cliff. A large, restless CROWD OF NATIVES has gathered on the beach below. Delafosse hands Deveaux a pair of field glasses.

WHAT HE SEES:

The island coming into focus. Goma paces the patch of stone with apparent disregard for his predicament.

BACK TO SCENE:

Deveaux turns as Eva and Olsson ride up on the motorcycle.

DEVEAUX
Summon the Chief of Police, Major. I want to get to the bottom of what happened last night.

DELAFOSSE
Yes, Sir.

He takes two soldiers with him and drives away in the military truck. Olsson and Eva join Deveaux.

DEVEAUX
Reverend...

Eva steps up to the edge, looks toward the island.

EVA
What happened?

Deveaux hands her the field glasses. She points them toward the beach. Deveaux stirs her view toward the island.

EVA'S POV THROUGH FIELD GLASSES:

WIPE TO Goma sits on the shipwreck, dejected.

BACK TO SCENE:

Eva lets out a GASP, passes the glasses to an impatient Olsson.

OLSSON'S POV THROUGH GLASSES:

Goma looks up, seems to gaze directly at CAMERA.

OLSSON (V.O.)
Good God, my son...

EXT. GOMA ON THE ISLAND

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE CAMERA IS ON THE ISLAND. The roar of the fall SATURATES the track. It underscores the hopelessness of access. We hold five full seconds before Goma opens his mouth in a mute, frustrated SHOUT.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Olsson watches through the field glasses. The VOCAL SOUND is heard again -- this time louder, as if coming from the clouds.

LEGAT
What was that?

The natives on the beach fall quiet.

EVA
Goma.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Why, that's absurd! Let me have those...

Olsson hands him the field glasses.

EXT. HOLLOW OF THE FALL - DAY

The wreck seen through the cascading water. Goma shouts again. His voice RESONATES LOUDLY in the cavernous concavity of the rock.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

THE VOICE faint but clear. Gilbert can see it echoes Goma's antics on the island. He puts the glasses down.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
How is this possible?

Deveaux considers.

ROSETTI
Acoustics...

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
What?

DEVEAUX
Yes...

ROSETTI
High frequency, amplified by--

DEVEAUX
The concavity of the fall.

CONTINUED:

Beat.

OLSSON
This is a tragedy.

Cacavelli steps up to the edge, takes a swig from his liquor canteen.

CACAVELLI
Oh, no. In a tragedy Goma would have perished, Reverend.
(squints at the island)
This is far worse.

EXT. RESIDENCE TERRACE - LATE AFTERNOON

DOWN SHOT: Deveaux at the telescope. ANGLE WIDENS: Delafosse, Rosetti, Dubois, Cacavelli, Gilbert, Legat, Eva, Olsson scattered on the checkered terrace -- as pawns on a chess board.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
I want it on the record I was against the idea of your blackie from the start!

LEGAT
Probably fell asleep.

DUBOIS
Of course he fell asleep! My men swear he never gave the alarm--

DELAFOSSE
Your men were found dead drunk in the storehouse--!

DEVEAUX
That will do! We'll have the answers when we've brought Sergeant Goma back.

The men exchange uncomfortable looks. A number of natives follow the discussion with interest from the lawn.

DELAFOSSE
(almost apologetic:)
No man has ever set foot on that island before, Sir--

DEVEAUX
Well, now one has, Major.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
That's right ... The gold must be recovered.

CONTINUED:

DELAFOSSE
You'd be sending men to their deaths, Sir.

DEVEAUX
Would you consider a rescue mission, where it myself down there?

DELAFOSSE
Why, of course, Excellency, but--

DEVEAUX
Well, sergeant Goma is far more important than any of us, now.

DELAFOSSE
Sir..?

CACAVELLI
(tickled)
Yes ... Of course... And WE put him there! Fail to rescue him we are nothing but impotent fools.

DEVEAUX
And you find this amusing, doctor?

CACAVELLI
(he does, but...)
Not on the least, Governor ... Imagine what horrors a horde of three million Congolese could unleash, were their fear of God and master be flushed down river, as it were...

Deveaux's had enough of Cacavelli, turns to Delafosse.

DEVEAUX
You've been here longer than most, Major ... You must know of someone with the technical skills needed to tackle this situation?

DELAFOSSE
The Belge, in Leopoldville, have a licensed harbor pilot, Sir ... We could request they--

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Four million of our gold in Belge hands? Over my remains..!

CACAVELLI
Actually, we do have a naval expert of sorts, right here in Brazzaville.

CONTINUED:

All eyes on Cacavelli -- his own shine with mischief.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESIDENCE GROUNDS - NEXT DAY

The Russian Admiral, wearing his customary frayed uniform jacket and four-day stubble, approaches across the lawn, flanked by TWO SOLDIERS. A sort of aristocratic scarecrow on thin, shaky legs.

DELAFOSSE (O.S.)
He claims to've been an Admiral in the Russian Navy, Sir ... Relieved of his command for refusing to scuttle his battleship during the Japanese-Russian War.

On the terrace, Deveaux, Delafosse, Cacavelli and the other skeptics await the visitor.

CACAVELLI
Quite a story, indeed, but I've never known him to lie.

The Admiral climbs the steps, offers Deveaux an impeccable salute.

RUSSIAN ADMIRAL
Rear-Admiral Alexander Illych Stark, Excellency ... At your orders.

Deveaux extends his hand. Stark takes it, with a soft KNOCKING of heels.

DEVEAUX
Thank you for coming, Admiral.
(motions toward study)
Please.

Stark casts a proud glance about and precedes Deveaux into the...

INT. GOVERNOR'S STUDY - LATER

Deveaux, Delafosse, Rosetti, Cacavelli, Dubois, DaRosa, Gilbert and several other OFFICIALS listen to the Admiral standing with a pointer before a large hydrographic map of the Congo basin and Stanley Pool.

The servants watch curiously from the crowded doors.

ADMIRAL STARK
Sixteen kilo-meters wide upstream, heer...
(points to falls)
Dee fall ... minus than 500 meter.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

ADMIRAL STARK (CONT'D)
One millions cubic feets of vuater rushing eech second thru leetle pass ... Very fast ... Sixty, seventy knot this time of yeer. Like a giant...
(searches, cups hands)
A big...

ROSETTI
Funnel?

ADMIRAL STARK
Da! Funnel! Strong to crush any boat that cross like ... egg shell. CRACK!

Delafosse looks at Deveaux who studies the chart up close.

DELAFOSSE
Nothing stands a chance against such force of nature, Sir.

The rest concede with silence. Deveaux stares at the map, stumped. Rosetti ponders the map with his head oddly cocked, finally CLEARS HIS THROAT.

DEVEAUX
Yes, Rosetti...?

ROSETTI
Well, Sir ... It's probably not even worth mentioning...

DEVEAUX
Speak up, lad!

ROSETTI
Well, Sir, Admiral Stark spoke of the crushing lateral force of the current ... I was wondering what would the chances be of negotiating the rapids...up stream?

The Russian darts him a narrow look. DaRosa lets out a CHORTLE dripping scorn.

DAROSA
Up-stream!?

ROSETTI
(encouraged by the slight)
May I, Admiral?

Stark passes the pointer, curls up his mustache, attentive.

ROSETTI (CONT'D)
Thank you...
(points)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

ROSETTI (CONT'D)
The Belge also have a 160-horsepower tugboat, here, in Matadi, below the falls, Sir...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CONGO RIVER - DAY

A powerful tugboat fights the current. AN AERIAL CAMERA gains on the sturdy vessel, past downstream rapids, on to the island where Goma sits with his head in his hands. OVER THIS:

ROSETTI (V.O.)
If she could be maneuvered past these boulders, here, she might reach the lee of the island...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. STUDY - DAY

Rosetti at the map.

ROSETTI
Using it as a shield against the current, get to our man and...

He finishes with an vague gesture. DaRosa snorts, dismissive.

DEVEAUX
Problems breathing, Captain..?

DaRosa wipes off his grin. Deveaux turns to the Russian.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Admiral..?

ADMIRAL STARK
Su-ee-cide idea, Excellency.

DaRosa grins, feeling vindicated. The Admiral's eyes shine, he twirls up his mischievous mustache.

ADMIRAL STARK (CONT'D)
I like it!

DEVEAUX
So do I.

DELAFOSSE
We would be sending men to certain death, Sir.

DEVEAUX
All death is certain, Major ... In any event, I don't intend to pass the buck.

(CONTINUED)
5/25/20

CONTINUED:

Delafosse realizes Deveaux means to go himself.

DELAFOSSE
Why, that's madness! I strongly object, Sir!

DEVEAUX
Dully noted, Major.

ROSETTI
I'd like to come along, Sir!

DEVEAUX
Thank you, Rosetti ... Perhaps you can find two other volunteers.

ROSETTI
Yes, Sir.

He hurries off.

DEVEAUX
We'll need a skipper, of course.

Stark gallantly CLICKS his heels.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Thank you, you've done your share, Admiral.
(turns to DaRosa)
I was thinking of someone more... expendable.

DaRosa's heart skips a beat.

DAROSA
But, I'm a Portuguese subject, Governor!

DEVEAUX
Only by birth, was it not?

He stalks off. DaRosa's face falls.

EXT. CONGO RIVER - DAY

Downstream from the falls. DaRosa -- not a happy skipper -- on the bridge of the shuddering tugboat, steers the 8-meter vessel into troubled waters.

Deveaux and Rosetti man the bow with TWO SOLDIERS, tense and holding hooks on ropes. The oncoming current wash the deck.

SEVERAL HUNDRED NATIVES watch silently from shore as the boat struggles up stream.

CONTINUED:

ON THE BEACH

The Sorcerer stands by his hut, arms crossed, defiant. His Boy ready at the mungungu.

EXT. CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE RIVER - DAY

Eva, Olsson, Delafosse, Mme. Delafosse, Dubois, Cacavelli, Gilbert, the Admiral, Colonials and Officials follow the action tensely. Eva clasps Olsson's hand.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Goma tosses pebbles into the rushing stream, apparently talking to himself. He suddenly springs to his feet, breaks into a wide grin, buttons up his soiled uniform jacket.

WHAT HE SEES: THE TUGBOAT APPROACHING

EXT. TUGBOAT - DAY

Deveaux braces himself as the vessel engages the rapids. He turns to DaRosa up in the steering turret.

DEVEAUX
Come on, Captain, show me what she's got!

DaRosa gives the engine full throttle, stirs the boat past the first boulder. The boat bucks like a bronco against the violent current but moves ahead.

SEVERAL SHOTS

The engine's pistons pumps hard. The soldiers shift anxiously as the ride becomes increasingly rough. The second boulder closes in. Deveaux trains his field glasses on the island.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Goma remembers the gold, rushes back into the wreck, drags the first cracked crate out. Gold coins fall out.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Gilbert follows the action through binoculars.

EXT. TUGBOAT - DAY

Deveaux takes one of the hooks from a soldier, wraps the rope around a hand, prepares to throw it. Suddenly, a SHRILLING SOUND IS HEARD. He turns -- black smoke spews from below deck. DaRosa sticks his head out the turret, sick with fear.

DAROSA
She can't do it, Sir!

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Yes! We're almost there!
(turns)
Rosetti!

Rosetti pulls open the engine cowling, thick black smoke blinds him. He shakes his head at Deveaux -- it's hopeless.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Goma drags the second crate out of the wreck. It weighs a ton. He does a double-take:

WHAT HE SEES:

The smoking tugboat slipping sideways, losing to the current.

EXT. TUGBOAT - DAY

Deveaux takes the steering wheel from DaRosa, compensates to stay on course with the island.

DEVEAUX
Full speed, Captain!

DAROSA
The engine will blow, Deus!

DEVEAUX
Then let it blow, I don't give a damn!

DaRosa pushes the throttle as far as it will go, Deveaux hands him the wheel, hurries down to the deck.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

All eyes on the island. Olsson puts his arm around Eva.

OLSSON
(under his breath)
Come on, son...!

EXT. TUGBOAT - DAY

Deveaux spins the metal hook over his head. The engine suddenly lets out a loud, CLUNKING SOUND and the largest burst yet of black smoke spews from the cowling. The boat immediately loses ground, strikes the first boulder.

Deveaux loses his footing, releases the rope, the stray hook flies off, crashes against the turret, barely missing DaRosa.

The boat spins, Deveaux is thrown overboard.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Eva gasps. Cacavelli grabs the binoculars from the Inspector, trains them on the river, showing uncharacteristic concern.

EXT. TUGBOAT - DAY

Rosetti throws a line, Deveaux manages to grab it. The vessel drifts downstream.

Rosetti slips, hits a metal beam, opening a gash on his temple, still helps Deveaux hoists himself back on board. LOUD CRACKING SOUND, they react as...

The propeller catches the boulder, is SHATTERED to pieces.

The boat spirals out of control, drifts downstream.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Treasury Inspector Gilbert curses, furious.

EXT. TUGBOAT - DAY

DaRosa steers desperately. Clock, then counter-clock-wise to no effect. The ship keels deeply. The soldiers grab for the railing, a wave sweeps one of them off the deck.

Deveaux leaps to the edge to try to save the man, but the soldier is sucked under the boat, to his death.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Olsson and Eva, deeply shaken.

EXT. CONGO RIVER - DAY (AERIAL)

The tugboat spins down-river, like a cork adrift.

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Goma stands by the crates, stock still. Suddenly holds up a fistful of coins, cries out at the top of his lungs:

GOMA
Ton-ton! I have gold!

His shouts barely audible above the ROAR of the fall.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SWEEPING PAN. GOMA'S VOICE REVERBERATES, crystal clear, hollow, all embracing -- divine-like.

GOMA'S VOICE
I HAVE GOLD!

CONTINUED:

THE SORCERER

Raises a hand and the beach goes quiet.

GOMA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
TATA! TATA OLSSON! I HAVE GOLD!

The Sorcerer lets out a loud MOAN of fanatical joy. The natives echo with reverential CLAMOR. The Boy beats on the TOM-TOM -- news of the white mans' failure quickly spreading.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

The group looks on. Cacavelli eyes Olsson.

CACAVELLI
Your protege is calling you, Reverend.

CAMERA PANS with their gaze to the beach. The Sorcerer rallies the natives, turns to the cliff, defiant, chanting the three distinct phrases, louder and louder.

NATIVES
"Omga nan lui! Selenga lami sasso endi serendui, omanga se."
"A great voice will come! Will push all the white men, Back into the sea!"
(bis)

Olsson scans the beach.

OLSSON
God help us...

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

INT. ROSETTI'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

The walls are covered with butterfly specimens in glass displays. Eva and Mme Delafosse assists Cacavelli stitch Rosetti’s temple.

EXT. RESIDENCE TERRACE - NIGHT

Deveaux looks through the telescope.

VIEW THROUGH TELESCOPE:

The beach populated by fire lights. A large circle of NATIVES dances around the Sorcerer. He leads them with a panther skin over his head. FOOTSTEPS.

BACK TO SCENE:

Deveaux turns from the telescope, sees Eva approach through the lawn.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
How's Philippe?

EVA
A few stitches...he'll survive.
How are you?

Deveaux leans on the balustrade, nods toward the river.

DEVEAUX
One man dead, another one beyond my reach...

Eva puts her hand on his.

EVA
You can't blame yourself.

DEVEAUX
Can't I? You wanted to know what killed my wife and son? I'll tell you: arrogance. I'm good at that.

EVA
I find that hard to believe.

DEVEAUX
The writing was on the wall! Send your families back home, they told us. I refused ... If I could not control one township, I had no business being Prefect! My arrogance killed my family and now it will kill Goma as well.
(beat)
I moved too fast.

EVA
You moved!

Deveaux looks at her. It's true. And yet, hardly a relief. He turns back to the island as WE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ISLAND - NIGHT

Goma lies on the ground, curled to a knot. Wet, shivering, covering his ears from the ROAR OF THE FALL.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A towering, two-hundred foot tree crashes down with explosive force. An army of WARRIORS attack the fallen giant with machetes and axes, begin trimming it.

CONTINUED:

The Sorcerer stands on high ground.

NATIVES
"Omga nan lui!
Selenga lami sasso,
Endi serendui, omanga se!"
(bis)

Ritual lumbering.

EXT. BRAZZAVILLE, MARKET ALLEY - NIGHT

A BLACK SOLDIER chats with a flirting young Bakongo woman. He is suddenly gagged from behind and dragged away by several Bakongo men.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The soldier is dragged through the parting crowd. They tie him to a sacrificial totem. The Sorcerer sprinkles powders at him. A STRONG MÉKÉE WARRIOR lifts a sacrificial knife, CUTS HIS HEART OUT, lifts it to the CLAMORING CROWD.

EXT. RESIDENCE, TERRACE - DAY

SHOTS. On the breakfast table, Deveaux's meal has gone untouched. Djo and Mokoka stand by quietly. Rosetti -- a blood-soaked dressing on his temple -- brews tea, takes it to Deveaux at the balustrade, facing the river, balancing his weight on the balls of his heels. He has not shaved.

Delafosse reads a telegram, the contents of it obviously already known to Deveaux. He turns to Gilbert who waits flanked by Legat and the Treasury Official.

DELAFOSSE
(incredulous)
You can't be serious! A powerful tugboat could not reach him and you think a bloody whale boat--?!

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Man-powered ... Lighter ... Downstream ... It makes a lot more sense, Major.

DELAFOSSE
Does it?
(eyes trio, scornful)
You'll be manning the vessel yourselves, I suppose?

The Inspector snatches the telegram back from Delafosse.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
We are not sailors, Major!

CONTINUED:

Delafosse lets out a contemptuous snort. Gilbert turns to Deveaux.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT (CONT'D)
The order from Paris is abundantly clear, Governor: I must attempt to salvage the gold and you are to assist me!

DEVEAUX
No man under my command will be ordered across the rapids in a bloody rowboat, Mr. Gilbert!

The Treasury Official produces a second telegram.

TREASURY OFFICIAL
Actually, that won't be necessary, Excellency ... We already have four volunteers.

This gets Deveaux's attention. The Treasury Official hands the second telegram to Deveaux.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
All we need is your signature to make the release official.

DEVEAUX
Release?

FIRST OFFICIAL
Boda Prison. Those four fellows have been found guilty of treason and await execution.

Deveaux stares at the telegram, stunned.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Paris has offered them a full pardon if the gold is retrieved.
(beat)
The Minister of Finance is taking full responsibility.

Deveaux bristles at the fait accomplis.

DEVEAUX
Sergeant Goma as well, I suppose.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Sorry..?

DEVEAUX
Our man on the island, Inspector!

CONTINUED:

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Oh, that, well... I've no instructions concerning the fate of your native, Governor...
(off Deveaux's look)
However ... You have my personal assurance that every effort will be made to rescue him as well.

DEVEAUX
No, Inspector. I don't give a damn how *abundantly clear* your orders may be! Sergeant Goma will board that whaler ahead of the gold or there will be no expedition!

Gilbert glances at the officials, cleans his monocle with a thin smile.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
Very well, Governor ... So be it.

INT. PRISON TRANSPORT - DAY

FOUR NEGRO CONVICTS in shackles rock with the motion. Ashen-faced, vacant-eyed men, wasted by the rigors of prison. Sunlight through wooden slats bar their glistening torsos. One of the men is the OLD CONVICT of noble bearing.

The vehicle comes to a stop. VOICES outside. After a moment, the back door opens and DUBOIS appears in the glare of sunlight. TWO GENDARMES prod the blinded prisoners with their rifles and they shuffle out...

EXT. CLIFF - CONTINUOUS

...with a heavy JINGLING of chains. Faded lettering on the side of the truck reads "SERVICE PENITENCIERE, BODA."

Several GENDARMES keep the Colonials in line. Deveaux, Delafosse, Rosetti, Cacavelli, Olsson, Eva, as well as a contingent of Delafosse's soldiers stand near the void.

Gilbert, Legat and the Treasury Official keep their distance, crowding the shade of a single parasol.

Rosetti steps into CLOSE-UP, gazes worried at:

WHAT HE SEES: THE MULTITUDE OF NATIVES ON THE BEACH HAS GROWN TO SEVERAL THOUSAND. A BEEHIVE-LIKE MURMUR FILLS THE AIR.

BACK TO SCENE 191: The four prisoners are brought forward. Deveaux is taken aback when he recognizes the Old Convict.

DEVEAUX
Miss Olsson, kindly ask this man if he understands the bargain they have struck.

CONTINUED:

Eva questions the man in Lingala.

The Old Convict's voice is like well-worn silk, incongruously serene. Deveaux listens, then looks to Eva for translation.

EVA
He understands ... He hopes at the bottom of the river he may find the dignity the White Man has denied him on land.

Deveaux holds the old man's gaze, troubled. Eva stalks away, bristling. Deveaux nods halfheartedly and Dubois shoves the prisoners down the ravine, follows them with a half dozen gendarmes -- guns at the ready.

WHAT FOLLOWS INTERCUT BETWEEN DEVEAUX'S GROUP ON THE CLIFF, GOMA ON THE ISLAND, THE WHALE-BOAT ON THE RIVER AND THE NATIVES ON THE BEACH:

BEACH: THE FOUR PRISONERS REACH THE SHORELINE, CLIMB INTO THE WHALE-BOAT. THE OLD CONVICT TURNS TO LOOK TOWARD THE CLIFF.

CLIFF: DEVEAUX SEEMS TO MEET HIS EYE.

BEACH: WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, THE GENDARMES GIVE THE VESSEL A POWERFUL SEND OFF. A CLAMOR RISES FROM THE NATIVES MASSED ON THE BEACH.

THE CONVICTS PADDLE VIGOROUSLY. THE FIERCE CURRENT TOSSES THE WHALEBOAT LIKE A DRIFTING SPLINT. THE OLD CONVICT SEEMS SUDDENLY TEN YEARS YOUNGER, SHOUTING ENCOURAGEMENT AT THE MEN.

EVA'S EYES FIND DEVEAUX -- THE WORLD ON HIS SHOULDERS -- PRESSES HIS ARM IN SUPPORT.

THE CONVICTS PADDLE FURIOUSLY.

THE MASS OF NATIVES ON THE BEACH STAND SILENT, EXPECTANT. THE SORCERER -- HIS HEAD SLIGHTLY COCKED -- LISTENS, WAITING.

GOMA IMMERSED IN HIS DEAFENING WORLD, SCRAPS AND EATS FUNGI OFF THE WET STONES. HE SUDDENLY BECOMES AWARE OF:

THE WHALE-BOAT SHOOTS UP THROUGH THE WAVES, LIKE A DESPERATE FISH OUT OF WATER.

GOMA CLIMBS ON THE SHIPWRECK, ECSTATIC, FINDS A ROPE.

THE CONVICTS ROW FOR THEIR LIVES AND THEY KNOW IT. THE CURRENT IS BRUTAL, THE ISLAND STILL SOME THIRTY METERS AWAY.

GILBERT AND THE TWO OFFICIALS WATCH FROM THE CLIFF, FILLED WITH ANTICIPATION. THE INSPECTOR GLANCES AT DEVEAUX WHO IS BEGINNING TO BELIEVE IN THE ENTERPRISE, IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

OLSSON'S LIPS MOVE IN SILENT PRAYER.

CONTINUED:

GOMA BECKONS THE PRISONERS A SCARCE FIFTEEN METERS AWAY -- THEY SEEM AT ARM'S LENGTH -- RUNS UP AND DOWN THE WATER'S EDGE, CALLING EXCITED. TWELVE METERS, TEN, EIGHT...

THEN THE WHALEBOAT HITS A BOULDER AND ABRUPTLY OVERTURNS. THE PRISONERS DISAPPEAR UNDER THE STRONG EDDIES.

DEVEAUX STEPS TO THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF, AGHAST, NEARLY LOSES HIS FOOTING. EVA AND ROSETTI HOLD HIM BACK.

THE NATIVES RAISE AN ANGRY CLAMOR, POINT TO THE OVERTURNED BOAT AS IT BOBS DOWN-RIVER -- THE CONVICTS NOWHERE IN SIGHT.

GOMA -- FROZEN IN MID-GESTURE, MOUTH OPEN WIDE IN DISBELIEF -- LETS OUT AN AGONIZING CRY.

ON THE BEACH, GOMA'S HOLLOW SHOUT FILLS THE AIR. THE NATIVES CHANT THE THREE PHRASES, LOUDER AND LOUDER.

ROSETTI CATCHES SIGHT OF SOMETHING THAT MAKES HIM FROWN, POINTS TOWARD THE FOREST. DEVEAUX AND THE OTHERS TURN.

WHAT THEY SEE:

Several hundred natives carry the massive, stripped tree bole out of the forest and onto the beach. From a distance, it looks like a centipede.

THE SORCERER TURNS TO FACE THE CLIFF, GESTURES, DEFIANT.

DEVEAUX AND DELAFOSSE EXCHANGE GRAVE LOOKS.

THE BOLE HAS BEEN CARVED INTO A SENSUOUS, UNDULATED SHAPE. GOMA'S ALL-ENVELOPING, PLAINTIVE VOICE SEEMS TO ECHO THE NATIVES' CLAMOR. THE SORCERER SPINS, HOLDING THE SNAKES IN HIS FISTS, RUSHES THE CLIFF, CHALLENGING THE WHITE AUTHORITY ABOVE.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Delafosse's soldiers shift in place, HUMMING a sibilant beat. Legat eyes them, worried. Cacavelli enjoys his apprehension.

CACAVELLI
Relax, Legat, we don't take chances around here ... These are Manja ... We draft soldiers only from distant tribes who'd like nothing better than skin our local Bakongo alive.

Legat marvels at the perversity.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
They're itching for a kill, though...

Legat's relief vanishes. Deveaux turns to Delafosse.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Move out, Major ... Nothing more for us to do here today ... Our presence will only further fuel their discontent.
(drills holes into Gilbert)
Satisfied, Inspector?

Gilbert casts his eyes.

Lieutenant LeClerc gallops up on a heavily lathered horse, salutes.

LECLERC
Excellency.
(to Delafosse)
Major, Kouyou rebels have set fire to the Ouesso station ... They're on their way here now ... To...
(glances at Deveaux)
Hear The Voice.

Delafosse turns to Deveaux for direction.

DEVEAUX
Leave men posted on the access roads into town, Major ... They're to use their weapons only in strict self-defense.

DELAFOSSE
Yes, Sir.

Delafosse pulls LeClerc aside, they confer. The Treasury Inspector confronts Deveaux.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
That's it?! What about my gold?

DEVEAUX
Kindly step out of my way, Inspector.

Gilbert holds his ground, daring. Deveaux delivers him a stunning back-hand slap, then bulls past him to join Olsson.

T. INSPECTOR GILBERT
How dare you...?! Paris will learn of this outrage!

Deveaux ignores him. Delafosse dismisses LeClerc, looks at Deveaux, consternated.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Reverend, I think it might be advisable for you and your daughter to spend the night at the residence ... No telling how this situation may degenerate.

OLSSON
I appreciate your concern, Governor, but I cannot desert my people when they most need me.

Deveaux's eyes appeal to Eva.

EVA
Father is right ... Besides, the mission is the safest place for us.

DEVEAUX
Major, have two men escort the Reverend and Miss Olsson back to their mission.

OLSSON
That won't be--

DEVEAUX
That's an order, Reverend.

Olsson yields, heads for his motorcycle. Eva lingers. Deveaux nods reassuringly. She climbs behind her father and they ride off.

DELAFOSSE
Sir ... The soldier who we thought had deserted...

DEVEAUX
Yes...?

DELAFOSSE
His body was fished out near Matadi. His heart had been...ripped out.

Deveaux, sobered, turns on his heels, climbs into the Renault, skids off. Delafosse and Rosetti exchange looks.

EXT. RESIDENCE, PANORAMIC - DUSK

A few loose strands of scarlet float over the distant mountains, underscored by a CHORUS OF CICADAS.

EXT. RESIDENCE TERRACE - DUSK

Deveaux peers into the telescope.

VIEW THROUGH TELESCOPE: TEN LONG, MÉKÉE CANOES WITH LIGHTED TORCHES GLIDE DOWNSTREAM (LEFT TO RIGHT).

EXT. RIVER - DUSK

In one of the canoes, a dozen Mékée warriors row to the counter-beat of the mungungus on board. In contrast to the low-pitched tom-toms on the beach, these have the sharp tone of newcomers.

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

The sea of natives hold torches, casting light on construction work of some sort. They shift silently in place. Like a tide of fire, swaying to the beat.

EXT. RESIDENCE TERRACE - SAME TIME

Deveaux pulls away from the telescope, worried.

EXT. RESIDENCE GROUNDS - LATER, NIGHT

Deveaux moves in the dark. Not a stroll, an inner search. He comes to Delafosse's bungalow. Through the screen, Delafosse can be seen at his desk, in his pajamas, writing -- his memoirs?

Deveaux moves to Rosetti's window. Rosetti is asleep at his desk. The crystal radio issuing STATIC beside him. Deveaux admires Rosetti's butterfly collection, then once again his attention turns to the tom-tom reaching from the river.

INT. AMPETI'S HUT - NIGHT

WE PULL Deveaux in. Ampeti sits in a corner, in the light of an oil lamp, smoking. He kneels beside her, takes her hands.

DEVEAUX
Forgive me.

She draws on her cigar, gazes at him from deep hollows AND WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOMA ON THE ISLAND - FIRST LIGHT

VERTICAL AERIAL APPROACH. Goma lies on his back, submerged in the roar of the fall. He brings his hands to his ears, shouts to the Heavens with rending force.

GOMA
Tata, senuli Goma! Tata! Tata Olsson sampe!!!

EXT. THE BEACH - SAME TIME

Thousands of natives react to...

CONTINUED:

GOMA'S VOICE
Tata Olsson sampe!!!

The Sorcerer stands erect, surrounded by his fellow Mékée warriors, wearing their distinct feathered head-dress.

SORCERER
Olsson senuli sampe!

The warriors raise their CRIES to the heavens.

NATIVES
OLSSON SENULI SAMPE!

The Sorcerer SHOUTS orders and a dozen or so Mékée warriors take off at a trot, to the beat of...

MÉKÉE WARRIORS
Olsson senuli sampe!
Olsson senuli sampe!

The Sorcerer's white orbs vibrate with excitement. He leads the chanting in the pale light of dawn.

NATIVES
"Omga nan lui!
Selenga lami sasso,
Endi serendui, omanga se."
"A great voice will come!
Will push all the white men...
Back into the sea!"
(bis)

Over and over -- like a mantra. Their chanting FADES LONG AFTER WE...

CUT TO:

EXT. MISSION - DAY

Olsson gazes across the manioc field, as if listening to the dying ECHO of the voices, then resumes working the patch.

LATER

Eva talks to the Native Old Man with elephantiasis. A line of ILL NATIVES queue behind him, but their numbers are far less than before. SHOUTS, she turns.

Namu and Leti approach with fear in their eyes.

NAMU & LETI
Tata, Tata Olsson!

Olsson comes out to the door. His gaze WIPES to the Mékée warriors trotting toward CAMERA. Olsson turns to Eva, alarmed.

CONTINUED:

OLSSON
Körning strax, Eva! Run!

EXT. RESIDENCE LAWN - DAY

Deveaux, Delafosse, LeClerc walk at a brisk pace toward the military truck loaded with soldiers. Deveaux is fuming.

DEVEAUX
You mean to tell me, Major, you can't hold back this... peregrination...without slaughtering the lot?!

DELAFOSSE
There are over three million blacks in French Congo, Sir, and barely two thousand of us. I'm afraid the odds of keeping them from flocking to the beach without using force are very slim, indeed.

DEVEAUX
Well, we will do our utmost, Major. Make your presence felt on all access to the river but don't allow yourself to be provoked. I've partaken in one massacre too many as it is.

DELAFOSSE
Sir.

He climbs on the truck, LeClerc drives off.

Rosetti approaches across the lawn. Deveaux reads the dread on his face.

DEVEAUX
What is it?!

EXT. MISSION ROAD - LATER

Deveaux's Renault speeds skirting the manioc field. Rosetti is at the wheel. He points to a thick column of smoke ahead.

DEVEAUX
Cut across!

Rosetti leaves the road, the Renault bounces down hill, across the planted field. CAMERA CRANES TO REVEAL the mission buildings ahead, burnt to the ground.

INT. RENAULT

Deveaux takes in the devastation, Rosetti pulls up to the mission house. Not a sound. Olsson's motorcycle lies tossed aside. Deveaux steps down in dread of what he will find.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX
Keep the engine running...

He moves toward the smoldering buildings, is taken aback by the bodies of Namu and Leti bundled together on the steps of the verandah, hacked to pieces.

Deveaux moves round the house, stops, stunned and sickened.

The entire line of ill natives lie slaughtered in a fly-infested pool of drying blood.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Eva!
(no reply)
Reverend!

His ECHO bounces back from the tree line.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
EVA!!!

He heads for the chapel, Rosetti blows the horn, Deveaux turns.

ROSETTI
(pointing:)
There!

AS Eva emerges from the forest, blanched with shock. Deveaux waves Rosetti over, rushes to her. Eva falls into his arms, sobbing.

DEVEAUX
It's over ... It's all right, now.
Where is your father?

EVA
He was... Mékée took him...

DEVEAUX
Mékée?

EVA
They were like...mad.
(remembers)
The girls...!

Deveaux holds her gaze.

EVA (CONT'D)
Oh, no..!

She tries to brake loose, Deveaux holds her back.

DEVEAUX
There is nothing you can do for them now, Eva...

CONTINUED:

The Renault skids up. Rosetti throws the passenger door open, scans the smoldering devastation, clearly on edge. Eva breaks down.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
(to Rosetti:)
They took the Reverend.

He helps Eva in back of the automobile, climbs in front.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
We will find him, Eva. Let's go!

Rosetti drives off.

INT. RENAULT - SHORT TIME LATER

Speeding along the bumpy road. Eva clings to Deveaux, unable to stop the flood of tears.

ROSETTI
(signals ahead)
Sir!

The yellow postal truck nears the crossroad. Rosetti blows the KLAXON, steps on the accelerator.

The truck comes to a stop. Rosetti pulls up alongside it, hurries down to speak to the driver. Deveaux takes Eva's face.

DEVEAUX
Eva, listen ... I need you to go to the residence ... Tell Major Delafosse to bring his men to the cliff.
(Eva shakes her head)
Yes, you must go! Philippe and I will bring your father back. I promise. But we will need the major's help.
(wipes her tears)
Come.

He walks her to the truck, help her up.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
(to driver:)
Rush Miss Olsson to the residence.

Eva kisses him impulsively.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Go!

The truck drives off. Deveaux and Rosetti climb back into the Renault and take off in the opposite direction.

EXT. CLIFF - DUSK

The beach twinkles with thousands of fire-lights, swaying to the steady rhythm of numerous TOM-TOMS.

The Renault rolls up with headlights off, Deveaux and Rosetti scurry to the edge of the cliff, observe the scene below.

THE MEKEE WARRIORS

Dance before the Sorcerer's hut -- reverence laced with fanaticism. The Sorcerer emerges from his hut wearing his panther headdress and ritual attire.

BACK TO SCENE 208

Deveaux motions Rosetti to follow and starts sliding down the ravine. Rosetti obeys, not one bit happy about it. They stop on a recess, Deveaux moves a bush aside revealing...

WHAT THEY SEE:

SEVERAL SHOTS. The two-hundred-foot tree bole arched by a cord braided from creepers into a GIGANTIC BOW. An arrow made from a thinner bole is being hoisted onto the shaft with the help of a rig.

BACK TO SCENE 208

ROSETTI
Is that what I think it is...?

DEVEAUX
The good doctor can't say the natives lack imagination now.

Deveaux's face suddenly falls. Rosetti follows his gaze to:

OLSSON

Tied to the sacrificial totem. Much shouting and dancing around him. The Sorcerer agitates his arms, hurls his magic powders at the missionary.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE - SAME TIME

Delafosse reviews the armed men posted behind improvised barricades around the mansion.

The postal truck speeds down the access road, pulls up, Eva jumps down.

DELAFOSSE
(surprised)
Miss Olsson!

EXT. CLIFF - NIGHT

Deveaux and Rosetti make their way down the ravine to a lower relief. They hunker down to watch:

THE SORCERER

He approaches Olsson. The Strong Mékée Warrior unsheathes the ritual knife and the natives rise a frightful CRY to the Heavens. The boy pounds the tom-toms into a frenetic beat.

DEVEAUX (O.S.)
We don't have much time.

BACK TO SCENE 210

Rosetti observes through binoculars.

ROSETTI
Why the Reverend of all people?

DEVEAUX
If you can't punish the White Man's God, slaughter his messenger. No time to wait for the Major.

ROSETTI
Sorry..? You're not planning to go down there, are you, Sir?

DEVEAUX
No, not without you, of course, Secretary.

He smiles and starts down.

ROSETTI
(following:)
Brilliant...

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Deveaux and Rosetti rush along the bottom of the ravine.

DEVEAUX
(stops)
Wait here for my signal. Then join me by the Reverend.

And he is gone. Rosetti crouches down, feeling very much alone.

The Sorcerer raises the knife and the clamor peaks.

Deveaux crawls to the back of the Sorcerer's hut, produces his lighter, sets fire to the thatch -- it catches quickly. He signals Rosetti and heads for the sacrificial pole.

CONTINUED:

Rosetti makes his way through the bushes.

The Sorcerer's boy is the first to notice the flames. He gives the alarm, natives rush to put out the spreading fire.

Deveaux and Rosetti reach Olsson. Deveaux gestures the surprised Reverend to keep quiet, undoes his ties. The blind Sorcerer stands just a few feet away, seems to be looking straight at them. Deveaux and Rosetti pull the Reverend along, make a run for it.

Rosetti, Deveaux and Olsson scramble up the ravine. Half way up, Olsson is out of breath, Deveaux holds out his hand.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Grab my hand, Reverend!

OLSSON
(pointing behind him:)
Watch out!

Deveaux turns, Rosetti has lost his footing, is crashing down the slope. Deveaux snatches him up by the collar, stealing him from death below but...

The Sorcerer, alerted by the NOISE of cascading debris, spins back, lets out an enraged CRY.

The Strong Mékée Warrior sees the men climbing the ravine.

STRONG MÉKÉE WARRIOR
Embe, embe Tata malawii!

The natives forget the fire, chase after the fugitive with torches. Arrowheads are set on fire. The Mékée carry long spears.

Deveaux, Olsson and Rosetti scamper up hill. Flaming arrows whoosh past them like shooting stars.

EXT. CLIFF - NIGHT

Deveaux, Olsson and Rosetti reach the top, make a run for the Renault. The natives after them in a murderous rage.

Deveaux shoves Olsson into the convertible. Rosetti turns the crank, the engine starts. He jumps behind the wheel, drives off -- a bit too excitedly -- the motorcar bucks and stalls. Rosetti jumps down, turns the crank again - nothing.

ROSETTI
(glancing back:)
Come on, you piece of junk!

Dead. Looks at Deveaux, helpless.

DEVEAUX
Again!

CONTINUED:

Rosetti turns the crank once more -- nothing -- turns to the charging Mékée warriors.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
(grabs Olsson)
Come, Reverend, can't stay here!

Rosetti turns the crank, frantic.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Rosetti, forget it!
(Rosetti insists)
ROSETTI, DAMN YOU!!!

Rosetti takes after Deveaux, crank in hand. Headlights appear ahead, over the crest of the road.

INT. ARMY TRUCK - NIGHT

Leclerc drives, Delafosse rides next to him. A dozen RIFLEMEN in the back. He sees the men ahead -- the warriors on their heels.

DELAFOSSE
Faster!

LeClerc steps on it, Delafosse hangs out the window, armed with his service revolver. Addresses the riflemen in back.

DELAFOSSE (CONT'D)
Two rounds above their heads!
(the riflemen aim)
FIRE!

SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

The rifles fire.
The warriors -- bullets WHIZZ over their heads. They come to a stop.
The soldiers reload.
Deveaux helps a panting Olsson along.
Rosetti hurls the crank at the pursuing party.
Delafosse fires his revolver, throws his door open to receive Deveaux and Olsson.
Rosetti catches up.
Deveaux shoves Olsson in, then Rosetti. The cabin is full, Deveaux slams the door shut.

ROSETTI
Sir!

Deveaux jumps on the step-up.

DEVEAUX
Go, GO!!!

The truck speeds away.
Natives set fire to the Renault.

CONTINUED:

The Strong Mékée throws his spear high into the air.
Deveaux holds on to the window frame.
The sibilant spear travels through the night.
Rosetti looks back.

ROSETTI
What about your motorcar, Sir?!

DEVEAUX
Never mind the bloody--!

A deaf THUMP is heard, Deveaux clasps Rosetti's arm, livid.

ROSETTI
Major!

Deveaux slips down, Delafosse helps Rosetti hold him up. The truck speeds away, Deveaux nailed to the door by the spear through his left lower back.

ROSETTI (CONT'D)
We've got you, Sir!

Deveaux looks back at...

The Renault on fire being pushed over the edge of the cliff.

EXT. ISLAND - NIGHT

Goma looks puzzled at the small ball of fire falling silently from the cliff, reflected in his eyes. PUSH AND

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RESIDENCE, LONG - NIGHT

AS thick clouds veil the moonlight.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Mme. Delafosse crochets. Eva paces by the window.

EVA
My God, how can you knit in a
moment like this, madame?!

MME DELAFOSSE
It calms me down!

Through the open library door, Cacavelli can be seen sitting on the billiard table, drinking Deveaux's cognac, banking the red ball in a monotonous path around the stained felt.

A clock above the lead soldiers chimes eleven. LIGHTNING lights up the grounds.

EVA
Where on Earth are they?!

CONTINUED:

MME DELAFOSSE
They'll soon be back, you'll see. Have some tea, dear.

THUNDER explodes over the residence, startling the women. It amuses Cacavelli who grins over the rim of his glasses, pours himself another shot. HEAVY RAIN begins DRUMMING on the rooftops. ENGINE SOUND, Eva rushes out to the...

EXT. TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Is immediately soaked. Sees headlights bounce up and down the access road.

INT. TRUCK - SAME TIME

Rosetti rides on the step-up, Deveaux lies across Olsson's lap, the stub of the broken spear protruding from his lower back. The truck cuts through the lawn, past Eva who chases after the vehicle.

It stops below the terrace. Rosetti and LeClerc help Olsson and Delafosse carry Deveaux into the mansion.

INT. RESIDENCE STUDY - NIGHT

Eva chases in after them, alarmed.

EVA
My God, what happened?! Is he shot?!

Cacavelli joins them from the library, takes in the situation.

CACAVELLI
Some hot water!

They hurry through to the...

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cacavelli helps lay Deveaux on his good side.

CACAVELLI
And more light...!

Eva raises the flame on the oil lamp, gasps at seeing her father's bloody shirt.

OLSSON
I'm all right...
(re Deveaux:)
He's not, I'm afraid.

Cacavelli tears Deveaux's shirt open. Eva gasps at the sight of the spearhead protruding from Deveaux's abdomen.

CONTINUED:

OLSSON (CONT'D)
He saved my life.

Eva collects herself, removes Deveaux's boots.

EXT. THE RESIDENCE, WIDE - SHORT TIME LATER

LIGHTNING floods the grounds, THUNDER rattles nerves.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Deveaux lies on the bed with eyes closed. Mme. Delafosse carries in the steaming kettle. Cacavelli inspects the wound.

CACAVELLI
Better get some brandy as well...

DEVEAUX (O.S.)
What's the matter, Doctor?
(Cacavelli looks at him)
Lost your cold blood?

CACAVELLI
(grins)
Not for me, Governor... For you.

He motions Rosetti to hold the lamp closer, inspects the protruding back-jagged spearhead.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
There is only one way this beauty is coming out ... And it's not the way it came in, I'm afraid.

He washes his hands.

EVA
Bad?

CACAVELLI
Depends what internal damage that thing's caused...

He touches the blade, Deveaux lets out an angry GROAN.

DEVEAUX
I had internal damage, I'd be dead already, Doctor! Get that bloody--!

Cacavelli has shoved the blade through, Deveaux cries out and passes out.

Mme Delafosse arrives with brandy. Cacavelli takes a shot, then pours some freely on Deveaux's bleeding wound. Deveaux GROANS. Eva drills holes into Cacavelli.

CONTINUED:

CACAVELLI
He'll live ... A tight bandage ... Rest.

Eva goes to it. Cacavelli wipes the five-prong blade clean on Deveaux's discarded shirt. Delafosse studies it to the light.

DELAFOSSE
Mékée?

Cacavelli defers to Olsson.

OLSSON
I believe so, yes...

DELAFOSSE
Never known Mékée to venture west of the Shanga.

OLSSON
I saw Bokiba and Kouyou on the beach ... Even a number of Mossaka.

DELAFOSSE
Hmm... All traditional adversaries.

CACAVELLI
(washing hands:)
That's rather inauspicious, don't you think, Mayor...? Goma's voice making them set centuries of murderous acrimony aside? I'd round up what men I have, I were you.

DEVEAUX (O.S.)
There will be no...retaliation...

All turn to Deveaux.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
Secure the grounds but do not attack the natives... Is that clear?

DELAFOSSE
Yes, Sir.

OLSSON
I must return to my mission, Governor.

EVA
No, father!

CONTINUED:

OLSSON
Our people deserve a Christian burial, child... I'll be alright. They won't be back.

EVA
(collecting her things:)
Then, I'm coming with you...

OLSSON
That's out of the question.
(his look to Deveaux a pleading)
You're needed here.

DEVEAUX
Your father is right, Eva. Some of the Major's men will escort him and help him burry your dead.

OLSSON
Thank you, Excellency.

He goes. Deveaux pats Eva's hand reassuringly.

DEVEAUX
He'll be alright... I promise.

Eva nods, unconvinced. Deveaux turns to Cacavelli.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
How'bout some more of that brandy, Doctor? This time, in a glass.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

It has stopped raining, the moon is out. Much activity around the bow -- construction work of some sort. The sea of natives hold torches, shift in place; like a tide of fire. Spooky.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Fonseca and two of his guards on horseback, watching from the cliff. Fonseca curses, looks toward...

EXT. ISLAND - NIGHT

Moonlit. Goma on it -- sailing, it appears -- on a river of quicksilver.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESIDENCE, PANORAMIC - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The forest is quiet -- as if the entire fauna had fled. Only the distant, unrelenting TOM-TOMS punctuate the night.

INT. RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eva sleeps on the sofa. Deveaux awake, dry-lipped, feverish, inspects the dressing on his side. He reaches for the water pitcher -- empty -- painfully slips out of bed.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Deveaux shuffles in, drinks from the ladle in a water barrel. HORSES APPROACHING. He listens, moves to the...

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

He raises the flame in the oil lamp on his desk, opens the terrace doors. Fonseca and his two armed Forestiere Guards materialize on the moonlit lawn. Fonseca dismounts the lead horse, stalks up the steps to the terrace AS...

EXT. TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Deveaux emerges from the residence. Fonseca glances at the lamps being lit in Delafosse's and Rosetti's bungalows, eyes Deveaux's bloody bandage.

FONSECA
That looks pretty nasty, Excellency.

DEVEAUX
Baron... What can I do for you at this most uncivil hour?

FONSECA
Perhaps you should be asking what I can do for you?

Deveaux starts back. Fonseca follows him uninvited into the...

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

...pulls off his riding gloves, cocks his head toward the river.

FONSECA
I don't think you realize what we've got brewing down there.
(sees Cognac bottle)
May I?

He does not wait for license, pours himself a sniffer.

DEVEAUX
What ever it may be, Baron, I don't see how it concerns you--

CONTINUED:

FONSECA
Two thirds of my natives have left their stations - three of them are actually on fire as we speak - and you don't see how this concerns me?!

DEVEAUX
The way you've been bleeding these people dry, I would have thought you'd be prepared for the unrest you're facing.

Fonseca studies closely the lead soldiers on the shelf.

FONSECA
I'm sure you meant to say the unrest we are facing, didn't you?
(a mordant look)
We're on the same boat, Governor ... Like it or not.

He downs his drink.

DEVEAUX
We may be on the same boat, Baron, but we hardly behold the same offing.

Fonseca chuckles amused, helps himself to more Cognac.

FONSECA
How did you draw this post, Deveaux? Usually Paris sends down here the hopeless, burnt out cases. But you... You're wasting your talents in this godforsaken hole.

DEVEAUX
I chose to come here, Baron... I spent the happiest days of my life in this godforsaken hole.

FONSECA
Then it can't be too hard for you to grasp that the only way to deal with this situation is to shoot the man.

DEVEAUX
I beg your pardon?

Fonseca downs his cognac.

FONSECA
Your nigger on the island ... He's doomed anyhow.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

FONSECA (CONT'D)
Rid yourself of him before this mess gets so out of hand not even I will be able to fix it.

Deveaux fights the desire to rip out his throat. Fonseca becomes impatient, his voice rises several decibels.

FONSECA (CONT'D)
In forty-eight hours your divine friend has drawn so many thicklips the beach is beginning to resemble an anthill, forcrissakes! You know they've built themselves some absurd contraption they plan to shoot a rope at your man with?

DEVEAUX
They can't do much worse than we have, can they?

FONSECA
You're missing my point! Can't you see our authority is at stake?

DEVEAUX
(matching decibels)
At stake is the life of a sergeant in the French army, Baron! Our authority will be in question...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eva wakes to the men's shouting match.

137DEVEAUX (O.S.)
...the day we fail to take notice of such details!

She hurries down the corridor...

FONSECA (O.S.)
I judged you too quickly: you're even more naive than Dulac!

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Fonseca paces, bristling.

FONSECA
Have you ever seen a native revolt, Governor?! Few things can get that ugly, take my word ... These animals are capable of savagery as to give God Himself pause ... I've seen them smash the heads of newborns and eat their brains while their hearts were still beating!
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

FONSECA (CONT'D)
These are not human beings like me an you! They're barely this side of primates!

Eva has appeared at the doorway, at Fonseca's back.

FONSECA (CONT'D)
Even Dulac, dense as he was, in the end understood we have no choice but to impose our will on these creatures any way we can!

Deveaux picks up the red file.

DEVEAUX
Dulac may not have been strong enough to resist your bullying, Baron, but he kept his Greek mythology well brushed up.

Fonseca grunts, at a loss, notices Deveaux's wound bleeding. Deveaux drops the file before him, mops his beaded brow.

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
I've unearthed so much filth bearing your name you will come to regret ever setting foot on this nation, Baron.

Fonseca peruses the file, quickly gets the picture, shuts it with a contemptuous snort.

FONSECA
Congo is not a nation, Governor. Congo is a business.

The men hold each other's icy gaze. Finally, Fonseca pulls his riding gloves back on.

FONSECA (CONT'D)
You've been told how to deal with your nigger ... Do it or someone will.

He reaches for his sun helmet, sees Eva.

FONSECA (CONT'D)
Well...
(fleeting sneer at Deveaux)
I owe you and apology, Miss Olsson: had I known you were in such... burning need of male companionship, I would at once have made myself available.

CONTINUED:

He turns on his heels, stalks across the terrace, ignoring Delafosse and Rosetti making their way up in their pajamas, holding weapons. Deveaux ambles after him.

DEVEAUX
Baron...!
(Fonseca turns)
So far, you'll just lose your concession ... But you so much as cast a stone in the direction of that island and I'll make sure you also rot behind bars.

FONSECA
(a thin sneer)
Do your job for you? Not a chance.

He mounts his horse.

FONSECA (CONT'D)
One small incident and that powder keg down there will blow up in your face ... I rather like those odds.

He spurs his mount, Deveaux watches him and his men gallop off into the night. Then turns and meets Eva's eyes.

HARD CUT TO:

THE SUN

A shimmering ball of fire rising above the forest.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

The Sorcerer stands outside his hut. The line of golden sunlight creeps down the high-relief tattoos on his face.

EXT. ISLAND - SAME TIME

Goma, hunkered down, shivers under the moisture sailing past like liquid voile. He suddenly lets out a drawn out, angry GROAN.

EXT. BEACH - SAME TIME

Goma's VOICE ECHOES AS the Sun touches the Sorcerer's eyelids. His milky eyes open slowly. He lets out a joyful MOAN. The boy beats on the tom-tom. The Mékée warriors CHANT.

WIDE. FIVE THOUSAND NATIVES RESPOND WITH A HAIR-RAISING CLAMOR.

EXT. PATH IN THE FOREST - SAME TIME

Overlooking the beach. Fonseca and his Two Guards watch the scene from their horses.

CONTINUED:

FONSECA
Up close. Don't miss.

The men spur their mounts down the path.

ON THE ISLAND - EARLY MORNING

Goma marches back and forth before the broken gold crates. But in a somber mood -- the stamina, the pride gone from his gait. He sits on one of the crates. A rainbow shimmers on the drifting drizzle. Beauty that could harbor no evil.

ON THE EACH - DAY

The Sorcerer agitates his arms and the tom-tom players switch to a one-two, monotonous beat. Hundreds of natives take their cue from it and pull on ropes.

EXT. SECOND PATH IN THE FOREST - SAME TIME

Fonseca's guards across a stream, gallop up a gully, to a fallen tree where they dismount. The First Guard takes a hunting rifle with telescopic viewing from its leather holster, shoulders it. They continue on foot through the underbrush.

ON THE BEACH - SAME TIME

The Natives pulling rope REVEAL they are slowly bending the huge bow.

IN THE FOREST - SAME TIME

The Guards come to a promontory overlooking the beach.

WHAT THEY SEE:

The crossbow-like contraption set at a forty-five-degree angle, aimed at the island. A harness is rigged to the cord being pulled by the Natives. Mékée warriors war-dance around it. The formidable arrow rests on the shaft, attached to a coiled rope long enough to reach the target.

The bow shaft continues to bend, CREAKING OMINOUSLY. Wooden wedges are shoved into stop crevices to lock the discharging mechanism.

EXT. RESIDENCE TERRACE - DAY

Rosetti climbs the steps to the terrace, buttoning up his uniform. He uncovers the lens of the telescope, aims it at the beach, focuses it on...

POV THROUGH TELESCOPE:

Hundreds of Natives pull on the rig, arming the crossbow.

BACK TO SCENE 244:

CONTINUED:

Rosetti pulls back, turns toward the residence.

ROSETTI
Excellency!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The natives' CLAMOR reaches fever pitch as the bow arches to its breaking point, charged with enormous energy.

The Sorcerer holds his arms up in the air. ALL FALL SILENT.

EXT RESIDENCE TERRACE - DAY, SAME TIME

Eva helps Deveaux, in pajamas, slippers and robe-de-chambre, join Rosetti at the telescope. Deveaux looks through it.

WHAT HE SEES

The Strong Mékée Warrior approaches the bow's triggering device.

DEVEAUX (V.O.)
I hope they make it.

BACK TO SCENE 246:

Eva holds his arm. Rosetti looks at them.

EXT. BEACH - SAME TIME

The Natives pull. The Strong Mékée halts them with his signal, pulls the safety. The contraption reacts with a THUNDEROUS release of force.

SEVERAL SHOTS. TIME STRETCHES AS the arrow sails and WHIZZES through the skies; the rope of creepers uncoils with blurring speed; the Natives CLAMOR louder than ever; the Sorcerer's wide open, glazed eyes wait.

ON THE ISLAND

Goma turns to the SOUND. Sees the dash of the arrow flying toward him, in awe.

IN THE FOREST

Tree tops sway to an Westerly gust of wind.

The heavy rope sails on, but drifts, downwind.

EXT. TERRACE - SAME TIME

Deveaux looks through the telescope, steps back from the lens, eager.

DEVEAUX
Come on, come on, come on!

ON THE ISLAND - WIDE

Expectation stretches time until finally the arrow splashes down, some thirty yards downstream from the island.

Goma cannot believe his eyes, runs to the water's edge, just now realizing what just happened, turns to the beach, in awe.

EXT. TERRACE - SAME TIME

Deveaux stares in disbelief, ecstatic.

DEVEAUX
I'll be damned...

Eva looks into the telescope.

WHAT SHE SEES:

The Natives recover rope.

BACK TO SCENE 252:

EVA
They're going to try again.

She yields the telescope, Rosetti looks through it.

ROSETTI
They are, Sir!

Deveaux marches into the residence.

DEVEAUX
I must be there if they succeed!

Eva starts after him.

EVA
Gaston, you can't!

EXT. FOREST PROMONTORY - SAME TIME

Fonseca's Guards crouch in the underbrush. The First Guard calibrates the rifle's telescopic view finder.

EXT. ISLAND - SAME TIME

Goma climbs on the wreck, strains to make out what's going on at the beach.

INT. RESIDENCE BEDROOM

Deveaux tries to fit his jacket. Eva calls out.

EVA
Philippe!

CONTINUED:

Rosetti hurries in, finds Eva holding Deveaux back. Deveaux leans on the bed, pale as chalk.

EVA (CONT'D)
Tell him he can’t move. He must lie down!

ROSETTI
Sir! Miss Olson is right--

Deveaux sees his bloody bandage.

ROSETTI (CONT'D)
Please....

Deveaux nods, drops on the bed, resigned. Eva runs her hand through his hair, pours a glass of water, nods at Rosetti who goes.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

SEVERAL SHOTS. The Natives finish coiling the rope. Hundreds others pull on the rig to recharge the mechanism. Again is CREAKS and YAWNS as the bow slowly bends.

The wedges are locked in place, securing stages.

Hundreds of Natives hoist the arrow up on the rig, fit it into place. The Strong Mékée Warrior, directs and they push the crossbow base to correct the aim slightly left.

The bow is bent to its limit.

EXT. FOREST PROMONTORY

The First Guard rests his elbow on a rock, takes aim...

THROUGH THE TELESCOPIC VIEWER

The cross hairs on the bow cord.

ON THE BEACH

The bow’s triggering mechanism is locked in place.

ON THE PROMONTORY

The First Guard takes a deep breath for steadiness, pulls the trigger. CRACK!

ON THE BEACH

The bullet strikes the cord where it meets one end of the bow: FILAMENTS TEAR.

The Sorcerer cocks his ear -- his milky orbs reel, uncertain.

EXT. FOREST PATH - SAME TIME

Fonseca watches through field glasses.

ON THE PROMONTORY

The First Guard reloads the bolt action rifle.

ON THE BEACH

The Strong Mékée Warrior readies to pull the triggering pin.

ON THE PROMONTORY

The First Guard lets out a second, ECHOING SHOT.

ON THE BEACH - SAME TIME

The bullet strikes the cord again. Now it snaps, releasing devastating force AND...

SEVERAL QUICK CUTS:

-The massive cord whips through the natives, wounding scores.
-The sideways released arrow shatters -- massive splinters maim, kill natives.
-The rope projects the sorcerer in the air, like a rag doll.

The Guards move off -- a BURST OF SUNLIGHT bounces off the rifle's metal.

The Sorcerer's Boy catches the FLASH OF LIGHT, SHOUTS the alarm, points. A horde of Natives charge at the promontory.

Mékée carry the Sorcerer into his hut. The Strong Mékée Warrior picks up the leopard mantle, rallies the warriors.

EXT. FOREST PATH

Fonseca turns his horse around, gallops away.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BRAZZAVILLE - DAY

An IVORY TRADER packing crates looks up and sees...

The plumed headdress of Mékée warriors appearing over the crest of the access road. Then the warriors themselves, led by the Strong Mékée wearing the mantle.

The Trader stops what he is doing. The warriors fire spears in the air. COLONIALS flee.

An arrow strikes the Ivory Trader through the base of his skull, killing him. The Warriors invade the main thoroughfare.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

145The black Gendarme severely chastised earlier by Dubois rushes in, with a wild look on his face. Dubois looks up from his work, annoyed.

DUBOIS
Speak, imbecile!

The Gendarme raises his machete. Dubois looks puzzled.

QUICK CUTS:

-The Gendarme's blade WHEEZES through the air.
-Dubois' head spins in SLOW-MO -- as if lost in space.
-Blood sprays the portrait of President Clemenceau.
-Dubois' decapitated torso keels over.

The Gendarme sheds his uniform jacket, grabs Dubois' pistol.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

TRAVELING with Fonseca's Guards as they make their escape on horseback, dodging low branches. The Natives chase after them, light on their feet.

The lead horse falls into a mud pit, the second one rears, throwing off his rider. The Guards turn in terror as the Natives wielding axes and machetes swarm over them.

INT. RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - DAY

Deveaux rests with eyes closed. Rosetti enters in a hurry.

ROSETTI
Pardon, Sir ... The Natives ...
They've attacked civilians in town.

DEVEAUX
Where is Miss Olsson?

EXT. PORT OF BRAZZAVILLE - DAY

Eva and Cacavelli help a dozen children with sleeping sickness debark from government whaleboats, together with a few WOMEN. SHOUTS, they turn.

A group of Mékée confront several TRADERS across the market square. Despite their superior numbers, the warriors appear intimidated by the white men. Suddenly, however, the more belligerent among them delivers a brutal machete blow to one of the colonials. The man draws a pistol, shoots the Mékée.

Cacavelli grabs Eva's hand.

CACAVELLI
Let's go!

CONTINUED:

EVA
I won't leave them behind, Doctor.

CACAVELLI
Eva, come with me!
(drags her off)
Now!

More Mékée flow into the market square -- fire in their eyes.

EVA
The Mékée will slaughter them--!

CACAVELLI
And there's nothing you or I can do about it!

EVA
I won't abandon them!

She shakes herself loose. Cacavelli knows he's beaten.

CACAVELLI
Damn you, girl!

He helps her gather and rush the natives across the square.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - DAY

Lieutenant LeClerc speeds down the main street. He sees Eva and Cacavelli leading the natives to the Health Ministry Dispensary building, veers toward them.

EXT. DISPENSARY - DAY

Cacavelli tries the door, locked, kicks it open, Eva hurries the natives inside.

The military truck skids to a stop on the other side of the square, LeClerc throws the passenger door open.

LECLERC
Miss Olsson!
(Eva turns)
I have direct orders from Governor Deveaux to take you [back]--!

A WHIZZ and an arrow burst through his chest. LeClerc regards it, puzzled, then freezes, dead.

Eva screams, starts toward him, Cacavelli pulls her back.

CACAVELLI
He's dead!

EVA
No!

CONTINUED:

CACAVELLI
EVA! He-is-dead!

He shoves her into the...

INT. DISPENSARY - DAY

TWO SOLDIERS bail from the truck, cover each other's retreat with gunfire, join Eva and Cacavelli, shut the door, barricade it with furniture, shatter window panes, open fire on the advancing Mékée. Several of them go down, the rest take cover.

CACAVELLI
Can you drive that truck?

EVA
Of course.

CACAVELLI
Wait here!

Eva watches him run out a back door, into an alley flanking a row of buildings.

A spear flies in through a window, kills one of the soldiers. The second one panics, Eva grabs him.

EVA
No! Stay! You stay!

She grabs the dead soldier's rifle, fires through the window. The Second Soldier returns to his post, resumes firing.

An arrow hits one of the native women. Eva goes to help her, reassures the children.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY

Cacavelli appears at the far end of the row of buildings, dashes to the truck. The Mékée spot him. He pulls LeClerc's body out the driver's door, takes off in a hail of arrows.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Cacavelli speeds out of the square, skids to a stop at the crossroads, looks toward the dispensary, then at the road out of town -- to safety. He steps on the gas.

INT. DISPENSARY - DAY

The second soldier falls wounded by an arrow. Eva sees the Mékée charging toward the building. She knows she is dead.

She puts down the rifle, holds hands with some of the perplexed children, prays. ENGINE SOUND -- she turns.

CONTINUED:

The truck skids to a stop at the back door, Cacavelli runs in.

CACAVELLI
Get those children in the truck!
Hurry, forchrissakes!

Eva rushes the children into the cage of the truck.

Cacavelli shatters a glass cupboard in the pharmacy, removes boxes of medicine, runs back out.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
Tryparsamide ... They'll need it.
(Eva stares, puzzled)
Take it!

Cacavelli dashes back inside, picks up the rifle.

EVA
What are you doing?!

CACAVELLI
Go!

He checks the chamber, pulls the remaining cartridges from the fallen soldiers' belts -- a half-dozen shots. The Mékée charge. Cacavelli fires through the window, brings down the two in the lead, the rest back away.

He turns -- Eva still there, frozen.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
Are you bloody deaf, girl?!

Eva's eyes flood. Cacavelli smiles -- closest thing to showing affection.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
I'll be alright.
(a roguish beat)
God will see to it, right?

Eva nods, tears flow.

EVA
Yes ... He will.

A warrior charges toward the truck. Cacavelli shoots him down.

CACAVELLI
Go!

Eva tosses the medicine into the truck, jumps behind the wheel. The vehicle SCREAMS into gear, bucks ahead.

CONTINUED:

Several Mékée chase after it, Cacavelli fires, brings two more down, the rest lose ground as the truck pulls away. WAR CRIES, he turns.

The front door CREAKS under pressure. Cacavelli slips the last cartridge into the chamber, takes out the liquor flask from his pocket, takes a stiff shot, waits. The front door shatters, the horde of Mékée wielding machetes, push the barricade aside.

CACAVELLI (CONT'D)
Hopeless mammals...

He sucks the muzzle and we...

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Eva speeds away -- A SHOT IS HEARD -- she looks in the rear view mirror, the Mékée overrun the dispensary. She steps on the accelerator. Several children pressed to the rear window watch her wide-eyed.

EXT. CORN FIELD - DAY

Olsson on his motorcycle, speeds through it. He sees the truck's trail of dust on the road ahead, realizes Eva is behind the wheel, sounds his KLAXON.

TRAVELING WITH THE TRUCK

Eva sees Olsson cutting through the field, brings the truck to a stop. Olsson pulls alongside. Eva runs out, breaks down in his arms.

EVA
Oh, father!

INT. RESIDENCE, STUDY - DAY

Deveaux, Delafosse and Rosetti read telegrams.

DELAFOSSE
(re telegram:)
Fort Lamy, Sir. They held off a major attack. Seventeen casualties.

DEVEAUX
Natives?

DELAFOSSE
Between two and three hundred killed ... Still unclear, Sir.

Deveaux casts his eyes. ENGINE SOUND, he looks out.

The military truck pulls up the access road.

CONTINUED:

Deveaux goes out, puzzled.

EXT. RESIDENCE LAWN - DAY

The local natives crowd the truck, look curiously at the foreign-looking children. Eva and Olsson step down. Deveaux, Rosetti and Delafosse join them.

DEVEAUX
Where is the Doctor?

Eva chokes.

EVA
He...saved our lives...

Deveaux embraces her, looks around for...

DELAFOSSE
Lieutenant LeClerc?

Olsson shakes his head sorrowfully. Eva and Mme Delafosse tend to the wounded mother. Deveaux turns his heavy gaze to the river.

EXT. VIEW THROUGH TELESCOPE - SUNSET

Fires rage in town. WIPE TO: thousands of natives amassed on the plains, half way to Brazzaville, chanting -- a sea of torches shifting to the beat of a relentless war mungungu.

EXT. RESIDENCE TERRACE - SAME TIME

Deveaux steps back from the eyepiece.

EXT. RESIDENCE GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

Two soldiers help Olsson unload his motorcycle from the truck. Deveaux and Rosetti make their way through hundreds of REFUGEE COLONISTS. More are arriving. Some wounded. Soldiers man barricades around the perimeter.

Delafosse strides up.

DELAFOSSE
My men are ready, Sir. With the cannon I think we have a fighting chance. Permission to deploy it.

Deveaux can't face him, nods, defeated. Delafosse glances at Rosetti, goes to it. A group of gendarmes appear disoriented.

DEVEAUX
Philippe...

Rosetti approaches.

CONTINUED:

DEVEAUX (CONT'D)
I'm naming you interim Chief of Police. Get those men organized.

Rosetti clicks his heels.

ROSETTI
Yes Sir! Thank you, Sir.

Deveaux moves on.

INT. RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

PUSH ON DEVEAUX tossing behind the mosquito net -- in the grip of...

FLASH - LAOS PREFECT'S RESIDENCE. CHRISTMAS TREE AND HOME ON FIRE. DEVEAUX'S WIFE AND SON TRAPPED INSIDE. A CEILING BEAM IN FLAMES FALLS ON THEM.

BACK TO BEDROOM SC 287

Deveaux gasps awake, soaked in perspiration -- like a drowning horse. He recovers his bearings at the sight of Eva sleeping beside him, drink water, quietly slips out of bed.

EXT. RESIDENCE GROUNDS - NIGHT

CAMERA WANDERS. Soldiers chat and smoke at the barricades. The TOM-TOMS beat like the pulse of the night. Colonists sleep around smoldering fires.

Deveaux ENTERS SHOT, thoughtful. His eyes fall on the canon aimed at the road, gleaming ominously in the moonlight. He stops, after a moment turns back, resolved.

INT. RESIDENCE STUDY - NIGHT

Deveaux's hands open the polished wooden box, grab the Remington hunting rifle and a fistful of cartridges.

EXT. GROUNDS BEHIND THE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Deveaux exits the mansion through a back door, armed with the Remington.

Ampeti sits by her hut, smoking. Her eyes shift to Deveaux's armed silhouette moving away. She draws on her cigar.

Deveaux pauses at the sight of the ember glowing in the dark, looks at her, then moves on.

EXT. THE PLAINS - NIGHT

Deveaux moves painfully across the vast, moonlit landscape.

CONTINUED:

TIME CUT:

Deveaux emerges from the night. He kneels, winded. He scans the scattered fires. A thousand natives down for the night.

Deveaux eyes the sky. Dark clouds glide in, hide the moon. He moves on. LIGHTNING flares above the forest. A sudden gust of wind buffets the bushes around him.

EXT. ISLAND - PRE-DAWN

Goma lies awake -- the voile of drifting mist sailing past his contemplative gaze.

EXT. KNOLL OVERLOOKING THE RIVER - DAWN

Deveaux's boots run along the crest of the grassy knoll. His armed silhouette drops into shooting position.

NOTE: ALL THESE SHOTS DESIGNED TO RECALL OPENING SEQUENCE.

Lightning illuminates Deveaux's hand as it pulls back the bolt of the Remington, slips the lustrous cartridge into the chamber. THE AMPLIFIED LOADING SOUND BLENDS WITH A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER.

EXT. ISLAND - DAWN

Goma admires the Heavens.

POV: STARS. COUNTLESS. ENORMOUSLY REMOTE. TWINKLING AGAINST THE VANISHING NIGHT. PULL BACK TO REVEAL DEVEAUX'S TELESCOPE AIMED AT ANOTHER SKY FROM THE VERANDAH OF THE RUSTIC BUSH-HOUSE. AND SHARING IN WONDER ITS EYE-PIECE -- IF THAT WERE POSSIBLE -- GOMA AND DEVEAUX, AGE NINE.

BACK TO GOMA

A CRACK OF THUNDER brings him out of his reverie. He SHOUTS, frustrated. WE HEAR NOTHING BUT THE ROAR OF THE FALL.

CUT TO:

DEVEAUX'S EYE

Pressed to the rifle’s telescopic sight. Goma's VOICE REVERBERATES, LOUDER AND LOUDER. Deveaux’s hand turns the focusing wheel, wipes the sweat off his brow. ALL SOUND FADES EXCEPT THE POUNDING OF HIS ACCELERATING HEARTBEAT.

Another gust of wind suddenly blows a cloud of dust in his face. He lifts his eyes to the heavy racing clouds, turns back to the eyepiece, turns the focusing ring.

POV THROUGH TELESCOPIC SIGHT:

Goma on the island comes into focus: motionless in the drifting drizzle, arms apart -- like a Christ.

DEVEAUX'S FINGER

Curls around the trigger.

POV THROUGH TELESCOPIC SIGHT:

Goma looking straight at CAMERA.

DEVEAUX

His face presses into the sight.

FLASH: FONSECA LECTURING DEVEAUX.

FONSECA
Shoot the man!

DEVEAUX

Blinks, eyes flooded.

WIDE: A FIVE-PRONG BOLT OF LIGHTNING ELECTRIFIES THE RIVER AND THE FOREST TO ITS CONFINES. A BOOMING CLAP OF THUNDER FOLLOWS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

BACK TO DEVEAUX: He eyes the skies.

FLASH: FONSECA AT THE RESIDENCE.

FONSECA (CONT'D)
He’s doomed, anyhow.

EXT. THE ISLAND - DAWN

The wreck. Goma. The gold crates. Surreal in the flash of endless LIGHTNING.

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - DAWN

And now...TORRENTIAL RAIN -- thicker than can seem possible -- begins to fall. Deveaux breaks down, confused, guilty.

FLASH: FONSECA -- NOT A FLASHBACK BUT A GHOST NOW -- SNEERING VICIOUSLY.

FONSECA
EVER SEEN A NATIVE REVOLT?!

Deveaux forces himself back to the eyepiece, lifts the Remington, aims.

FLASH: FONSECA SEEDING.

FONSECA (CONT'D)
SHOOT THE MAN!

Deveaux’ finger adjusts the elevation drum one click.

CONTINUED:

VIEW THROUGH TELESCOPIC SIGHT:

Goma listening, it seems. But to what? The ROAR OF THE FALL overwhelms all other sounds.

Deveaux, leans into the eyepiece, resolute, releases the weapon's safety -- but his eyes catch sight of...

WIPE TO:

EXT. CONGO RIVER - DAWN

Half-a-mile or so upriver -- alarmingly swollen, closing in fast. Uprooting trees and underbrush, shattering fishing rigs, sweeping cattle and costal shelters -- rushing toward the fall like a tsunami.

BACK TO SCENE 299

Deveaux stands, puzzled, then, aghast, SHOUTS.

DEVEAUX
GOMA!!!

EXT. ISLAND - DAWN

Useless. Goma motionless under the RAIN, unaware of his impending doom. He seems to be smiling toward the beach, then slowly turns toward the fall, puzzled by the nearing RUMBLING SOUND. PUSH.

AND THEN...the Congo river bounds at CAMERA over the fall.

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - DAWN

Deveaux stares breathless as...

HIS POV: THE RIVER WASHES OVER THE ISLAND, SUBMERGING IT OUT OF SIGHT.

AERIAL: THE RIVER FLOODING EVERYTHING ON ITS PATH.

IN TIME, THE ISLAND REEMERGES -- WIPED CLEAN. PULL BACK AND FADE TO BLACK...

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY (AERIAL)

Flying flush with the tree-line, closing in on the advancing puffs of black smoke rising through the tree-tops. SUPER:

"JULY 10, 1934"

And now we see the monster: the Congo Ocean Chemin de Fer, speeding along the narrow gauge track at a vertiginous 40 miles per hour!

CONTINUED:

The black Golwé locomotive pulling three sparkling new cars -- the first two navy blue, the last red and marked "First Class" in gold copperplate. All three replete with PASSENGERS.

We pull away. The brief convoy chases us laboriously, coughing smoke spasmodically into the blue sky. As the sound of the locomotive fades away, MUSIC fades in -- LA MARSEILLAISE played by the trio of wind blowers -- before we...

CUT TO:

EXT. BRAZZAVILLE TRAIN STATION - DAY

Deveaux, in immaculate whites, Eva, Rosetti, Olsson, Delafosse, Mme Delafosse, OFFICIALS, and SEVERAL DOZEN COLONIALS crowd the sparkling-new station, awaiting the arrival of the first train from Pointe Noire.

A banner suspended across the tracks explains this and marks the end of the line: "Km 512." The mood is festive. The wind blowers play faultlessly. Well, just about.

An even larger CROWD OF NATIVES, complete with a colorful tam-tam and convulsive DANCERS, bare witness from the other side of the tracks.

Finally, the distant WHISTLE all have been waiting for. The crowd breaks into CHEERS. Deveaux tries to shares the look of satisfaction Eva offers him and joins in the applause. But there is sadness in his eyes too. He stoops and lifts in his arms a beautiful SIX-year old BOY, tugging at Eva's breeches. She lifts onto her shoulders the four-year old GIRL trailing behind, smiles at Admiral Stark -- looking sharper than we've know him -- who clicks his heels at her respectfully.

The locomotive finally appears around a bend. Deveaux speaks into the boy's ear.

DEVEAUX
Gaston, this day you must remember.
The machine is here. At long last.

He raises his son above the fray.

The engine PUFFS, HISSES AND SCREAMS to a stop, enveloping all in a heavenly cloud of white steam. Passengers pour out, are met by friends and relatives.

Rosetti steps forward, greets a taught, robust man with an optimistic, upturned mustache debarking from the first class car -- DR. NEGREAU.

He seems a bit at a loss, but in all evidence happy to be here.

CONTINUED:

ROSETTI
Dr. Negreau?
(Negreau beams, takes Rosetti's hand)
Secretary Rosetti, Sir. Please, meet His Excellency, Governor Gaston Deveaux.

Negreau takes Deveaux's outstretched hand.

DEVEAUX
Welcome, Doctor ... Welcome to Brazzaville.

NEGREAU
Thank you, Excellency ... Thrilled to be here.

DEVEAUX
My wife, Eva...

NEGREAU
Madame...

DEVEAUX
Her father, Reverend Olsson.

NEGREAU
Reverend...

DEVEAUX
And this are our children, Gaston and Victoire.
(Negreau smiles)
The Reverend and my wife have waited a long time for your arrival, Doctor.

He puts his son down.

NEGREAU
Well, I'm here ... And ready to work.

He motions to a handsome woman making her way over, flanked by a beautiful YOUNG WOMAN of seventeen.

NEGREAU (CONT'D)
My wife Emma and our daughter, Celeste, Governor ...

Deveaux and Eva greet them. Rosetti's eyes are riveted to the young woman. Celeste blushes and neither can suppress telling smiles.

Eva is watching. If we detect a bite of jealousy in her eyes, it is only proprietary habit.

CONTINUED:

She gives Rosetti a teasing smile before introducing the new Chief of Health Services and his family to the rest of the official delegation.

The black STATION CHIEF removes the "BRAZZAVILLE" destination sign from the side of the car, replaces it with one reading "POINTE NOIRE," then checks his pocket watch, blows whistle, directs new passengers to their respective cars.

DEVEAUX
Heading back already, Chief?

STATION CHIEF
Congo is in a hurry, Your Excellency... Progress waits for no one

Deveaux smiles. Wary. He suddenly does a double-take, catches sight of Goma across the tracks -- a fleeting image immediately blurred by flying flags -- only to reveal, a moment later, a NATIVE RESEMBLING GOMA.

Deveaux searches a moment the crowd. Eva notices it.

EVA
What is it, darling?

Deveaux forces a smile, takes his son's hand, follows her. CAMERA RISES, FRAMES THE DISTANT CONGO RIVER, THE FALL, THE BARREN ISLAND...AS LEGEND ROLLS:

"To this day, the narrow-gauge Congo Ocean railroad remains the only means of land transportation between Brazzaville and the Atlantic outlet port of Pointe Noir."

"Throughout the decade of the 1920's the indigenous population of French Equatorial Africa staged violent protests against forced labor and the abuses by concessionaires and railroad officials. Together they became known as the Kongo-Ware war. By the time the last revolt was put down, the brutal repression had caused the death of more than 100,000 natives."

"Baron Casimiro Fonseca was found guilty of abuse of authority. He received a suspended one-year sentence and was forced to sell his concession. He left Africa a rich man."