

1682
How the Cape was won

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Acknowledgment
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EPISODE 1 - THE NEW COMMANDANT

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1 1510 A BEACH FRONT IN TABLE BAY.

FADE IN:

EXT. TABLE BAY BEACH - NIGHT

An overhead shot in dim moonlight. A Portuguese man of war rocks gently in Table Bay. Its sails rolled up for anchorage. A company of Portuguese soldiers, dressed in fighting gear, glints in the dark as it rests at ease on the beach. The iconic silhouette of Table Mountain looms ominously in the background.

We ZOOM IN on the group. One soldier lights a joint, takes a puff, and passes it to a companion.

SOLDIER #1

(EXHALING SMOKE)

Ah, that's better. Takes the edge off this godforsaken place.

SOLDIER #2

(ACCEPTING THE JOINT)

You said it. I've got a bad feeling about tonight.

SOLDIER #1

I wouldn't worry, Dom Francisco didn't become Viceroy by losing Battles. His Reputation proceeds him. He has beaten every Nigger from India to the East. These locals will think twice before trying to fuck with us.

The camera PANS to the two leaders: DOM FRANCISCO DE ALMEIDA, the Viceroy, and his CAPTAIN. They stand apart from the men, surveying the beach.

CAPTAIN

(FIDGETING)

I've gotta go take a piss. I don't like this place, Dom Francisco.

ALMEIDA

(CHUCKLING)

Relax, Captain. They'll be here any minute. I'm sure the boys have already made the trade. We'll be plotting a course for Lisbon within the hour.

CAPTAIN

(LOOKING AROUND NERVOUSLY)

This is Adamastor's place. A God-forsaken beach in a God-forsaken land. We shouldn't be here.

ALMEIDA

(SCOFFING)

Don't be so superstitious, Captain. They can't harm us, even if Lord Jesus tries to lead them. These Caffres are godless. These savages will trade their own children for trinkets.

CAPTAIN

(SHOCKED)

We're taking children?

ALMEIDA

(MATTER-OF-FACTUALLY)

They trade children all the way up the coast. Why wouldn't they trade them here? They take up less space than cattle and will make us a handsome profit.

The Captain looks uneasy but says nothing. Almeida squints into the darkness.

ALMEIDA (CONT'D)

Look! Here come the cattle!

In the distance, cattle appear over the top of the dunes. First a few, then more.

CAPTAIN

(SURPRISED)

So many?

As the herd approaches, a solitary figure emerges, running frantically through the cattle. It's a returning Portuguese SOLDIER, stumbling as he races towards them.

ALMEIDA

(FROWNING)

What in blazes?

SOLDIER

(GASPING FOR BREATH)

Run! There are hundreds of them!

CAPTAIN

(DRAWING HIS SWORD)

Hundreds of what? Speak, man!

Before the soldier can answer, shadows emerge from behind the cattle. At first, just a few local tribesmen, then rapidly increasing numbers.

ALMEIDA

(REACHING FOR HIS SWORD)

To arms! To arms!

But before he can draw, a KHOI WARRIOR strikes him in the head with a *knobkierrie*. Almeida crumples to the ground as a second attacker rains blows upon him.

CAPTAIN

(BLOWING A MILITARY BUGLE)

Retreat! Return to the ships!

The Captain turns to run but is impaled by a Khoi spear. He gurgles blood, eyes wide with shock.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(WEAKLY)

I told you... Adamastor...

The beach erupts into chaos. Portuguese soldiers scramble to their feet, some caught on the ground, others struck in the back as they flee towards the boats.

SOLDIER #1

(PANICKING)

They're everywhere!

SOLDIER #2

(SWINGING HIS SWORD WILDLY)

Fight, you cowards! Fight!

But it's clear the Portuguese are overwhelmed. The Khoi warriors, armed with spears, clubs, and stones, methodically cut down the invaders.

A young KHOI BOY, no more than twelve, stands over a fallen Portuguese soldier. He holds a bloody stone in his hand, eyes blazing with righteous fury.

KHOI BOY

(IN KHOEKHOEGOWAB, SUBTITLED)

Izwelethu! Awusoze uthathe abantwana bethu. (This is our land. You will never take our children.)

THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE
BEACH, NOW LITTERED WITH
PORTUGUESE BODIES. THE
SURVIVING SOLDIERS SPLASH INTO
THE SURF, DESPERATELY TRYING TO
REACH THEIR SHIPS.

We FOCUS on the incoming tide, slowly washing away the
bloodstains from the sand. As dawn breaks, the scene is
eerily peaceful.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TABLE BAY - DAY

A series of scenic shots showcase the natural beauty of
Table Bay.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CATHARINA RAS)

Retreating in disarray to their ships,
sixty-five Portuguese were killed,
including Almeida and eleven senior
officials. They were killed not by
Gods, but by sticks and stones, hurled
not by giants, but by what they called
'bestial Negros', the most brutal of
all that coast.

THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE NOW-
SERENE BEACH.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The battle rocked the Portuguese Colonial
Empire, and the European slavers took
their business elsewhere. It would be a
hundred and fifty years before Europeans
returned in force, this time the Dutch, to
establish a trading station and fort.

WE SEE THE OUTLINE OF THE
FUTURE CAPE TOWN OF 1670 START
TO TAKE SHAPE THROUGH A TIME-
LAPSE EFFECT.

NARRATOR (V/O) (CONT'D)

But the spirit of resistance, the
determination to protect this land and
its people, would endure. The battle of
1510 was just the beginning of a
centuries-long struggle for the soul of
the Cape.

CATHARINA, is sitting in an OPEN CARRIAGE Looking at
the SEA. Her HUSBAND is walking in the distance
skipping stones into the sea.

NARRATOR (V/O) (CONT'D)

This beach is peaceful now, but it was
once that fateful site of chaos and
conflict. Don't be fooled, it is still
the Cape of Storms and Adamaster still
reigns.

PAN TO DISTANT STORM CLOUDS

NARRATOR (V/O) (CONT'D)

History is written by old men,
invariably about battles they never
fought and victories they never won.
Women are spectators and little is
written of the sex that builds
societies.

1682 - How the Cape was won - will now
engage, The two hour traffic of our
stage.

FADE OUT.

END OF SCENE

2 1671 A CARRIAGE APPROACHING THE CAPE CASTLE

FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD TO CAPE TOWN CASTLE - SUNDOWN

A horse-drawn carriage approaches the imposing Cape Town Castle, silhouetted against the setting sun. The castle stands near the beach where ALMAIDA fell over a century and a half ago.

WE BEGIN WITH A WIDE-ANGLE
OVERHEAD VIEW OF THE TURBULENT
WATERS OF TABLE BAY, THEN ZOOM
IN ON THE CARRIAGE.

OPEN CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

HANS RAS, late 20s, and his wife CATHARINA RAS, also late 20s, sit opposite each other. The tension between them is palpable. CATHARINA is dressed in an opulent gold-braided evening gown, while Hans wears a multi-use brown formal suit.

Hans fidgets with an obvious darning on his sleeve, trying to bite off a loose thread.

HANS

(MUTTERING)

Damned thread...

CATHARINA

(SIGHING)

Oh, for heaven's sake, Hans. Leave it be. You'll only make it worse.

HANS

(DEFENSIVELY)

Well, we can't all afford new dresses whenever we please.

CATHARINA

(COOLLY)

Perhaps if you spent less time at the tavern and more time tending to our affairs...

HANS opens his mouth to retort but thinks better of it. They lapse into uncomfortable silence.

CUT TO:

INT - CASTLES KITCHEN

It is a busy kitchen in a tight space, CHEFS are busily putting the finishing touches to a massive spread, a *rijsttafel*, there are at least one hundred small dishes prepared for a feast. Exotic vegetables, Turtle, Prawns the head of a dead pig are shown in the pantry.

INTRODUCING SIMON. CAMERA IS ABOVE HIM AND BEHIND. WE NEVER SEE HIS FACE. WE SEE HIS HANDS AND HE AUTHORITATIVELY CHOOSES OR REJECTS DISHES. HE NEVER SPEAKS

CHEF #1

(OBSEQUIOUS)

We prepared 40 different dishes as you requested Commandant.

SIMON walks between the dishes he is carrying a long sharp wooden skewer stick. He occasionally picks into the dishes and a CUTAWAY to his hands shows he either OK's the dish or rejects it.

CHEF #1

(MOTIONS TO CHEF #2 TO REMOVE THE REJECTED DISHES)

Well its a good thing I actually prepared forty three dishes.

CHEF #1 gestures to the other side of the kitchen where we see ACHMED who wears a Muslim headress and is cleaning a large pot.

CHEF #1

(POINTS TO ACHMED)

As you instructed Commandant I put Achmed on punishment duty cleaning the pork cooking pots.

ACHMED looks from, the corner of his eye, then quickly puts his head down and focuses on cleaning the pig fat.

FADE TO:

EXT. CASTLE GATES-MOMENTS LATER

A CASTLE GUARD stops the carriage and gestures for the invitation. Hans points to CATHARINA, who hands over an invitation reading "Catharina Ras and Partner."

The carriage proceeds through the gates.

INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

HANS

(BREAKING THE SILENCE)

So, who is this new Commandant?

CATHARINA

Simon van der Stel. The Company is expanding. He is to be the first Governor.

HANS

(FEIGNING DISINTEREST)

What's his wife's name?

CATHARINA

(WITH A HINT OF SATISFACTION)

His wife has stayed with their children in Holland. He's here on his own, accompanied only by his mother.

HANS

(SARCASTICALLY)

How convenient.

CATHARINA

(SHARPLY)

And what exactly do you mean by that, Hans?

HANS

(BACKPEDALING)

Nothing, nothing. Just an observation.

The carriage comes to a stop. They can hear the bustle of other guests arriving.

CATHARINA

(ADJUSTING HER DRESS)

Remember, Hans. This is an important evening. Try not to embarrass us.

HANS

(UNDER HIS BREATH)

Us? Or you?

CATHARINA

(IGNORING HIM)

And for God's sake, keep that sleeve covered.

EXT. CASTLE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Hans steps out first, then reluctantly offers his hand to help CATHARINA down. As they approach the entrance, they paste on fake smiles.

CATHARINA

(WHISPERING)

Stand up straight, Hans. And try to look like you want to be here.

HANS

(THROUGH GRITTED TEETH)

Yes, dear.

CUT TO:

3 CASTLE DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

INT. EVENING

The room is well-lit and bustling with the colony's elite. It is an elegant room with large High Classical Dutch Paintings and elaborate Curtains. A FOOTMAN leads Hans and CATHARINA to their seats.

FOOTMAN

Madam Ras, you're seated here, next to the head of the table.

CATHARINA smiles, clearly pleased.

FOOTMAN (CONT'D)

And sir, you'll be seated down there, next to the Commandant's mother.

HANS' face falls as he realizes they're being separated.

HANS

(TO CATHARINA)

Surely there's been some mistake?

CATHARINA

(SWEETLY)

No mistake, dear. These things are carefully arranged. We mustn't upset the order.

HANS grudgingly takes his seat next to SIMON'S MOTHER, a dark-skinned woman of mixed African descent, dressed in a fine embroidered black dinner dress with touches of expensive blue.

SIMON'S MOTHER

(WARMLY)

Good evening, sir. I'm Monica da Costa, Simon's mother.

HANS

(SURPRISED BY HER APPEARANCE)

Oh, uh... good evening, madam.

MONICA pours him a full glass of wine, clearly aware of her role to keep HANS preoccupied.

MONICA

(CONSPIRATORIALLY)

I find these affairs can be rather tiresome. But the wine helps, doesn't it?

Hans takes a large gulp, nodding gratefully.

Suddenly, a hush falls over the room as a FOOTMAN announces:

FOOTMAN

Commandant Simon van der Stel!

Everyone stands. SIMON VAN DER STEL, a mulatto man in his mid-thirties, enters immaculately dressed in a stylish Golden Age Dutch tailored suit.

Hans hides his darned Sleeve below the table.

Simon makes his way to the head of the table, stopping to greet CATHARINA.

SIMON

(KISSING CATHARINA'S HAND)

Madam Ras, your reputation precedes you.

CATHARINA

(COYLY)

And what reputation is that, Commandant?

SIMON

(SMOOTHLY)

The most beautiful woman in the colony, of course. You certainly live up to it.

Hans, watching from the other end of the table, downs the rest of his wine in one gulp. Monica quickly refills his glass.

MONICA

(SYMPATHETICALLY)

Another long night ahead, I fear.

Hans nods grimly, his eyes fixed on CATHARINA and Simon as they begin to converse animatedly.

CATHARINA:

You flatter me Commandant. I simply try to keep our colony to the standards of the Company.

They are interrupted by the presentation of the first of the courses. Numerous small mixed dishes.

CATHARINA:

A Rijstaffel how delightful.

Simon is determined to show his sophistication.

SIMON:

A high Sumatran Rijstafel should have forty dishes. Some of these items came in on the ship from Batavia this morning.

Would you like a Burgundy?

He signals to a foot man to present CATHARINA with a red wine.

SIMON (CONT'D):

One day we will make the finest wines here.

CATHARINA:

This is indeed a rare treat for us. Provisions are hard to come by this far South. Sir you add a touch of class to the Colony.

He leans over and touches her hand

SIMON:

Oh this is just the beginning. I intent
to make a lot of improvements around
here.

CUT to MONICA filling HAN'S Glass.

CATHARINA takes a measured sip of the wine.

MATCH CUT (on her drinking)

END OF SCENE

4 ON THE CASTLE WALLS

EXT LIT BY LARGE FIRELIGHT

MATCH CUT IN EXT. (on her drinking)

CASTLE WALLS - NIGHT

CATHARINA is sipping A glass of Portuguese Port.

The stone walls of the castle are lit by the warm glow of large fire pits. The night sky is clear, stars twinkling above the restless sea below. The sounds of the dinner party fade into the background.

CATHARINA stands alone, looking out at the sea. She takes a measured sip from a glass of Portuguese port, lost in thought. Simon approaches, a bottle in hand. He moves with quiet confidence, his eyes never leaving CATHARINA.

SIMON

(SOFTLY)

A refill for the lady?

CATHARINA turns, a small smile playing on her lips. She gestures negatively but doesn't send him away.

CATHARINA

Thank you, but I've had quite enough.
One must keep one's wits about them in
such... interesting company.

SIMON

(SMILING)

And here I thought the intention was to
help you lose your wits, Madam Ras.

CATHARINA

(ARCHING AN EYEBROW)

Is that your intention, Commandant?

Simon sets the bottle down on the castle wall, moving closer to CATHARINA. The tension between them is palpable.

SIMON

My intentions are purely honorable, I assure you.

CATHARINA

(TEASINGLY)

How disappointing.

They share a laugh, their eyes locked. Simon breaks the gaze first, looking out at the sea.

SIMON

It's beautiful, isn't it?

CATHARINA

(LOOKING AT SIMON)

Indeed. The most beautiful place in the world.

SIMON

(TURNING BACK TO HER)

It's beautiful now, but I hear it gets rough.

CATHARINA

The Greek legend of Adamastor is that he was banished here by the other Titans. Mostly he broods and sulks, but when he rages, it can be a storm of the Gods. Diaz called it the CAPE OF STORMS.

SIMON

(LEANING IN SLIGHTLY)

And what do you call it?

CATHARINA

(MEETING HIS GAZE)

Home. The Cape is my home now. I'm more
of a land person, a farmer at heart.

SIMON

(SURPRISED)

A farmer? You continue to intrigue me,
Madam Ras.

CATHARINA

(WITH DETERMINATION)

Soon, I will own a farm here.

SIMON

(ADMIRINGLY)

A farm for a woman? You are indeed
unusual.

I am a bottamist myself.

He reaches over and cheekily grabs her bottom, making a
play in the similarity of the words.

CATHARINA

SIR!

He reaches out, boldly tucking a stray strand of hair
behind her ear. CATHARINA doesn't pull away, her breath
catching slightly at his touch.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I've been on a few trips to the
borders, seeking opportunities for
viticulture. The best land seems to be
in the Constantia Valley. You should
look in the Tokai area.

CATHARINA

(PUZZLED)

Tokai? That's in Batavia, isn't it?

SIMON

Actually, it's the name of an island in Java. Some of the free slaves have named the area next to Constantia as Tokai, after their homeland.

Their eyes meet, the connection between them electric. CATHARINA reaches out, mirroring his earlier gesture, and brushes a lock of hair from Simon's face. The touch lingers, far too intimate for their level of acquaintance.

CATHARINA

(BREATHLESSLY)

You seem to know a great deal about this land already, Commandant.

SIMON

(VOICE LOW)

I intend to know everything about it, Catharina. Every valley, every vineyard... every fascinating inhabitant.

The use of her first name hangs in the air between them. For a moment, it seems as if Simon might close the distance between them. Instead, CATHARINA takes a small step back, composing herself.

CATHARINA

(REGRETFULLY)

I... I must get back to my husband.

SIMON

(DISAPPOINTED BUT UNDERSTANDING)

Of course. But I hope we'll have the chance to continue our discussion of... agriculture... very soon.

CATHARINA

(WITH A KNOWING SMILE)

I'm sure we will, Commandant. The Cape is full of opportunities, after all. I hope that we will be friends.

As they turn to leave, CATHARINA discreetly plucks a strand of Simon's hair, tucking it into her purse. Simon notices but says nothing, a small smile playing on his lips.

SIMON

(WITH IRONY)

Friendship may, and often does, grow into love, but love never subsides into friendship.

They walk back towards the party, close but not touching, the potential between them crackling like the nearby fire pits.

FADE OUT.

END OF SCENE

5 THE CARRIAGE TRAVELLING BACK HOME

FADE IN:

EXT. TREE-LINED ROAD - LATE NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

An arc shot begins with the feet of the horses, moves to the wheels of the carriage along a bumpy seventeenth-century suburban road. The carriage is heading down a tree-lined path, with occasional village firelight visible in the distance. HANS RAS and CATHARINA are in a compromising position. CATHARINA is on her knees, facing away from Hans, who is clumsily to entering her from behind. His movements are erratic, betraying his drunken state.

Two FOOTMEN serve as carriage drivers, one carrying a rifle for security.

HANS

(slurring)

Hold still, woman!

CATHARINA

(WINCING)

Hans, please. This is hardly necessary.

HANS

(GROWLING)

I'll decide what's necessary!

Suddenly, Hans lurches forward.

HANS (CONT'D)

(SHOUTING)

Driver! Stop the carriage!

The carriage comes to an abrupt halt. Hans stumbles out, nearly falling.

EXT. ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Hans relieves himself by urinating on the side of the road. He sways unsteadily, muttering to himself.

HANS

(UNDER HIS BREATH)

Thinks she can flirt with that mulatto governor... I'll show her...

He finishes and clambers back into the carriage, resuming his previous position.

INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

HANS

(TO THE DRIVER)

Carry on!

As the carriage starts moving again, CATHARINA turns to address the camera directly.

CATHARINA

(TO CAMERA, QUIETLY)

This whole performance is because I flirted with the Commandant. What he's trying to prove is that he's still the top dog. He's obviously had too much to drink. This is going to be a tiresome affair.

Hans makes a particularly hard thrust, pushing CATHARINA's head down.

CATHARINA (CONT'D)

(TO CAMERA, GRIMACING)

I don't mind the "I'm the boss" strutting, but ladies, you have to admit it's the thumping that is the problem. For me, the thumping is the beginning of the end. Next, the drunkenness turns to verdriet, and he's going to try restricting my social activities. Then he'll apologize and beg for forgiveness, but by then it will be too late.

Hans lets out a groan, wipes himself off on his sleeve and flops back onto the seat, his energy spent. CATHARINA straightens her dress and takes out her mirror to check her hair.

CATHARINA

(TO THE DRIVER)

Driver, how much further?

DRIVER (O.S.)

Another ten minutes, madam.

Hans is already asleep on the carriage seat, snoring loudly.

CATHARINA

(to camera)

I simply won't stand for him restricting my activities.

She reaches into her purse and checks that the strand of Simon's hair is still there, a small smile playing on her lips.

CATHARINA (CONT'D)

(TO CAMERA, WISTFULLY)

Our Commandant has the touch of a gentleman. History will laud him for it.

(TO CAMERA, WITH DETERMINATION)
Things will have to change. I'll not be
the farmer's wife anymore. The Cape is
full of opportunities, and I intend to
seize them.

She glances at her sleeping husband, a mix of pity and
resolve in her eyes.

CATHARINA (CONT'D)

(SOFTLY)
Poor Hans. He has no idea what's
coming.

The carriage continues down the dark road, the rhythmic
sound of hooves punctuated by Hans's snores. CATHARINA
sits straight-backed, her mind clearly elsewhere.

CATHARINA (CONT'D)

(TO CAMERA, WITH A SLY SMILE)
The winds of change are blowing at the
Cape, and I intend to set my sails
accordingly. Simon van der Stel may be
the new Governor, but he's not the only
one with ambitions.

She takes one last look at her sleeping husband, her
expression a mixture of determination and anticipation.

FADE OUT.

END OF SCENE

6 1634 CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DUTCH INDIAMAN

FADE IN:

INT NIGHT LIT BY A OIL LAMP

The cabin rocks violently in a raging storm. MONICA DA COSTA, a freed slave of mixed African descent, lies on a makeshift bed, in labor. The SHIP'S DOCTOR attends to her.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

(WIPING MONICA'S BROW)

Hold on, Monica. The storm's making this difficult, but you're doing well.

MONICA:

(BREATHING HEAVILY)

I've weathered worse storms than this, Doctor. This child will be strong.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

(MAKING SMALL TALK)

Th dilation is full the birth is underway, what are you hoping for?

MONICA:

(BREATHING HEAVILY)

A Boy.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

Why so?

MONICA:

(BREATHING HEAVILY)

A Boy a warrior.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

A Warrior will you not miss his absence when he is in the field.

MONICA:

(BREATHING HEAVILY)

If my son were my husband, I should
freelier rejoice in that absence
wherein he won honour than in the
embracements of his bed where he would
show most love.

Doctor looks up startled.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

And should your Warrior die in the
business, what then?

MONICA:

(BREATHING HEAVILY)

Then his good report should shall be my
son.

Thunder CRASHES. The ship lurches.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

Push now! I can see the head.

MONICA STRAINS, GRIPPING THE
SIDES OF THE BED.

MONICA:

My son will be great. He'll rise above
the prejudices of this world.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

(ENCOURAGING)

That's it, keep pushing!

MONICA:

(THROUGH GRITTED TEETH)

One day, he'll be Governor of the Cape.
I've seen it in my dreams.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

(SKEPTICAL BUT KIND)

Let's focus on bringing him into this
world first, shall we?

MONICA:

You don't understand. This boy... he'll
change everything.

ANOTHER CONTRACTION HITS.
MONICA CRIES OUT.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

Almost there! One more big push!

MONICA:

(WITH FIERCE DETERMINATION)

Simon will make his mark on history. I
swear it! If he was and the only son of
my womb, I would feel more joy hearing
he had proved himself a man than now in
first seeing he was a man-child.

With a final effort, Monica pushes. The cry of a
newborn fills the cabin, barely audible over the storm.

SHIP'S DOCTOR:

(HOLDING UP THE BABY)

It's a boy!

Monica collapses back, exhausted but triumphant.

MONICA:

(REACHING FOR THE CHILD)

My Simon. My warrior. My Governor.

The doctor places the baby in Monica's arms. She gazes
at him with love and fierce ambition as the storm
continues to rage outside.

FADE OUT

END OF SCENE

7 1671 THE SLAVE AUCTION

FADE IN:

EXT. CAPE TOWN HARBOR - DAY

A bustling harbor. Ships unload cargo, including human cargo. A makeshift auction block is set up near the docks.

CATHARINA, elegantly dressed, watches from the sidelines, both horrified and intrigued. SIMON, in official VOC attire, oversees the proceedings with visible discomfort.

The AUCTIONEER, a boisterous man with a cruel glint in his eye, takes center stage.

AUCTIONEER

(SHOUTING)

Next up, gentlemen! A fine specimen
from Angola!

Two guards drag forward JOAO, a strong but terrified young man.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

Look at those muscles! He'll work your
fields till he drops!

CATHARINA

(TO HERSELF)

Dear God...

SIMON notices her and approaches.

SIMON

(QUIETLY)

Madam Ras, I didn't expect to see you
here.

CATHARINA

(composing herself)

One must understand all aspects of the
colony's economy, Commandant.

The bidding starts. JOAO looks around desperately, his eyes meeting CATHARINA's for a moment.

AUCTIONEER

Do I hear 50 guilders? 50 guilders for this prime Angolan!

A WEALTHY FARMER raises his hand.

WEALTHY FARMER

50!

AUCTIONEER

50 guilders! Do I hear 60?

As the bidding continues, CATHARINA turns to SIMON.

CATHARINA

(WHISPERING)

Is this truly necessary for the colony's success?

SIMON

(CONFLICTED)

It's... complicated, Madam Ras. The locals are useless at labor and I came here to build look what we have after ten years, a fort a village. The Company believes -

He's interrupted by the Auctioneer's shout.

AUCTIONEER

Going once!

CATHARINA

(STEELING HERSELF)

Perhaps I should consider investing in this... trade.

SIMON

(SURPRISED)

You? But I thought-

CATHARINA

(CUTTING HIM OFF)

A woman must seize power where she can,
Commandant. Even if it means getting
one's hands dirty.

SIMON

Its illegal for women to own slaves.
Perhaps I could be of assistance, -

He is cut off by the AUCTIONEER.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)

THE AUCTIONEER IS STARTLED AND
BREAKS WITH TRADITION

Sold to the Commandant! 120 Guilders.

JOAO is dragged away, his fate sealed.

SIMON

ASIDE TO HIS ASSISTANT

Have the slave delivered to the care to
MS RAS for safekeeping.

SIMON

HE TURNS TO CATHARINA

Consider is a gift to seal our
friendship.

CATHARINA blushes but does not object to the
gift.

As they watch JOAO being led away, both CATHARINA looks
troubled by the implications of their conversation.
SIMON is standing too close to her, like the owner of
a new possession

FADE IN:

8 THE MARINERS HAVEN

INT. CAPE TOWN BROTHEL - MORNING

The common room of a brothel. Sunlight streams through
grimy windows, illuminating the aftermath of the
previous night's revelry. Two prostitutes, MINA and

GRIET, are cleaning up, while ANNA DE KONING, the madam, supervises.

ANNA

(surveying the room)

Well, girls, hope you got your beauty sleep. Tonight's going to be a rough one.

MINA

(YAWNING, WAVES HER SKIRT TO COOL HER GROIN)

Busier than last night? My pussy is still burning are still sore from that sailor with the peg leg. I couldn't tell which wood he was using

GRIET

(LAUGHING)

At least you had a man and not a louse. Its the lice I hate. They get under your skin and you can't even scratch them out. That fat merchant I had couldn't even rise to the occasion.

ANNA

(CLUCKING HER TONGUE)

Now, now, girls. A little professional courtesy. Be delicate. Besides, coin is coin, whether it comes from a stallion or a mule.

GRIET

(UNDER HER BREATHE)

Who wants a delicate whore?

The girls giggle as they continue cleaning.

MINA

So why's tonight going to be so special, Anna?

ANNA

The farmers are in town for the auction. And you know what that means...

GRIET

(EXCITEDLY)

Auctioneers with pockets full of guilders!

MINA

Farmers with cash they don't want to take back to their fat hippo wives.

ANNA

(LAUGHS)

Exactly. They'll be looking to celebrate their profits with a bouquet of twat.

MINA

(CONCERNED)

But we're already short on twat. How are we going to manage?

ANNA

(WITH A SLY SMILE)

Don't you worry about that. We've got some fresh fish coming in. Young things from the new shipment.

GRIET

(SURPRISED)

You mean the slave girls? Some of them are so young. They're not even...

ANNA

(INTERRUPTING)

They're whatever I say they are. The new ones will handle the farmers, who are getting tired of your old cunts. You lot focus on the auctioneers - they're the ones with the real money.

MINA

(NODDING ASIDE)

Welcome to Africa. Those poor new tulips don't yet know how a change of semen can make a girl bloom.

ANNA

We have a reputation to protect

MIN & GRIET

IN UNISON, DOING A DANCE

The Mariner's Haven, where all is clean and shaven

ANNA

JOINING THE DANCE

..and you don't have to beat about looking for a bush.

ANNA abruptly stops and turns to them seriously.

ANNA

Just make sure you're spruced and juiced, ready for tonight. I want every Mariner leaving the Haven with a smile on his face, a smell on his fingers and an empty purse. Important - if the Commandant comes in - He's mine.

The girls nod and continue their work. Anna looks out the window, a calculating expression on her face.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(TO HERSELF)

In this town, everything's for sale. One way or another.

FADE OUT.

9 THE RITUAL

FADE IN:

EXT. SECLUDED BEACH NEAR CAPE TOWN - NIGHT

Moonlight reflects off the dark waters. CATHARINA and two local women, ZARA and NOMSA, stand in a triangle around a small fire. All three are in traditional dress, topless with beads and animal loin cloth hip covering. They chant softly in a mixture of Dutch and Khoikhoi.

CATHARINA

(EYES CLOSED, SWAYING)

By earth and water, fire and air,
We summon forces beyond compare.
Ancient spirits, heed our prayer,
Reveal the secrets that you bear.

ZARA & NOMSA

(IN UNISON)

We call upon the ancient powers,
In this sacred night of midnight hours.
Grant us wisdom, strength, and might,
Reveal our path with mystic light.

SIMON appears at the edge of the beach, drawn by the firelight. He watches through the trees, mesmerized.

CATHARINA

(OPENING HER EYES, STARTLED)

Commandant!

SIMON

(STEPPING FORWARD)

Madam Ras... what is this?

CATHARINA

(TO SIMON)

It's not what you think-

Before CATHARINA can answer, three KHOIKHOI TRIBESMEN emerge from the shadows, eyeing the scene suspiciously.

TRIBESMAN #1

(IN KHOIKHOI, SUBTITLED)

What evil is this?

ZARA

(NERVOUSLY)

We should leave...

The tribesmen advance, becoming more agitated.

TRIBESMAN #2

(BRANDISHING A SPEAR)

Witches! You bring curses upon our land!

SIMON

(DRAWING HIS SWORD)

Stand back! I am an officer of the VOC!

The situation escalates quickly. Tribesman #1 lunges at CATHARINA with a knife. Simon reacts instinctively, running the man through with his sword.

Time seems to stop. The tribesman falls, blood staining the sand. The other tribesmen flee in terror.

SIMON

(BREATHING HEAVILY)

Are you alright?

CATHARINA

(SHOCKED)

You... you killed him.

They lock eyes, the gravity of the moment sinking in. ZARA and NOMSA disappear into the night.

SIMON

(wiping his sword)

We can never speak of this.

CATHARINA

(NODDING)

Our secret. Bound in blood.

They stand together, the dead tribesman at their feet,
their fates now inextricably linked.

End the CLIMAX with a long dissolve to a CHANGE OF TIME
DISSOLVE OUT.

10 1660 A COFFEE HOUSE IN AMSTERDAM

FADE IN:

INT. AMSTERDAM COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

A luxurious coffee house, filled with ornate
furnishings and the aroma of exotic brews. GUNTER
USTINGS and JAN-WILLEM VAN REEDE, both in their early
forties, sit at a corner table. A BUXOM WAITRESS moves
between tables.

GUNTER

(NERVOUSLY)

Nice place you have here. Willem, my
old friend, I appreciate you meeting
me.

JAN-WILLEM

(COLDLY)

We're hardly friends, Gunter. Your debt
to the VOC grows by the day.

The waitress approaches their table.

WAITRESS

More coffee, gentlemen?

JAN-WILLEM

(DISMISSIVELY)

Yes, yes. And be quick about it, woman.

As she turns to leave, JAN=WILLEM roughly grabs her
wrist.

JAN-WILLEM (CONT'D)

And mind you don't spill it this time,
or it'll be your wages.

The waitress nods fearfully and hurries away.

GUNTER

(WINCING)

Must you be so harsh, Willem?

JAN-WILLEM

(SCOFFING)

These serving girls need a firm hand.
Now, to business. How do you intend to
settle your debt?

GUNTHER has a small spirit glass of gin which he
swallows in a gulp.

GUNTER

(HESITANTLY)

I... I have a proposition. You've met
my daughter, Catharina?

JAN-WILLEM

(INTEREST PIQUED)

Ah, The young beauty? At least for that
you are famous. What of her?

GUNTER

I am looking for a position for my
daughter in the fashion business.

JAN-WILLEM

A woman's place is in the kitchen. She
should marry a man like me.

GUNTER

I am not sure she is ready for the
Kitchen, why not marry an older woman
for that?

JAN-WILLEM

An older woman can't work in the kitchen, we'll end up with no meat on the bone or juice in the pussy?

GUNTER

She's of marriageable age now. Modest, diligent... a fine prospect for any man of standing.

JAN-WILLEM

Takes sip of coffee

(LEANING FORWARD

Go on.

GUNTER

(SWALLOWING HARD)

Perhaps... an arrangement could be made. A marriage,

JAN-WILLEM

(CONSIDERING)

In exchange for the debt? Interesting. But hardly sufficient. The girl's virtue is intact, I assume?

GUNTER

(NODDING VIGOROUSLY)

Of course! Since her mother died, She's been raised with the utmost propriety.

The waitress returns with their coffee, careful not to spill a drop. She leans over to pour and he groin is near to JAN-WILLEM'S face. He takes an exaggerated deep breath, sniffing the air like an animal.

JAN-WILLEM

(TO THE WAITRESS)

Leave us.

As she scurries away, JAN-WILLEM first look at her receding buttocks, then turns back to GUNTHER.

JAN-WILLEM (CONT'D)

Your daughter for the debt... plus I'll
throw in a 1000 guilders.

GUNTER

(SHOCKED)

A thousand! That's ...

JAN-WILLEM

(INTERRUPTING)

The price of a prized tulip, not so
long ago. I am a man of generosity.
Surely your daughter is worth as much?

Gunter looks conflicted, then defeated.

GUNTER

(QUIETLY)

Very well. It's agreed.

JAN-WILLEM

(SMIRKING)

Excellent. I'll have the papers drawn
up this afternoon.

As they shake hands, the waitress passes by again. JAN-
WILLEM slaps her bottom, causing her to yelp.

JAN-WILLEM (CONT'D)

(LAUGHING)

See, Gunter? That's how you handle the
lower classes. Don't worry Lubeck, your
Catharina will soon have some upper
class in her. She'll be the wife of a
Rentegen. She'll need to learn her new
place.

GUNTER nods weakly, unable to meet WILLEM's eyes.

FADE OUT.

11 AN ARGUMENT AT HOME

FADE IN:

INT. MODEST AMSTERDAM HOME - DAY

GUNTER USTINGS paces nervously in the voorhuis a sparsely furnished study. He calls out:

GUNTER

Catharina! Come here, my child.

CATHARINA, a beautiful young woman in her late teens, enters the room.

GUNTER (CONT'D)

(FORCING A SMILE)

Ah, my precious daughter. You know you're the most valuable thing in my life.

CATHARINA

(SUSPICIOUS)

Father, what's this about?

GUNTER

(HESITANTLY)

I've... arranged a marriage for you. To Willem Van Reede.

CATHARINA

(SHOCKED)

What? No! I won't do it. I have plans, Father. The Dutch are the world leaders in textiles. I want to go to the Academy, to study fashion.

GUNTER

(SIGHING)

Catharina, fashion is a pastime of the rich. Unless you become one of them, you're destined to fail.

CATHARINA

(DEFIANTLY)

But I can succeed! I have talent,
ambition-

GUNTER

(INTERRUPTING)

Talent and ambition aren't enough!
Dutch women are meant to forge a home,
not a career. This is your glass
ceiling, my dear. Willem is fine man,
upstanding in the community. He can
offer you a good life.

CATHARINA

(ANGRY)

I don't care! I won't do it. I refuse
this marriage.

GUNTER

(LOSING HIS TEMPER)

It is not your choice! The marriage
will go through. It's already decided.

CATHARINA

(TEARFUL)

Father, please-

GUNTER

(SHOUTING)

Enough! Go to your room and prepare
yourself. The wedding is in two days.

CATHARINA runs out, sobbing. Gunter collapses into a
chair, head in his hands.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. WEDDING BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

A sweaty, red-faced WILLEM finishes the deed and rolls
off of a visibly distressed CATHARINA.

JAN-WILLEM

(PANTING)

Welcome to the upper classes, my dear.

CATHARINA turns away, silent tears streaming down her face.

FADE OUT.

12 AMSTERDAM ACADEMY

FADE IN:

INT. AMSTERDAM ACADEMY LECTURE HALL - DAY

A small, well-appointed lecture hall. A single tulip sits in a vase on the lecturer's desk. DR. MARGARETHA VAN LEIDEN, dressed in a protestant habit, addresses a small group of advanced students. Among them is SIMON, now a handsome and confident man in his early twenties.

DR. VAN LEIDEN

Today, we'll examine the concept of original sin, and its implications for mankind's inherent nature.

She picks up the tulip from her desk, runs her finger provocatively up its stem and over its petals, and kisses it.

DR. VAN LEIDEN (CONT'D)

This flower, in its perfection, represents the state of man before the Fall.

DR. VAN LEIDEN (CONT'D)

This single flower once commanded a price higher than most people's yearly wages. Why?

SIMON

(CONFIDENTLY)

Supply and demand, Doctor.

DR. VAN LEIDEN

But surely there's more to it than that? But like man, it too is destined to wither.

SIMON

(THOUGHTFULLY)

But surely, Doctor, we have the capacity to overcome our sinful nature?

DR. VAN LEIDEN

An interesting perspective, Simon. Some argue that through faith and good works, we can aspire to a higher state.

A RIVAL STUDENT interjects with a sneer.

RIVAL STUDENT

Not that a half-breed like you would know anything about higher aspirations, Van der Stel.

DR. VAN LEIDEN

(SHARPLY)

That's quite enough!

(TO THE CLASS)

Remember, we are all equal in the eyes of God, regardless of our earthly circumstances.

SIMON

(LEANING FORWARD, INTENSE)

So, there's always hope for redemption, even for the lowest among us?

DR. VAN LEIDEN

(MEETING HIS GAZE)

Indeed, Simon. Some find ways to rise above their circumstances, to shatter the limits placed upon them. But I would argue that we cannot rise above sin, a witch will always be a witch.

The lecture concludes. As students file out, SIMON lingers.

DR. VAN LEIDEN (CONT'D)

Simon, a word about your recent essay on predestination?

SIMON APPROACHES HER DESK,
TENSION PALPABLE BETWEEN THEM.

SIMON

(WITH A HINT OF SUGGESTION)

Of course, Doctor. I'm always eager to discuss... matters of faith.

DR. VAN LEIDEN

(SLIGHTLY FLUSTERED)

Yes, well... your ideas on free will were quite... provocative, but sin is sin and sometimes even love can be a sin.

She runs the tuplip up his neck and onto his head, mimicking the early shot with the tulip. She leans in to kiss him ...

FADE SLOWLY TO BLACK

13 SIX AND COMPANY

FADE IN:

EXT. AMSTERDAM ACADEMY - LATE AFTERNOON

Students file out of the grand building. ADRIAN VAN DER STEL, a distinguished man in his 50s, checks his pocket watch impatiently. Finally, SIMON emerges, looking slightly disheveled.

ADRIAN

(IRRITATED)

Simon! You're late. Again.

SIMON

(APOLOGETIC)

Sorry, Father. I was discussing my paper with Dr. Van Leiden.

ADRIAN

(SIGHING)

Never mind that now. You're about to graduate, and I've made an appointment for you.

THEY BEGIN WALKING DOWN THE STREET.

SIMON

An appointment? With whom?

ADRIAN

Willem Six. He's agreed to take you on as an apprentice at Six and Company.

SIMON

(SURPRISED)

A textile merchant? But Father, I know nothing about textiles.

ADRIAN

It's not about what you know now, it's about the opportunity. Six has no sons to inherit his business.

SIMON

(HESITANT)

I see. Father, may I ask you something? Why didn't you raise me as a Jew, like yourself?

ADRIAN

(CAREFULLY)

Simon, you know of my Portuguese heritage. In our tradition, Jewishness is inherited through the mother. Your mother Monica...

SIMON

(UNDERSTANDING)

Is not Jewish.

ADRIAN

Exactly. You'll face enough challenges with your color, my son. No need to add the burden of anti-Semitism to your path.

They arrive at a grand building with "SIX & CO." emblazoned above the door.

INT. SIX & CO. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

WILLEM SIX, a robust man in his 60s, greets them warmly. Behind him stands his daughter, JOHANNA JACOBA SIX, a beautiful young woman around Simon's age.

WILLEM

Adrian, my friend! And this must be young Simon.

Simon and Johanna lock eyes, an immediate spark between them.

WILLEM (CONT'D)

(NOTICING THEIR INTERACTION)

Ah, and you've noticed my daughter, Johanna.

ADRIAN

(CLEARING HIS THROAT)

Willem, thank you for this opportunity for Simon.

WILLEM

(ENTHUSIASTICALLY)

Of course! The real opportunity, young man, lies in the East. We exchange cloth for spices at an enormous profit.

SIMON

(tearing his eyes from Johanna)

The East? You mean the Indies?

WILLEM

Exactly! With your education and...
unique background, you could be
invaluable to us there.

SIMON glances at JOHANNA again, clearly torn between
ambition and newfound attraction.

FADE OUT.

14 **A PRIZON IN AMSTERDAM**

FADE IN:

EXT. AMSTERDAM PRISON - DUSK

A foreboding stone building looms against a blood-red
sky. CATHARINA, young and beautiful but with haunted
eyes, stands clutching an open wicker basket draped
around her left arm of food and a bottle of wine. Her
cloak billows in an ominous wind.

A gruff JAILER approaches, keys jangling.

JAILER

(LEERING)

Here to see the witch, are ye? Better
be careful, girl. Her kind's
contagious.

CATHARINA

(COOLLY)

I have permission.

The JAILOR grunts, unlocking a heavy door.

INT. PRISON DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

CATHARINA descends into darkness, the air thick with
the stench of decay and despair. In the furthest cell,
illuminated by a single shaft of dying light, sits the
WITCH, once beautiful, now a shadow of her former self.

CATHARINA

(RUSHING TO THE BARS)

I've brought you food. How are you holding up?

WITCH

(WITH A SAD SMILE)

Oh, deary. It's you I worry about. I'm dead already.

CATHARINA

(VOICE BREAKING)

Don't say that. We can still fight this.

WITCH

(SHAKING HER HEAD)

The time for fighting is over. Now, it's time for you to learn.

The witch motions CATHARINA closer, their faces inches apart.

WITCH (CONT'D)

(WHISPERING)

Listen carefully. There's a mushroom that grows in the dark places of the forest. You will find it in mid winter. Red and white cap, red stem. It'll stop a man's heart, quick and quiet.

CATHARINA

(NERVOUSLY)

I... I don't know if I could...

WITCH

(FORCEFULLY)

You must! What are you going to do? Live with him for the rest of your life? They're burning our sisters all over Europe. Two hundred just last week. Catharina, you must run.

CATHARINA

(TEARFULLY)

Run where?

WITCH

Anywhere. Out of Europe. Run to Africa
if you don;t want them to find you.

Suddenly, the sound of approaching footsteps. The witch
grabs CATHARINA's hand.

WITCH (CONT'D)

Promise me you'll run!

CATHARINA

I... I promise.

FADE TO BLACK

The crackle of flames fills the darkness.

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

A massive pyre, flames licking the sky. Tied to a stake
at its center is the witch, screaming as the fire
consumes her.

WITCH

(THROUGH THE FLAMES)

Run, Catharina! Run!

The image blurs, transforming into a lion charging
through the inferno, its roar merging with the witch's
screams.

INT. CATHARINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CATHARINA bolts upright in bed, drenched in sweat, the
echo of the lion's roar still ringing in her ears.

CATHARINA

(GASPING)

I'll run. I swear it.

FADE OUT.

15 A WALK IN THE FOREST

Catharena is walking in a the forest wearing a bright red coat. She is carrying the same wicker basket Ground is covered in snow. On to the path steps a giant wolf. She walks toward it and pats it on the head.

She is talking to the wolf.

CATHARINA

(GENTLY)

Are you Hungry? Would YOU like something to eat?

She reaches into her basket and pulls out a small sausage. The Wolf take it from her hand.

CATHARINA (CONT'D)

I am looking for a small red mushroom. It grows only in the winter.

The wolf turns and walks away. After a few paces it stops and looks around and CATHARINA, ad then turns expecting her to follow.

CUT TO:

CATHARINA is picking up a red mushroom with a small pair of tongs. She holds it up, inspects it. And then drops it into the basket.

CUT TO:

EXT DAY

WILLEM VAN RHEEDE is walking along the warf on one of Amsterdam's canals, when suddenly he stops and grabs his chest. It stands stationary for a few seconds and then his legs give in and he drops into the canal

16 SIMON STARTS WORK

(NO DIALOGUE)
THEME MUSIC STARTS SOFTLY

INT DAY

This scene consists of a few cutaways of SIMON starting work at WIX.

MONICA, Simon's mother, making last adjustments to his work out fit. Gives him a lunch box

DR VAN DER LIEDEN looking out of her office into the street below where SIMON walks by on his way to WORK.

SIMON standing in front the sign "WIX and CO" - morphs to "Wix and Son" and back to "WIX and CO"

SIMON packing boxes in the warehouse. JOHANNA walks buy and smiles at him.

SIMON working in accounts adding up invoices

EXT DAY

SIMON sitting in the Park with JOHANNA eating lunch

INT EVENING

SIMON Is closing up the Business the last to leave.

INT NIGHT AT THE COFFEE CLUB

SIMON having a drink with WIX having an intense Business conversation

FADE OUT:

17 THE POLICE COME LOOKING

CATHARINA is sitting opposite a lawyer, who is flicking through the pages of a will. He stops and looks closer at a page. Then he looks up

LAWYER

(FORMALLY)

Madam your husband left most of his Estate to his children, but did make a provision for you of TEN THOUSAND Guilders.

He then pushes a small case forward and opens it. The case is full of CASH money. CATHARINA leans forward and looks forward into the case.

MATCH CUT TO:

CATHARINA is leaning forward out of her bedroom window. She is looking into the busy Street below. After a few seconds two men com walking up One one is a policeman and that other is the JAILER wih his keys. The stop a passer bay and the JAILER is asking a question, he gestures a motion to show a Basket over the left arm.

CUT to a shot of the Basket on her bed and a packed suitcase next to the bed.

CUT EXT

CATHARINA is climbing down the back stairs of her apartment building. CUT She is hurrying through a busy street near the docks. She gets to the gantry of a Ship moored in the docks. There is a sign:

THE DROMEDARIS

WOMEN NOT WELCOME

CUT TO back alley. CATHARINA is looking into a placed mirror she is cutting her hair. She reaches into the suitcase a brings out a tweed jacket and matching cap.

CUT

INT On board

CATHARINA is standing in front of the pursor's desk.

PURSOR

... I confirm then that the ASSISTED passage to the Cape, one way is 100 guilders. You will be expected to work in the galley three meals a day a serve the watch once per night. What is your name?

CATHARINA

Michel Lubek.

PURSOR

Welcome aboard the Dromedaris Mr Lubek.

FADE

EXT EARLY EVENING

Michel Lubek is at sea on the deck of the Dromedaris looking back at the receding lights of Amsterdam.

FADE TO

A WIDE SHOT OF THE DROMEDARIS
HEADING OUT SEA

SUB TITLES

"TO BE CONTINUED"

OUTTRO

THE END