

THE JEWEL OF THE NILE

Joan Wilder's Greatest Adventure!

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FADE IN:

BLUE LAGOON

Lush tropical forests across a storybook island. Pink sunlight dances on azure waters. A great WHITE SEABIRD glides along moist air currents.

THE ANGELYNE

The gleaming sloop is anchored in a lovers' paradise, rocking gently at the mouth of the lagoon. A cluster of DINGHIES bob around the boat.

A WHITE WEDDING CAKE

Sweet icing melting slowly around two FIGURINES on the top tier of the cake. A tiny TOY MAN in a wide-brim fedora holds plastic hands with a TOY SENORITA. Between them is a marzipan ALLIGATOR. -- MOVING INTO FRAME -- a pudgy finger swipes a taste. PULL BACK to a rotund English MISSIONARY. He licks his finger, checks a pocket watch, and waddles across the deck, festooned with orchids and ribbons. Expatriate LOCALS mingle with bare-chested NATIVES, all watching the cabin steps anxiously.

ON A DRESSING TABLE - A LEI OF WHITE FLOWERS

lifted gently and draped over shining chestnut curls. Turning to her mirror, JOAN WILDER rests the thick lei against her breasts. Her skin richly golden, she touches a white rose above her ear. Smoothes the tight sarong down her thighs. Aglow, she smiles at the image of her own beauty.

CLOSE ON - WHITE TROUSER CUFFS

A speck of dust is flecked from alligator boots. In the cabin next door, JACK COULTER fixes a white boutonniere to his white linen suit. Takes inventory in his mirror. Bronzed, brash, lean, WINKS at himself. Then opens a draw-bag, pouring out green chips of the great emerald -- El Corazon! One chip has been set as a wedding RING. He holds it up to catch the light, then drops it in his pocket.

OUT THE CABIN DOOR

Jack surprises Joan at the steps. Joan is suddenly shy, flushes with passion. Jack touches her cheek tenderly.

JACK

(softly)

How did I ever get so lucky?

He leans to kiss her. A GUST of wind catches them. The cabin door is thrown open, faces staring eagerly down at them. The guests giggle. Embarrassed, Jack leads Joan upstairs.

ON DECK

An intimate semi-circle of guests around the red-cheeked Missionary. Jack and Joan take their places. Just then, the white SEABIRD lights upon a teak rail alongside.

MISSIONARY

A goodly omen!

(opens his black
book)

Friends, on this glorious day in God's own paradise, we gather to witness the joining together of these two young people. The adventure that brought them together was but the first step in what will be their greatest adventure -- marriage.

The Missionary takes Joan's hand and rests it, trembling upon Jack's.

MISSIONARY

(turning to Jack)

Now the time has come for you to declare yourself! Will you marry this woman and take her to your heart, forever devoted and forever young?

ALL EYES ON JACK

He sets his jaw. Everyone leans in to hear.

JACK

(loud and clear)

I will!

Sighs of relief from the guests.

ON JOAN

the crystalline hint of a tear in her eye.

MISSIONARY

(enjoying himself)

Good, good! Where is the ring?

Jack takes out the RING and holds it just beyond Joan's hand.

MISSIONARY

(now turning to Joan)

You too must declare yourself.
Will you marry this man and take
him to heart, forever devoted and
forever young?

CLOSE ON JOAN

quivering, more lovely than ever. She looks at the ring, opens her mouth to respond...

ZAP! THWACK!

The RING flies from Jack's hand, carried on a RUSH of air. It SLAMS into the mast. SPINS around the shaft of a long ARROW. Bug-eyed, the Missionary points behind the guests.

MISSIONARY

P-P-P-Pirates!

SWINGING OVER THE STERN

A gross mass of tattooed flesh, SPEAR-GUN in hand, cackles, charges on board. He's followed by THREE similar cretins, in mohawks and leather, like nautical Hell's angels.

PANDEMONIUM!

as guests rush for their dinghies. The Missionary simply dives overboard. Plates crash, food flies. The white SEABIRD takes off for safer ground.

THE WEDDING CAKE

as a big, hairy fist smashes into it, grabs an oozing handful. The FAT PIRATE crunches on the toy bride and groom, swallows them whole. Tilts his head back and lets out a roar.

ON JACK

Calm and confident, he tosses off his jacket, moves Joan behind the cabin.

JACK

Stay here.

JOAN

Be careful!

JACK

Don't worry. Nothing will keep me from marrying you.

A kiss, a wink and he's off. A rampaging PIRATE meets Jack at mid-ship. Swings once, swings twice. Jack ducks both blows. THUD! A kick between the legs drops the creep to the deck. A second PIRATE comes from behind. Jack FLIPS him overboard.

JOAN (O.S.)

Jack! Help!

Jack looks across the deck. The Fat Pirate is grabbing at Joan. Jack makes a beeline for her.

JACK

Here I come.

VOICE (O.S.)

Au contraire mon ami, there you go!

STANDING ON THE BOOM

casually balanced like Errol Flynn is the PIRATE KING! Lusty and stalwart, darkly handsome, bare chest glistening, he bows to Joan. An offhand push and he rides the boom in an arc across the deck BOOTING Jack. In a somersault, Jack disappears over the rail!

JOAN

(screams)

Jack...!

She runs to help him but the Fat Pirate slashes the anchor line. The ANGELYNE starts drifting out to sea, leaving Jack behind.

JOAN

(turns to the Pirates)

You bastards!!

JOAN ON THE ATTACK

She grabs a bottle of champagne. CRACK! Down goes the Fat Pirate. But three others chase her around the deck as the Pirate King watches, laughing merrily. Joan plays come-and-get-me behind a cart holding a ROAST PIG ON A SPIT.

PIRATE

Now I got you!

Joan shoves the cart into his belly. He takes the protruding spit 6 inches in his gut. Collapses over the cart. With her foot as a prop, Joan pulls out the spit. The Pirate falls face-to-face with the pig, the apple wedged between their mouths. Now Joan uses the spit like a sword. Parry and thrust! She fends off the Pirates. The Lady Swashbuckler!

A FISH NET

drops over Joan, entangling her. The Fat Pirate belches in victory. Paws her, his head wet and bloody from the champagne bottle.

FAT PIRATE

Now here's a real treasure chest!

ANOTHER PIRATE

(pushing through)

Leave off! She's mine.

FAT PIRATE

(slugs him)

I saw her first!

The CRACK of a whip ends the matter. The Pirate King leaps between them, brandishing his ox-tail whip.

PIRATE KING

Back off or you'll be shark bait
tonight!

His men slink away, cowards in his presence. Untangling Joan, he bows and kisses her hand a la francais. Joan SLAPS him hard across his face. He touches his cheek, laughs wonderfully, then GRABS Joan, pulls her close and KISSES HER FULL ON THE MOUTH! Joan loses her breath, squirms away, almost... titillated. Astonished, she backs to the mast.

PIRATE KING

I've come looking for the rest of
this!

He reaches above her and slips the wedding RING off the arrow's shaft. The green stone sparkles.

PIRATE KING

But your lovely ceremony has touched
my heart. I'm in the mood for a
wedding and you will be my bride!

His men laugh heartily.

JOAN

NEVER!

Joan wrenches the ARROW from the mast. She watches the Pirates surround her. Step by step Joan is backed to the very tip of the prow. We HEAR a woman's voice:

JOAN (V.O.)

No escape! The handsome, virile
Pirate King came closer! She knew
she'd fight hard to save her
virtue... but not too hard.

Joan looks left, looks right. Heavy seas. Looks down.
A frenzy of SHARKS!

PIRATE KING

Who's going to save you now?

ROAR!

The deafening churn of a motorboat closes in on the ANGELYNE. Joan turns toward the sound, shielding her eyes from the sun.

JACK ON WATER SKIS!

in a bathing suit -- weaving like a daredevil across the water --

JOAN

... Jack?

THE PIRATES

turn to each other, confused.

ON JACK

a cocky, ear to ear grin. Gives a big wave and a maniacal shout.

JACK

Go for the gold!!

CUT TO:

INT. - ANGELYNE CABIN - DAY

CLOSE ON - TYPEWRITER

pounding keys stop at: "Who's going to save you now!" Joan Wilder at her makeshift desk below deck on the ANGELYNE. Short-shorts and a bikini top. Thick white gunk on her badly sunburned nose.

JOAN'S POV - LOOKING THROUGH THE PORTHOLE

Jack is racing on water skis through busy traffic of Marseille harbor. He sets himself to jump a line of bobbing harbor barrels. Waves again.

JOAN

sighs, partly covers her eyes.

JACK IS AIRBORNE!

Soaring over the barrels, he lands neatly -- one barrel too soon. Somersaults out of control and OUT OF FRAME.

BACK TO JOAN

A beat, then the world's LOUDEST SPLASH! The wake of the motorboat ripples across the water, rocking the ANGELYNE -- Joan's chair shoots back and forth -- the coffee cup sloshes. Joan holds on til the boat settles. She sits back down at the typewriter, reading the last page.

JOAN

God, that's really... dreadful.

LOOKING AROUND THE CABIN

Joan searches for inspiration. Kansas after the tornado: Piles of clothes, empty bottles, a yellow surfboard wedged at an angle dividing the tiny cabin in two, a giant stereo, a basketball -- a jock's dorm room. Head in hands, she spots a series of photos pasted by her work area.

SNAPSHOT OF JAMAICA

Jack in a silk shirt looks lovingly at Joan. One arm around her waist, the other holds a BOTTLE of beer.

SNAPSHOT OF MARTINIQUE

A shirtless Jack tries to keep one arm around Joan while the other precariously balances two SIX PACKS.

SNAPSHOT OF TRINIDAD

Jack in a bathing suit, both arms lovingly around a KEG of beer. Joan stands by herself behind him.

BACK TO JOAN

lost in her memories. A DROP OF WATER plops on her hand. Another drips on the typewriter. Then a tiny shower.

JACK

(reading over her
shoulder)

Married! What the hell you get
them married for?

ON JACK

Dripping water from his hair, his nose, his skimpy bathing suit. Startles Joan.

JOAN

(embarrassed)

I thought it might save the story.

She quickly yanks the page from the typewriter, folds it, and hides it under the other papers.

A PUDDLE

slowly forming on the floor beneath Jack. Joan moves away from her desk. Throws a towel at Jack.

JOAN

(snaps)

Dry yourself off.

JACK

Hey, just one man's opinion... marriage is kind of old-fashioned even for your books.

JOAN

(forced laugh)

Well, you know me.

Jack tosses the towel on the floor, swishes it once or twice with his foot. He's got a thin red cut over his eye.

JOAN

(noticing)

You're hurt!

She reaches to a high shelf for a well-used FIRST AID KIT while Jack ducks under the surfboard to get at a small fridge. Pops open a can of French beer. Sniffs, swigs... grimaces.

JACK

(sing-song)

Honey, did you get a chance...

Joan is wetting a cotton ball with iodine.

JOAN

(cuts him off)

NO. I can't run all over Marseille
looking for Coors when I'm trying
to write.

She grabs his chin, daubs the cut.

JACK

(yowls)

That hurts!

JOAN

Good... I'm tired of explaining
why you have bandages all over
you every time we go out.

Jack slips an arm around her waist... mischievous.

JACK

So let's lock ourselves in until I
heal.

JOAN

Jack...

JACK

(kissing her neck)

C'mon. You won't even have to
cook. We'll call "Frog Legs R Us"
and have them deliver.

His charm is irresistible. Joan sways with his hug.

JOAN

(dreamy)

We can't... you know we have my
reception.

JACK

... not til Tuesday.

JOAN

This is Tuesday.

Jack stops, shrugs, then tries to maneuver Joan onto
the bed, sweeping away the clutter with his hand behind
her.

JACK

Then we'll fool them. We won't show up.

Joan turns away.

JOAN

Not show up? Gloria flew all the way in from New York. The party's for me.

JACK

And no one deserves it more! But, uh... I can't handle being Mr. and Mrs. Joan Wilder again.

Jack spends the next few minutes tearing the cabin apart to find his jeans.

JOAN

I wanted you there for moral support.

JACK

You've missed deadlines before...

JOAN

(a deep breath)
You don't understand. I'm not writing any more romances.

JACK

(still on the move)
What are you talking about? You got a great formula with those silly little books. Keep the assembly line greased. Crank 'em out forever.

Jack doesn't see her hurt.

JOAN

(defensive)
I could write something more serious... more important...

finally finds his jeans in a tackle box.

JACK

(teasing)
... famine, corruption... man's quest for the "G" spot!

JOAN

Sorry I brought it up.

Starts to walk away. Jack catches her to apologize.

JACK

Honey... just relax. Everything will sort itself out by the time we get to Rio.

JOAN

(dumbstruck)

RIO! But we just got to Marseille!

JACK

CARNIVAL! Everybody samba!

He hits the stereo. Starts to dance around the cabin. Joan watches him, wonderful, impossible, but a smile won't come. She shuts off the music.

JOAN

(earnest)

Jack, I don't need a carnival. I need a kitchen, and a living room... a real place to live. Let's go back to the States. We could get a house in Connecticut or on the island... then we could sail on weekends.

Jack is incredulous.

JACK

Weekends? And what do I do the rest of the week?

JOAN

You'll find something you want to do.

JACK

I'm doing it. Everything I ever wanted came true.

JOAN

But we need a new dream.

JACK

Right now, I'm dreaming about Carnival in Rio. And if I'm dreaming really, long range, I'm dreaming about what party comes after that, and after that.

Joan turns to hide a breaking heart.

Jack jumps into his jeans.

JACK

I'll get my own Coors.

Joan watches just long enough to see him disappear up the stairs. She moves to her typewriter, slowly covers it and addresses it squarely, as if it were her only confidant:

JOAN

Maybe nobody lives happily ever after.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD - NORTH AFRICA

AN ORCHARD

Gentle desert hills transformed into fruit groves and vegetable gardens. Working the fields are young men and women. They wear white galabehs that billow in the hot winds. -- A herd of WHITE STALLIONS graze beyond.

A COURTYARD - AROUND A FARMHOUSE

Cool shadows across a wooden gate. KITAL, barely 30, strokes an already long beard as he studies. Three dogs BARKING in the fields. LAUGHTER, O.S.

A LITTLE BOY

watched carefully by a circle of playmates, nervously tries to juggle three oranges. Has it for a beat, then drops an orange. Looks to his teacher, AJILA, who casts a scowl, then laughs, easily spinning four, five, six oranges! His baby DAUGHTER, not yet two, sits nearby with a single orange, mimicking what she sees.

AN OLD SCHOOL BUS

painted white. Across the side in blue is six-pointed STAR AND DOVE IN FLIGHT. Other bearded young men load supplies with a certain urgency. The bus almost looks like it was headed for an African Woodstock.

ON KITAL

content, surveying his community of DERVISHES, a Bohemian sect whose ancient theater arts inspire peace, service, and FUN. Suddenly, the dogs stop BARKING. Kital reacts. The packing stops.

BAM! - THE GATE IS KICKED OPEN

Framed by daylight is a huge, onyx-skinned African, RASHID, grey-haired but solid as a rhino. Behind him, vague silhouettes of other men.

RASHID

Fayn al-jawharah!
(*subtitled*)

Where is the Jewel!

Courageous silence. The children scurry to hide behind their mothers.

AJILA'S BABY DAUGHTER ..

left alone by the older kids. Now biting into her orange. Looks up and smiles as Rashid bends and lifts her into his massive hands.

RASHID

(holding the baby)

Fayn al-jawharah!

Kital has to stop Ajila from rushing the African. He points to the farmhouse. There is no other choice.

INSIDE THE FARMHOUSE - ON RASHID

as he shatters the door. He smiles. The JEWEL is now his!

CUT TO:

JOAN

forcing a smile. Behind her large picture windows open into gardens that overlook the Mediterranean. She stands dolefully next to a silver-haired BARON on a small dais. She has a PLAQUE in one hand and a glass in the other. The entire room of snooty guests hold crystal champagne glasses aloft to her.

BARON

(accented)

So we toast the woman who keeps the romance in our lives. May she write a thousand more!

CRASH! - JOAN DROPS HER GLASS.

The last thing she needed to hear. As the guests go back to the party, an all black orchestra plays soft jazz. GLORIA, Joan's publisher, comes over. Joan gives Gloria the plaque and takes her drink.

GLORIA

Half of France wants to seduce you. Ready?

Joan strains to catch a glimpse of the front entrance.

GLORIA

You should be glad he didn't come. This is a literary crowd. Jack's favorite author is the man who wrote "pull tab to open."

(turns Joan to her)

I didn't fly here to watch you get another plaque. I came because I'm your publisher and you're three months late.

JOAN

(deep breath)

My heart's not in it. Romances don't seem real to me anymore.

GLORIA

Real? You don't write real. You write about people that sail off into the sunset.

Joan stops a waiter for more champagne.

JOAN

What about the next day? When
the sun comes up?

GLORIA

No one cares. That's why they're
romances.

(Joan looks to
door again)

Oooh, I know what's wrong. Too
much time with Peter Pan on the
Good Ship Lollipop. Move on,
Joan. Guys like Jack have a
learning disability. They can't
use the words "marry" and "me" in
the same sentence.

JOAN

(defensive)

It's not that... I have a career.

GLORIA

(finally)

And I know a million career women
in New York who wished they got
wedding dresses with their corner
offices. All you'll ever get from
Jack is a wet suit.

INTO THE GARDEN - A MOB SCENE

Elegantly pushy fans -- Women in tiaras, men in tuxedos,
offer copies of her book for signing. Joan is swept
away from Gloria.

FLASH!

Blinded by flashbulbs, she veers off course. Pressed
by the crowd, champagne dizzy, she teeters on the EDGE
of Baroque fountain.

TO THE RESCUE

Someone pulls her free, away to a small gazebo. Joan's
eyes slowly adjust to the light.

INTO FOCUS - A WHITE ROSE

offered by every woman's dream -- exotically handsome, young, sultry, tumbling out of Scheherazade -- he kisses Joan's hand a la francais.

STRANGER

"White for love's purity. White for the heat of passion. White for an eternity of devotion."

A brilliant smile. He kisses her hand again.

JOAN

(amazed)

Do you have the right woman?

STRANGER

(an easy, friendly laugh)

You wrote those lines! In "Angelyne's Betrayal" -- the young Priest hides white roses in the confession box. It was wonderful. You are wonderful!

(steps closer)

My name is Omar Khalifa. I have travelled one thousand miles to tell you I need you.

PIANO KEYBOARD

Omar finishes a soulful Chopin Etude. THROUGH A WINDOW -- they can see but not hear the reception.

JOAN

That was so lovely.

OMAR

(sighs)

Can a madman play that way? That's what TIME magazine called Omar. A madman warlord. Why don't they ask my people? Next week they will choose Omar President for life.

(his eyes rivet

Joan)

If someone would write Omar's story so the West would understand.

Joan feels one of her feet slipping down the rabbit hole.

JOAN

But I only write silly romance novels.

OMAR

(pressing)

You create heroes, in a world of cynics. Strong men in a world of weaklings. That's not silly... that's important. I need you to do that for Omar...

JOAN

I couldn't....

Banging at the French doors; party revelers insistent on meeting Joan.

OMAR

We'll go to a quiet place; and you'll fascinate me with your ideas for the book.

(Joan hesitates)

Are you waiting for someone?

JOAN

There's a chance my friend Jack might come, but...

OMAR

In my country we say Fate will open the door... but each walks through alone.

CUT TO:

LIGHTS ON THE WATER

from a sleek 300 foot yacht. Joan leans over the railing of the top deck. Moonlit -- beautiful and confused. A HELICOPTER sits on a landing pad -- astern.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey! Joanniiiiiee...!

Startled, she runs across to the port side.

JOAN'S POV - ON THE WATER

French Harbor Patrol -- thirty feet below. A search-light hits Joan. Through the glare -- Jack! A hood ornament on the patrol boat. Spots Joan.

JACK

Thanks guys!

Thumbs up. He leaps recklessly onto the yacht's boarding ramp.

UP THE STAIRS

Two by two, Jack races. He's cleaned up -- a shave and a crumpled white tuxedo. He's as loose as Joan is tense. Surveys the yacht -- 360°.

JACK

You could put ten Angelynes on this tub!... Something else...
(from giddy to
angry in an instant)
Looked for you at the reception.

JOAN

You said you weren't coming.

JACK

I know but... I thought about what you said, and, uh, I had something important to say.

Expectant, Joan suddenly thinks the happy moment has finally come.

JOAN

You did?

JACK

(the wisdom of
Solomon)

Yeah... You don't want to sail to Rio and I don't want to go to Connecticut. I came up with a great compromise... We'll fly to Rio.

Joan deflates.

JOAN

Oh, Jack.

JACK

Don't answer yet. I'm not sure
the offer is still open. If
you're going to run off with some
fast-talking rich... jerk...

VOICE (O.S.)

You must be Jack!

BEHIND THEM - OMAR

His chic, European suit has given way to a red silk
galabeh. He is at once more exotic and more regal.
As if he fell back 400 years. He walks to Jack, hand
outstretched. Jack takes his hand.

JACK

And you must be the...

A sharp look from Joan --

JACK

... guy.

OMAR

Come and relax with us.

Omar opens the portal door for them.

JACK

(as Joan passes)

With us?

INTO THE STATEROOM

Plush, decorated with expensive kitsch -- western
technology -- stereo, TV, modular furniture. But one
wall is a great map of AFRICA. Joan sits. Jack
doesn't.

OMAR

I was just showing Joan my little
village in Africa. We'll stop
there on our way to Khartoum.

JACK
Khartoum?

Before Jack can talk.

OMAR
(excited)
Now Joan's work will receive the
serious attention it deserves.
This will be her greatest book...
OMAR'S biography.

JACK
(astounded)
You said you're going to Africa
with him?

JOAN
I haven't said anything. We were
just talking business.

JACK
That's the first time I heard it
called "business."

Omar watches them carefully.

OMAR
Isn't this a great opportunity
for Joan? She will be there to
see the gathering of tribes when
Omar is elected President.

JACK
(glaring at Joan)
And who is Omar running against?

JOAN
Jack, do you have to...?

OMAR
Open your mind, Mr. Coutler. As
the strong man rises, the weak
man falls aside. We all have only
one chance to grab what we want...
(takes Joan's hand)
... or else... we lose it.

JACK

(nods)

... deep!

(takes Joan's hand)

Good luck, pal. But we have to catch a flight to Rio.

Jack pulls. Joan pulls back... and loses.

OUT TO THE DECK

Joan is humiliated. Finally yanks -- free.

JOAN

You're hurting me... stop!

CLOSE ON JACK AND JOAN

Surprised themselves from the situation. A long beat --

JACK

(confused)

Haven't we had fun?

JOAN

(almost in tears)

It's not... enough.

JACK

(long beat, takes her hand)

Are you coming?

Joan can't talk. Just shakes her head. Jack realizes she means it. Omar appears behind Jack, touches his shoulder.

OMAR

I will call for a launch.

JACK

I don't need you to get me home.

He shoves Omar away.

JACK

yanks off his shoes, throws them overboard.

JOAN

What are you doing?

Off comes the coat, tie, shirt, pants. Omar's MEN gather on the decks to watch the crazy American as he climbs up on the rail, gives the finger to Omar and looks down to the water.

JACK'S POV - DARK SEA

It is a long way down.

JACK

See you in Rio-o-o-o!

He JUMPS!... A long beat... then a SPLASH.

ON JOAN

astonished, she grabs the rail.

JOAN

(almost a whisper)

Jack...

Omar is elegantly sympathetic.

OMAR

I am deeply sorry.

Joan nods, keeps her head turned to hide the tears.

JOAN

I'd like to freshen up.

OMAR

Of course.

He takes her arm, opens the portal DOOR.

A KNIFE!

plunges into Omar's chest! Joan SCREAMS! Omar falls backwards from the force of the blow. In front of Joan is Ajila, the Dervish juggler -- wet, bloody, and half out of his mind. He drapes a bloody hand around Joan's neck for support.

AJILA

(heavy accent)

Bring the Jewell!

She shoves him away and runs down the corridor. SLAM! into the immovable body of the African, Rashid. Joan screams again. Lost in the funhouse. Runs back the other way.

TWO SHOTS. Ajila comes staggering at Joan. She closes her eyes, trying to press herself into the wall. She HEARS the body fall, and decides she'd like to keep her eyes closed forever.

CUT TO:

STATE ROOM - LATER

Joan has trouble keeping her hands still around a brandy.

OMAR

is changing into a clean galabeh. Rashid ties a steel mesh VEST around his chest. Ajila's knife is bent in two on the table.

OMAR

I'm sorry you had to see such a terrible thing.

JOAN

(sympathetic)

Oh, I know what it feels like to have someone try to kill you because of a jewel.

OMAR

But not like this one!

As he finishes dressing, he walks slowly to Joan's chair -- and turns from chic to ominous.

OMAR

The Jewel of the Nile is a legend -- stories told to generations of children. Now, fanatics tell a new story! They say the Jewel is real... they say Omar has taken the Jewel!

Joan is suddenly very scared. Tries to pretend she doesn't feel it. -- Rashid stands impassive.

JOAN

I think I'd like to go home now!

OMAR

You are a gifted storyteller. If you should tell what you have seen, the stories will never end.

The ship's HORN sounds.

OMAR

Good! We sail.

JOAN

You can't... Jack will come for me.

Now Omar smiles.

OMAR

I believe Jack is on his way to Rio.

JOAN

(fishing)

... my publisher's meeting me for lunch!

OMAR

(amused)

Omar will sign your telegram, "Love, Joan!"

JOAN

BUT I'M AN AMERICAN CITIZEN!

OMAR

And Omar loves America!

FOLLOWING OMAR - ONTO THE DECK

Rashid bends to hear his command (in Arabic).

OMAR
(*subtitled*)
Kill Jack Coulter.

Rashid pivots, shouts orders in Arabic.

AT THE LAUNCH

Two MEN are being helped into scuba gear.

CUT TO:

ALONG THE QUAY - JACK

squishing along in his underwear and his socks. He moves past shocked lovers strolling by the misty sea-side. Stops in front of the ANGELYNE, staring at the bold black letters.

JACK
(addressing the boat)
Lady, you and me are going to Rio!

Climbing on board, Jack's anger grows. He starts slapping; banging anything he touches, he starts up the motor, throws off the mooring.

JACK
I samba alone!

POV - FROM THE DARK CABIN STEPS - WATCHING JACK

The low wheeze of a cough quickly suppressed. Something moves. Whatever it is gives a sickly, animalistic bay. Follows Jack's every move.

THE ANGELYNE

under the soft, guttural churn of its engine, starts into the harbor. Liquid lights of other boats, distorted in the sea mist, melt by.

Jack takes out his charts and a FLAHLIGHT from his locker by the wheel. Spreads out the maps on the deck table. Pops a bottle of BEER from the cooler.

JACK
I never promised her anything
but... me.

POV - STILL WATCHING FROM THE CABIN

What could only be described as laughter, degenerating into more coughing. Hastily swallowed so Jack won't hear.

Jack chug-a-lugs the beer.

JACK
She was the best time I ever
had... dammit!

He throws the bottle wildly over his shoulder. It sails into the cabin stairway. A beat, then:

VOICE
(from the cabin)
OW!!... buffone!

Jack jumps to his feet.

JACK
Somebody there? Hey, who's there?

Heavy footsteps on the stairs. A wet cough. A FIGURE stands motionless in the doorway. Red glow of a cigarette. Cloud of white smoke drifts out. Jack fumbles with his flashlight. Aims it at the door.

IN THE BEAM OF LIGHT

The glint of a GUN. Hand shielding its face, the FIGURE shuffles menacingly towards Jack... closer... the hand drops. ... It's RALPH -- last seen on his knees in Cartagena cursing his cousin for abandoning him. Tattered clothes. His mad little eyes are outposts of hell on earth.

RALPH

(wheezy euphoria)

I found you! ... Congratulations!
You've been named centerfold in
next month's "Dead Guy" magazine!

JACK

(slow recognition)

Wait a minute. I know you!
... God, you look terrible.

BLOOEE! Ralph fires a SHOT above Jack's head. Jack
hits the deck.

RALPH

Hands up! ... I know your moves.
You'd rearrange the furniture in
Helen Keller's living room.

JACK

(getting to his feet)

Easy with that gun.

Jack takes a step forward. BAM! Ralph fires again.

RALPH

Go ahead. Give me a reason. It
would make my... year.
(genuflects)

Madre mia. Know where I was while
you and Miss Long Legs were out
playing captain and first mate?
I got left on that island without
a shyster's nickel. Had to sign
up on a rusty freighter to work
my way back to the States.

(starts to pat Jack
down)

Only the crew were all rejects
from the communicable diseases
ward... every wacko, drippy,
open-sored lowlife was on that
stinkhole boat.

Ralph backs up and starts digging through the locker
with one hand, looking for something.

RALPH

I figure, okay, what the hell,
it gets me home. But the psychos
mutiny and turn south for Brazil.
Know who lives there, Mr. Lucky?
... Nazis. Nazis! Seems they
had a few genetic experiments
that they didn't get a chance to
finish in World War II. Those
Krauts had their eyes on my
Y-chromosomes. So I hitched a
ride on a Mickey Mouse prop plane.
But they made an unannounced
ganja stop in Haiti. The pilot
don't have enough bakshish for
the customs boys and we all get
accomodations at the Hotel Papa
Doc, every cell with a view of
the cesspool. Four weeks I
spent on my knees, tunnelling,
til my fingernails broke off, but
I crawled out and stowed away on
a cruise boat from Miami.
Finally, I get a break! Some
nice Cuban guy takes me in,
nurses me back to health... and
then during my sponge bath he
kisses me on the lips!

(spits)

He said I reminded him of Garbo.

Ralph is shaking from the memories, eyes fixed in space.

JACK

(moved)

Gee, that really sounds rough.

(reaches in his
pocket)

Can you use a C-note?

KAPOW! Ralph shoots again.

RALPH

A hundred dollars! How 'bout a
hundred thousand, you dismal
scumster -- part of that rock was
mine! I had my hands on it!
We're waiting for morning, then
we're marching for your bank to
make a little withdrawal.

Hands still up, Jack looks around for a way out.

JACK
Can't... joint account.

RALPH
So we'll wait for the lady broad.
(spooked, looks over
his shoulder)
Where is she?

JACK
(points behind
his shoulder)
Over there. On that yacht.

RALPH
(looking)
What yacht?

Jack runs to the rail. A break in the mist reveals that the yacht is gone. Jack's voice drops. It's finally real.

JACK
It's not there... She... left me.

RALPH
(taunting)
Tough luck, Broadway Joe. Looks like she's smarter than I thought.

JACK
(coming back)
Yeah, well no girl, no bank account.

Ralph realizes his hard-earned victory is sailing away on the missing yacht. He cocks the gun.

RALPH
(thinking)
Okay... okay... know what...
you're going to follow that yacht!

JACK
Not me... I'm going to Rio.

RALPH
Suck my Rio! Turn this boat
around. Now!

BAM! Fires, this time a little closer to Jack. Jack
nods, goes slowly over to the wheel.

JACK
Whatever you say.

Spins the wheel. The ANGELYNE comes around, shooting
the BOOM across. Ralph is whacked off his feet.

THE GUN

flies across the deck. Jack dives for it. Ralph rolls
himself into a ball and rams Jack, knocking him into
the engine. It sputters and kicks off. Now the
ANGELYNE starts to bob. Ralph is flailing at Jack.

THE ANGELYNE

out of control, pushed by the currents, turns back the
other way. The BOOM shoots back across the deck. This
time taking Ralph with it over the rail.

HANGING OVER THE WATER

Ralph holds onto the boom, screaming for dear life.
Feet dangling wildly over dark, choppy seas. The
ANGELYNE keels sharply.

JACK
(from the deck)
Don't blame me.

RALPH
But I can't swim!

Jack grabs a long pole, holds it out to Ralph.

JACK
Catch it! Hurry up.

The boat is 30 degrees in the water. Ralph lets one
hand free to reach for the pole. Almost. Stretches.
Grabs it.

RALPH
I... got it!

He PULLS a little too hard. Jack and Ralph both tumble into the sea.

CRAZY IN THE WATER

Jack comes up. No sign of Ralph. Jack goes under. A beat, then comes up with Ralph. Puts him in a life-guard's hold.

RALPH
(splashing)
I'm dying. You're drowning me.

JACK
Shut up. We'll get to the boat.

RALPH
What boat...?

THE ANGELYNE

is making its crewless way out to sea, far from reach.

CLOSER

Jack's lovely dream, free on the water. A long beat... then... POW! An apocalyptic explosion. The ANGELYNE goes up in a ball of fire. Mast toppling, sails flaring, it all burns like firewood. Sinks quickly into the Marseille harbor.

CUT TO:

ON THE DOCK

Jack is bent over Ralph's supine body, pumping his chest. A tiny jet of water squirts Ralph's mouth. He mumbles deliriously as he comes around. Jack holds his head up.

RALPH
... the boat blew up... the boat
blew up...
(opens his eyes and
grabs Jack tightly)
The BOAT BLEW UP! I was almost
killed! Who are you? The Prince
of Darkness? Don't you got any friends?

Jack lets him drop back to the ground. Notices big chunks of the ANGELYNE floating by -- a piece of wood with the letters "ANGEL", pages from Joan's novel.

JACK
(stands, yells)
OMAR!

Jack walks to the edge, stares off towards the sea.

JACK
I've got to go after Joan.

RALPH
You ain't making one move without me, hear that? ... So where we going?

OVER JACK'S SHOULDER

into the blackness of the night.

JACK
... Africa!

CUT TO:

WHIRLING SANDS

Kicked up by the blades of Omar's HELICOPTER. FROM INSIDE Joan strains to see where she's landing. The dust blocks her view. Omar leans to her.

OMAR
(shouting over the noise)
It's good to come home!

JOAN'S POV - AS THE DUST SETTLES

They have been surrounded by twenty men in jet black galabehs and scarlet red burnuus, all armed with automatic weapons. These are Omar's WARRIORS.

JOAN
(open-mouthed)
I wrote this once!

OMAR

Yes, yes! "The Return of the King." I had the same costumes designed!

A FLOCK OF SHEEP tended by two young boys sweeps by the helicopter. Right behind comes a DUNE BUGGY, chopped and rigged for the desert. Rashid hoists the seat next to Omar.

VAROOM!

Tearing recklessly through his village. An ancient casbah in the northern Sudan. High mud walls and a labyrinth of dirt streets.

OMAR

The people have come to greet
OMAR!

Rushing out of his way are Omar's "people" -- frightened men, dour women and skeptical children.

Omar cuts through a cat's cradle of wash lines.

INTO THE SUKH

The traditional market place. A square of stalls and an old BARN. The dune buggy fishtails to a stop. Omar jumps out.

OMAR

Come see! Hurry!

He's gone. Joan climbs out awkwardly, but Omar has disappeared. Beyond the sukh, four high ARCHWAYS. Joan runs after. Around a corner. WHACK! The local BUTCHER slams his cleaver on a camel carcass, tosses the head into a pile of offal.

Joan, almost swoons, hurries on. A low RUMBLE begins...

BETWEEN TWO ARCHWAYS

First the needle point, then the gleaming body of an F-16 rolling right at Joan down the old streets of the medieval village. The PILOT waves at Joan. The barn doors open and the jet rolls inside. Suddenly OMAR is next to Joan.

OMAR

The first jet in my country.

(genuine)

I love it so. When Omar is President, he will have many more. Of course, in the book you will say that Omar is the pilot.

JOAN

(astounded)

Book!... No... You can't keep me here.

Omar smiles. Grabs Joan and runs with her towards the village wall. Screams and his WARRIORS open the MAIN GATE. They run outside the walls.

JOAN'S POV

A palette of browns and whites, hard sands and dunes. Desert everywhere. Joan turns a slow 360. On the other side are jagged MOUNTAINS, their tops dusted by snow.

OMAR

(shoves Joan a little)

Walk. Go. You are free to leave!

(voice drops)

Did you ever see what happens to a body after just an hour in the desert? Of course, you could reach Khartoum across the mountains... but there are tribes there so primitive even my men wouldn't go near.

JOAN

... I'll never write your book.

OMAR

Make yourself comfortable in my home. You'll be there until the book is done.

Joan's fortitude is melting quickly.

JOAN

(more to herself)

And no one can find me?

Takes her hand to lead her back in. The GATES slowly close around them.

OMAR

Only the worst kind of fool would
tempt our desert alone.

CUT TO:

A CREST OF DUNES

A new tarmac road stops abruptly. TRACK one hundred yards past the road's end. We HEAR the nagging grind of an engine that will never start again.

A dusty LANDROVER comes into view. The HOOD slams down. Jack kicks the ground. His hands are filled with grease. A gun in a holster on his side.

Ralph is sucking out the last drop of water from his canteen. His face is cracked and nettled. He hurls the canteen and charges Jack.

RALPH

(panics)

I need water. I got active sweat glands.

He grabs Jack's canteen. It falls and the water sloshes out into the sand.

JACK

(hard)

You'd better pray I get this thing fixed.

He goes back to the Landrover. Ralph is losing it. Wiggles up a dune, talking to himself.

RALPH

I'm dehydrating before my own eyes.

(checks his pulse,
blinks)

My vision's going blurry.

At the CREST OF THE DUNE Ralph falls to his knees, crying.

RALPH

I need water!!

Looking down the other side, Ralph does a double take. Jumps up. Throws a kiss to the sky.

DOWN BELOW - A SMALL OASIS

A cluster of palms and a rambling pool of water. Ralph half runs, half rolls down the hill. Splashes into the pool and falls face forward, drinking.

A beat, then Ralph shoots up, spitting the water out in a fine spray.

RALPH

This tastes like camel piss!

Looks to his right. A dromedary CAMEL is unleashing a yellow jet stream into the pool. It seems to sneer at Ralph. A small herd grazes nearby.

RALPH

(howls)

I'll sand down your hump!

He jumps at the camel but it trots away unconcerned past two billowy WHITE TENTS pitched by the side of the pool. On their side, the mark of the STAR AND A DOVE IN FLIGHT. By a smoldering campfire are several baskets of food, jugs of wine.

Ralph thinks he's been redeemed. He creeps by the tents.

RALPH

Anybody home?

No one seems to be around. Ralph snatches everything he can and dashes behind a tall PALM TREE. Starts eating wildly. Tilts up a jug of wine. CRASH! The jug is shattered.

RALPH

What the...?

RAT TAT TAT

Three knives catch the drape of Ralph's sleeves, pinning him to the tree. He tries to move. Immobile.

PRESTO!

PRESTO! Dropping down in a flash before Ralph's eyes is a six foot vision of fear. A long beard and white burnuus, dark sunglasses. It's Kital -- the Dervish leader.

RALPH

COULTER! Help! Get your ass over here!

Ralph looks up at the top of the PALM where he came from, then starts screaming again. FWOP! He gets an orange stuffed in his mouth.

COMING OVER THE CREST - RALPH'S POV

Jack appears. Ralph relaxes. Then he sees Jack raise his hands over his head.

Charging over the dune come five DERVISHES riding wild white Arabian stallions. They chase Jack down by Ralph and start a giant circle around them, shrieking, howling, doing dangerous stunts on their horses.

The DERVISHES stop and form a tight ring around Jack and Ralph. He removes the orange from Ralph's mouth.

KITAL

AMERICANS?

RALPH

Yeah... we're... uh...

(thinking fast)

... tourists. Yeah. That's it. We were looking for the pyramids, but the Sphinx gave us the wrong directions.

THWACK!

another blade pins Ralph's shirt to the tree. This one close to his neck. Kital waits.

JACK

Actually, we're not tourists.

KITAL

You are Omar's men?

RALPH

(hoping)

Can't fool you guys. Yeah. We're Omar's men.

THWACK! THWACK!

two more knives. This time Ralph's ears are practically pinned back.

JACK

Actually, we're not Omar's men either. But we are headed to Omar's place. We're trying to help a friend in trouble.

Kital goes through their pockets. He takes Jack's gun, wallet and knife.

KITAL

Omar makes trouble for all. He has taken the Jewel of the Nile from us.

He juggles the gun, wallet, knife and then tosses them to the others who juggle on their horses.

Ralph suddenly stops moaning and perks up.

RALPH

Jewel?...

JACK

Believe me, we're not after the Jewel. I just want to find my friend... and break her neck.

RALPH

This Jewel... what's it worth? In round numbers...

KITAL

Priceless! And all powerful! Only the appearance of the Jewel in Khartoum can stop Omar.

RALPH

You just gave me the chills.

The SOUND of an engine. One of the DERVISHES drives the Landrover into the oasis.

JACK

Great, you fixed it! We'll get out of here right away.

MACHINE GUN FIRE explodes around the oasis.

LEADER

(wails)

OMAR!!

The DERVISHES leap to the remount. A small convoy of Omar's forces has attacked. Their black galabehs in a line across the dunes.

Jack scurries for the oasis, diving behind Ralph's tree for cover. Ralph is right in the line of fire.

One by one, the DERVISHES ride by the tree removing their blades and freeing Ralph with blinding speed. Kital reaches him last.

KITAL

(looking down at Ralph)

Anything you ask from us -- you will be given. Anything you take from us -- you will be killed.

Kital raises his sword high... Ralph closes his eyes. Then Kital smiles.

KITAL

But this time we forgive you.

RALPH

Oh thank you your Honor.

PING! A bullet knocks the sword from Kital. The DERVISHES spur their horses -- dust gathers -- and they're off. Ralph immediately sneaks over and takes the sword.

JACK

(a beat, then to Ralph)

Get the Rover!

He and Ralph sprint towards their Landrover. Then stop. A dozen WARRIORS appear between them. They head back and jump into a shallow ravine.

JACK'S POV

A convoy of three TRUCKS moves across the hard desert floor. Jack and Ralph watch from their vantage point.

JACK

I hope you can run better than you can swim.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

Thirty SHEEP are squeezed in like sardines. Ralph stares nose to nose with a black-faced ewe. He and Jack slump against the side, exhausted. Ralph kisses the stolen sword.

RALPH

(cynically)

Right down the middle. Fifty-fifty.

JACK

(eyes closed)

What?

RALPH

Don't play stupid. The Jewel!
And do not even think about messing with me.

He swats at the ewe.

RALPH

What are you lookin' at?

CUT TO:

THE WORLD'S LARGEST DESK

dwarfs Joan -- sitting behind a typewriter. She pecks with one finger jabs, glum little karate chops.

ABOVE THE DESK

A monstrous framed blow-up of Omar's infamous TIME magazine cover. More like a B-movie ad than hard news.

ON THE ROLLER

The page is filled with nonsense. Out a dormer window on her right -- scorched desert, savage mountains and Khartoum. Joan sits up, inspired. Slips a fresh page into the machine, types:

"To the American Consulate,
Khartoum. I am a prisoner..."

Joan is energized. Zips out the page, folds it, runs to the door. Opens. Two WARRIORS are rigid sentries.

Joan steps back, runs to the window. Takes a deep breath, and out --

ROOF

Slopes down to the Village sukh on one side. Into a dark courtyard on the other. Centuries of wear have made the tiles slippery -- so she removes her shoes -- and hot!

Joan's feet sizzle. She fights screaming -- and gravity. Down to the sukh, leaping to the ground. She plunges her feet into fetid MUD along the edges of the market.

AROUND THE SUKH

Mid-day heat has driven most of the villagers indoors. Joan skirts the edges of the square. Passing by an open stall, she jumps. The BUTCHER steps from the shadows -- a chicken under his arm. TWIST! Off comes its head. Joan flinches.

JOAN

(reeling)

Hello... well... I need to get a message to Khartoum... To the American Consulate... Understand? Khartoum. ... Oh, God.

The BUTCHER stares at her blank-faced. Starts to pluck fluff off the carcass.

JOAN

(pleading)

Oh please, does anyone speak
English?

(holds up note)

Just take this letter to Khartoum.
Maybe someone has a camel? A
horse? ... Something?

BUTCHER

(hestatingly)

Téléphone?

Points matter-of-factly around the corner. Joan follows-unsure. A new TELEPHONE BOOTH is set at an angle in the dust. The Butcher opens the door for Joan. Drops a coin in the machine for her. Hands her the receiver. Nonplussed, Joan steps in, turns her back and cups the receiver.

JOAN

Operator? ... Hello? Can I
have the American Embassy? ...
No... please... s'il vous plait...

She's cut off. Turns back to the Butcher.

OUTSIDE THE BOOTH

A crowd of nearly a hundred VILLAGERS has gathered to watch Joan use the phone. Joan gasps. Waves them away. They ALL WAVE BACK, nice and friendly.

TWO WARRIORS

on the far side of the sukh, spot the crowd. Move to investigate. Push their way through the crowd. When they get to the phone, it's empty. One YANKS the phone off its cord.

ON JOAN

running hard to get back to her room.

BY THE PHONE

The two warriors question an old WOMAN. She points in Joan's direction. But the BUTCHER immediately points the opposite way. Now all the villagers point around the compass.

JOAN - CLIMBING THE ROOF

Stifling screams as her feet sear again. Halfway up she realizes that she can't make it. Straddles the ridge of the roof -- a hot tile breaks her grip. WHOOSH! -- She slides down the wrong side of the house.

OVER THE DARK COURTYARD

filled by the branches of a mammoth BAOBAB tree -- Joan grabs for something to break her fall but she runs out of roof.

Crashing into the tree -- Joan hangs suspended -- hands on the roof, feet in the tree. A long beat -- to contemplate her fall. Below, the courtyard is a thicket of sharp, stiff bramble.

Small cracks, as the branch starts to give. From the house -- a shadow.

AN UMBRELLA - loops her neck -- she's pulled just as the branch gives way -- through a window into a shadowed room.

IN THE ROOM

Joan is upside down on a pile of pillows. A few beats to gather her wits. She rolls over.

FACE TO FACE

with an elfin OLD MAN in rimless spectacles. Silky white beard. Bald pate covered by a skull cap. More like a wrinkled child than an elder. He wears an academic's three-piece suit.

The Old Man squeezes her nose. Touches her cheeks, mouth, eyes, teeth. Echoes of a British public school in his accent.

OLD MAN

(amazed)

You're a woman! This is... unexpected.

(feels her biceps)

Not very strong. Oh well. Up, up!

He pulls Joan to her feet.

JOAN

You've got to help me. I've been kidnapped by Omar. I have to get to Khartoum.

OLD MAN

(amazed)

But in my dream, I say those words! But not to you... to a hero... with a great army.

(doubtful)

You have an army?

JOAN

No... I'm just Joan Wilder.

OLD MAN

Well, Justjoan... Omar has out-smarted us both. As a little boy, he was afraid of the dark. Now he has become the darkness. ... Neither of us will ever see Khartoum.

He walks to a small table with books. Joan is confused -- but he might be an ally.

JOAN

You're a prisoner too? What did you do?

OLD MAN

Nothing yet. ... Hopeless.

He starts to read.

JOAN

No... no it's not. I'm going to Khartoum. Somehow.

He looks up -- amused, surprised.

OLD MAN

Across the desert?

JOAN

I'll travel at night. To the East. If I could get to the American Consulate.

Long stare from the Old Man. Joan blushes.

OLD MAN

Someone is worried about you?

He takes Joan by surprise.

JOAN
 (off-balance)
 No... not anymore...
 (beat, then)
 I can do it. Then...
 (she smiles)
 ... I'd really write a book about
 Omar.

Now he smiles --

OLD MAN
 (curious)
 Maybe you are the one. ... The
 desert is very powerful.

JOAN
 I can handle myself.

The Old Man reaches under his bed for a satchel and an umbrella. Quickly combs his few remaining tufts of hair. He stands at attention in front of Joan.

OLD MAN
 I accept. We are sworn, Justjoan.

JOAN
 Accept? ... I ...

OLD MAN
 You are the Hero. I'll be the
 army.
 (salutes)
 When do we leave?

Puts his umbrella to his shoulder like a rifle. It takes a moment -- but Joan runs with the absurdity.

JOAN
 Well... the heat keeps everyone
 inside. Maybe...

She runs to the window. Climbs part way on the branch to get a view into the square.

JOAN'S POV - THE SQUARE

A brisk scirocco is starting to gust. Near the BARN -- a TRUCK CONVOY has just arrived. Sheep are leaping from the LAST TRUCK. -- They seem very happy to get out. Especially one ewe.

BACK TO JOAN

As she crawls in again, she's exuberant.

JOAN

We should just be ready for the right moment... Oh my God.

ACROSS THE ROOM - OMAR!

Joan almost faints. The Old Man is gone. Omar stands like his TIME cover -- a madman. Rashid stands behind. Omar's rage cuts through his studied deportment.

OMAR

Where is the Jewel!

JOAN

(genuinely confused)
The Jewel? I don't...

He SLAPS her across the face. As her eyes tear, her defiance is steeled.

OMAR

The Jewel of the Nile. Do not cross me.

JOAN

Please, I've never seen the Jewel.

OMAR

Then why are you here now!...

No answer. Omar steps to the side. Joan is left facing Rashid.

VOICE (O.S.)

Do not hurt her, Omar.

Swinging down from the ceiling beam, with surprising agility, the Old Man hits the floor. Stumbles a bit. His glasses scoot across the floor. Almost blind without them, he nods politely when Omar offers them back.

JOAN

(to the Old Man)

You have the Jewel?

Omar laughs.

OMAR

Miss Wilder... this is the Jewel!

The Old Man bows gracefully to Joan. Clasps his hands to his forehead.

OMAR

... Abn al Mahdi, Defender of the Faith, Sage of the Desert, whose blood descends through two thousand years of history... The Jewel of the Nile!

Joan does double, double-takes.

JOAN

But... you don't exist!

JEWEL

(smiles)

I am the last. I hoped to fill my remaining days with teaching and quiet study...

(turns to Omar)

But that hope was denied me. I had to come to my people.

OMAR

Old man you should have stayed with your tricksters. I could not allow you to interfere with the election.

(jealous)

You see Joan -- one word from him is more powerful than Omar's armies.

Joan goes to the Jewel. Takes his hand.

JOAN

Omar is a loser.

A low rumble in the distance startles them. A beat, then...

EXPLOSION

The room fills with dust, falling boards.

OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

On low hills overlooking the square, two of Omar's warriors work mortars. PULL BACK -- Kital and the Dervishes are their captors. Kital juggles three mortar grenades casually.

VILLAGE STREET

Omar's warriors rushing to the attack. Shoving villagers aside. The WINDS have surged.

BACK TO THE COURTYARD

The side of Omar's house is rubble. In the room -- Rashid trips over rubble to find Omar under a beam. Helps him up.

DOWN THE BAOBAB TREE

Joan and the Jewel drop to the closed yard -- only now, a gaping hole, opens to the BARN. The Jewel carries his umbrella -- they run together.

INTO THE SQUARE

50 sheep running lose. Joan and the Jewel wade through. Ordinance whistles above them. The truck convoy has been left alone. Joan looks.

JOAN

We'll drive to Khartoum!

The Jewel's glasses are dusty. He stops to dust them. Joan is half-way there when she realizes he's not. Turns. Two warriors grab her.

BAM! A blur of punches...

JACK

finally. The sheep dart around them. Joan touches him,... before she can say anything he grabs her, pulls her to the truck. Opens the door. Rushes her in.

JACK

Get in!

She squirms into the driver's seat and out the other door.

JOAN

Wait!

Jack cannot believe it. Joan runs to the Jewel -- helps him along.

JACK

Who's he?

Before Joan can answer, the Jewel silences her with a look.

JEWEL

I'll be your guide.

JACK

We don't need a guide. We need a miracle!

JOAN

He's coming with us.

JACK

Didn't you already cause enough trouble with your boyfriend, Omar?

JOAN

I was kidnapped! ... I'm not going without him.

RASHID

enters the square. Spots them. Rashid swings up his UZI. RIPS across the tires of all the trucks.

JACK

No time to argue. He and Joan get out of the truck. The Jewel follows as Jack pulls Joan with him towards the BARN.

JACK

Thanks... Now we're really stuck. What's in the BARN?

Joan suddenly realizes what's inside. Jack slides open the gate. Reacts.

IN THE BARN

Omar's F-16. Jack startles the pilot. He puts up his hands.

CUT TO:

SUKH

The wind keeps everyone head down in the village. Ralph is creeping along the edges, a burnuus draped over his head. Stops two old women. He holds his sword like a musketeer.

RALPH

Excusez, le Jewel ...? Ou est le rock?

The women just hurry away. Ralph sneaks for someone else to find:

CUT TO:

OMAR

leading a dozen warriors and Rashid in search of the Jewel. In the wind, he prowls madly.

CUT TO:

RALPH

pinned down by machine gun fire. Holds his sword like a teddy bear. On hands and knees, he starts into the street outside the barn.

FROM THE BARN - A ROAR

Exploding madly comes the F-16! It disintegrates the doors. Howls into the main square. Past the sheep. Under the archways.

IN THE COCKPIT

Jack is behind the pilot with a gun to his head. Joan and The Jewel are squeezed behind in the co-pilot's seat.

ON OMAR

his face turns black as he sees the F-16 taxing through the village. Instructs Rashid. Rashid kneels and aims. Fires!

BACK TO COCKPIT

The pilot slumps in front of Jack. Jack curses and takes the stick. Finds himself in charge of the fastest race car in the world! At least he can steer.

JOAN

Now what?

JACK

Time to kick some ass!

Joan realizes that Jack is enjoying it!

JACK'S POV

As they careen through the village, dragging clothes-lines and carts in their wake. Joan points to the MAIN GATE. Jack takes aim.

ON OMAR

yelling to his warriors to lie down before the jet. They all scatter. The jet rumbles by.

ON RALPH

sees Jack pass by in a blur, shakes his sword.

RALPH

COULTER! You bastard!

ON JACK

A big, U.S. thumbs up as he bears down on the MAIN GATE.

JACK

Hold on!

BOOM! Slicing through the old gate. Fiery taxi -- trail from behind as the F-16 heads into the desert.

CUT TO:

OMAR AND RASHID - AT THE HELICOPTER

Though the wind is picking up, they make sure several men board the chopper. A swirl of dust and it lifts off in pursuit.

OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

The Dervishes point as the F-16 disappears from view.

STREAKING ACROSS THE DESERT FLOOR

The F-16 rattles and shakes. Jack is unable to stop it. Or make it fly. It skips wildly along the rocky, cracked, terrain, leaping through intermittent dunes.

Now the WIND has become vicious. Joan turns to look behind.

JOAN
(yelling)
Here they come!

IN THE SKY

Omar's chopper buzzes low along the desert. The chase is on.

JACK
Now what!

The Jewel leans forward to point at the horizon.

ANGLE - SANDSTORM

A maelstrom of black foam churns the sky.

JEWEL
Habo'ob. Go there!

JACK
You're crazy. We'll get killed!

THE CHOPPER

fires repeated BURSTS from machine guns. Dips and turns to force the jet to stop.

BACK TO THE COCKPIT

bullet holes speckle the seat near Jack.

JACK
Good argument.

TRACKING THE JET

Jack steers it wildly into the sandstorm. The dust cloud envelops the plane and everything else.

ON THE CHOPPER

Too late to turn. It begins to shake violently.
Vanishes in the blackness.

SCREEN GOES BLACK:

FADE IN:

CLEAR SKIES

The desert has settled under silent blue skies. A hot, crimson sun sits above the mountains.

JOAN

almost buried in a sand bank. Wiggles to get free. Spits out sand -- in her hair, eyes, teeth. Blind for a moment -- she rubs her eyes.

DIRECTLY ABOVE HER - JACK

Half-amused, half-disgusted. Stands high on the wing of the F-16. Its tail is free but its nose is Ostrich-like in the dune.

JOAN

Jack?

He looks at her, then at the desolation around him.

JACK

Sure beats the hell out of Rio.

Jack makes no move to help her.

JOAN

Don't help.

JACK

We've got to get going ... And put something on your nose. An hour out here it'll be deep fried.

JOAN

Where's the J --
(slurs the "Jewel"
into --)
Joe. Where's Joe?

Jack walks to the tip of the wing.

JACK

Joe?

He points across the desert. The Jewel has started walking toward the mountain range in the distance. He's a hundred yards away, walking with his white umbrella open above his head.

JACK

Just let him go. He'll slow us down.

JOAN

(back turned)

We have to catch up.

(turns back)

We're together.

JACK

Moving to his Casbah next?

JOAN

We have to get to Khartoum. To the American Consulate. All of us.

Jack takes a deep sigh. Looks heavenward. Rubs the stubble of his chin -- LEAPS -- off the wing, to the ground beside her.

JACK

Lady... You still haven't paid me the three hundred and fifty dollars you owe me for dragging your ass to Cartagena. I can't tell you what Khartoum is going to cost you.

JOAN

You can have my share of the boat!

That cuts. She turns her back to him and walks quickly in the direction of the Jewel. He catches up and walks along.

JACK

Slow down. Conserve your energy.

Joan cools a bit.

JOAN

(for strategy)

No, hurry up. I don't think you want to be here when Omar finds his toy.

JACK

What...?

JOAN

The jet. His first born.

Jack takes a few steps and then it hits him.

JACK

You go on. I'll catch up in a minute.

She tries to protest but he's gone.

ON JACK - BACK TO THE JET

Bubbling, inspired. Under the exhaust, in English and Arabic lettering, is the red stenciled warning:
DANGER - FUEL.

ON JOAN - FROM A DISTANCE - POV

Watches Jack busy with the jet. Then a pop! -- and --
ROLLING THUNDER! The F-16 goes up in a black ball of
grease and fire.

BACK TO JACK - CLOSE UP

A smile the size of Montana comes across Jack's face.

JACK

That's for the Angelyne... I
still owe you for Joan.

CUT TO:

SAND DUNE

A hand appears at the top. Then another. Finally a
head -- Ralph. Face crusted with dust, lips charred.
He barely manages to drag himself over the top. Stops.
Dives back down -- comes up with his souvenir sword.
Kisses it.

A SHADOW

elongated in the sand -- slips over Ralph. Then two,
three...

LOOKING UP

he sees the Dervishes lined across the hillcrest, sitting on their stallions. Ralph screams, runs, but they quickly surround him. Two Dervishes leap on Ralph, pull him to his knees. Kital takes back his sword. Walks a circle around Ralph. Now they bend his head.

KITAL

You were warned!

RALPH

(crying)

Not my head, c'mon guys!

KITAL

Tell me why your friend has gone with the Jewel of the Nile?

CLOSE ON RALPH

he forgets where he is and who he's with -- shakes his head free.

RALPH

That mook! He did it to me again! Listen to me. I never saw that jewel.

KITAL

No?

They press his head down again. The tallest Dervish yells and raises the broad sword high.

RALPH

(choking)

Wait, wait, for God's sake. You need me. I can help you find him. I... I know his habits. His M.O. He's a psycho. Real smart. You'll never find him without me.

KITAL

He's not your friend?

RALPH

(forced laugh)

Friend? Not even close. I'm on a mission like you guys. I took an oath to the Mother Superior at the orphanage to find him. He, he steals from kids. I'll catch him for you! I studied his habits!

KITAL

smiles -- nods to the others. Ralph looks up at his own sword of Damocles, winces. Two Dervishes juggle the sword above his head. Coming closer with each pass.

KITAL

Your friend does not know what Omar will do for the Jewel. You will help us find him -- but first you must take the oath.

RALPH

Oh baby, I want to. Give me the oath. Let me swear.

(under his breath)

I swear I'm going to kill Coulter.

KITAL

Good, the oath.

Two of the Dervishes grab Ralph and make a thin slit along his arm. Looks alot worse than it is... but Ralph smiles, then faints dead away.

CUT TO:

OMAR -- IN THE DESERT

his face contorted. Before him is the wreckage of his F-16. Smoke sweeps along the charred fuselage. Behind him, his men stand at a safe distance. More toys -- Three HALF-TRUCKS painted black and red -- idle nearby. Omar finally turns his back on his jet just in time to see a flatbed truck driving up.

RASHID

jumps out of the truck. His hair covered in sand. On the back of the truck is the hulk of Omar's helicopter. That's two down. Rashid doesn't dare speak. Omar brings his binoculars up to his eyes, scans the desert.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS

Omar sweeps along the sand until he stops at the mountains. Opaque clouds on the horizon. Omar drops his field glasses.

OMAR
(points to the
mountains).

Do'or ree!

Rashid starts to complain. Omar cuts him off. The HALF-TRACKS are already moving as Omar and Rashid run to jump onboard.

CUT TO:

JOAN'S NOSE

Fire-engine RED. She touches it and moans.

WIDE ANGLE - ACROSS THE DESERT

Three long shadows trudging on sand packed into tiny wavelets. Jack trudges his sunglasses coated in dust. Ahead, the Jewel saunters easily with Joan at his side. His umbrella opened and resting on his shoulder. If the umbrella were closed, he could be Charlie Chaplin.

JOAN
(quietly)
But shouldn't I tell him?

JEWEL
The Bull runs fastest when aroused.

JOAN
I don't...

JEWEL
Your friend's anger may get us to
Khartoum... devotion he must learn
on his own.

Joan drops back to talk to Jack. He's not in a good mood.

JACK

stops to open the jug of water. Joan is doing her best to minimize the situation.

JACK
Here. Take one sip.

JOAN
I can wait.

Jack shields his eyes with both palms, looks ahead.

JACK
(grudging
admiration)
Joe never seems to slow down
though, does he? Never takes a
drink of water. Doesn't even
sweat.

JOAN
I couldn't just leave him there.

JACK
Of course you couldn't. You knew
I'd kill you if we were alone.

JOAN
Look, I didn't ask you to rescue
me. I'm the victim here! If I
ever see Omar again...

JACK
(interrupting)
You're about to...

ON THE HORIZON

Three sand devils spiral off the desert floor. The
wake of the three Half-Tracks.

JACK
Looks like Omar isn't taking
your break-up that good.

Zap ... Jack gets the last word in.

ON THE OLD MAN

He's stopped walking. Before them, the mountains rise
suddenly off the desert floor. The JEWEL is rubbing
his chin, singing to himself. Running up behind, Jack
and Joan stand on either side.

JOAN

(scared)

Omar said there were dangerous tribes in these mountains...

JACK

(joking)

What? Cannibals?

The Jewel looks at him with a "You guessed it" look.

JACK

Oh. Well, let's start at the bottom.

JEWEL

There is a safe path, Justjoan, but I'm afraid I've been away too long to remember.

A few steps -- and the low path they're on hits a --

FORK IN THE ROAD

To the left, the path shoots up steeply over barren rock. To the right, it seems to meander around the foothills and into the mountains.

Without noticing as they walk, Jack goes to the right and the Jewel to the left. Joan notices and stops -- they form a triangle.

JACK

We go this way.

JEWEL

(points with his umbrella)

No, no -- here.

JOAN

I think he's probably a little more familiar with these mountains than you are, Jack.

A beat...

JEWEL

America. Democracy. We vote!

He starts to walk up his chosen path and slowly raises his arm above his head to vote. Joan falls in behind and raises her hand as well. Jack has no choice. He makes an attempt to regain some of his lost authority.

JACK
OK, but let's shake a leg.

The Jewel sticks out his skinny leg, shakes it, shrugs, and goes on.

CUT TO:

A NARROW CANYON IN THE NUBIAN FOOTHILLS

High sandstone cliffs dotted with scraggy thorn trees. The Jewel has lead them steadily uphill. Slipping between two boulders, they come face to face with a dead-end wall.

JACK
(throws up his
hands)
Great. A blind canyon.
(at Joan)
A black day for democracy!

JOAN
Don't be so dramatic. We'll just
go out and start again.

ZING! A bullet skips on the stone, just missing Jack. Then another. Now serious GUNFIRE erupts.

AT THE FAR END OF THE CANYON

In their eerie dark galabehs, Omar's men are climbing up from the desert floor. They sing out with frightening ululations like banshees. Jack huddles Joan behind a rock.

JACK
Did you do something special for
this guy Omar that you never did
for me?

Jack notices something gooey on his hand. He looks down to see he is sitting on a pile of goat dung.

JACK
Just the way I always wanted to
go out. Covered in goat shit.

CLOSE ON JOAN

Her eyes light up.

JOAN

If there's goat shit, there's
goats. There must be a trail.

A Hansel and Gretel trail of brown droppings leads
behind a boulder. Joan takes off. BULLETS whiz
around her. Jack and the Jewel go after her.

FOLLOWING THE DROPPINGS

Joan takes the lead. Stops.

JOAN

There!

ON A TRAIL

Three fierce-looking NUBIAN IBEX MOUNTAIN GOATS with
their towering, jagged horns scurry away at Joan's
approach. Joan is pleased with herself. Far below,
Omar's MEN move cautiously. Joan runs on wildly, the
JEWEL behind her. Jack keeps one eye on their backs.

Winding around the side of the mountain, the trail
begins to narrow. The cliff walls funnel them in
until the trail is no more than a foot wide. The
mountain is split in two. On the other side of the
trail is a straight drop. A six foot gap and then a
sheer cliff. Omar's men fire up from below. Joan now
presses herself into the cliff. The path, no more than
a ledge, finally crumbles away. Several thick THORN
BUSHES jut out horizontally. Joan grabs one to steady
herself and gets a handful of thorns.

JACK

(coming up)

Don't stop now!

JOAN

(afraid to tell
him)

I... I can't go on!

The JEWEL peers over the edge. Taps Jack.

JEWEL

The goats, see?

On the other side of the crevice, the three GOATS watch
amused.

Jack looks like he's ready to pitch the old guy over the side. After a few moments of silence, bullets start to ZING! around them again. Jack fires back with his gun. The yells of Omar's men seem to be mixed with laughs.

JACK

I think they're enjoying this too much.

Joan feels something behind the bushes. She reaches in and comes out with the hidden end of a THICK VINE. Cocky determination pops on her face. She tests the vine. It holds. Jack doesn't notice her until it's too late.

JACK

Perfect. You followed goats! I should have known... hey, what are you doing! Not again!

Joan, confident she's done it before, grips the vine and...

SWINGS ACROSS THE CREVICE

Holding tight, her momentum carries her just about half-way across. Then it stops and she swings like a pendulum to a quick halt.

JOAN

Uh-oh.

Below her, the dark inner recesses of the mountain. The JEWEL squints to observe.

JEWEL

Justjoan, you are stuck.

JACK

(panicked)

Reach out for my arm!

Holding onto the thorn bush, Jack tries to jut out and grab the vine. He's several feet too short. Joan is losing her grip. Starting to slide down the vine.

JOAN

(pitiful)

Jack...? I'm falling.

There's nothing Jack can do.

ON THE VINE

And on the contrary, the VINE STARTS TO RISE! The JEWEL waves a little goodbye. Jack stares open-mouthed as Joan disappears high up into the cliffs.

CLOSE ON JOAN

squeezes her eyes closed until she comes to a stop at the very top of the cliff. She takes a deep breath, opens her eyes.

JOAN'S POV - THE NUBIANS

A dozen ebony faces framed by massive hayricks of dung-greased hair, tangles of dreadlocks, and kinky swirls. Some have dusted their faces with white clay.

An old wooden winch has pulled the vine onto a cliff that widens into the heart of the great mountain. The NUBIANS reach for Joan and pull her to her feet.

OMAR'S WARRIORS - SEEING THE NUBIANS

stop shooting. One, two steps back and then they stampede down the mountain.

CUT TO:

BOTTOM OF THE MOUNTAIN

Omar's men are retreating from the canyon. OMAR stands waiting for news. RASHID comes to him, makes a sign with his hand above his head that describes the Nubian hair.

RASHID

(gleeful)

Anz'unuwz naas.

The other men all laugh. Relax. Omar stares intently at the mountain peaks. Thinks in his own way for a moment. Then he gestures for them to go back.

OMAR

Ha'wl!

The men complain quietly at first. ONE WARRIOR turns for the HALF-TRACKS. OMAR takes Rashid's gun and SHOOTs just above the Warrior's head.

OMAR

Ha'wl!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE NUBIAN VILLAGE

Built onto the side of the mountain. Elongated daub and wattle huts arranged into smaller families.

A PROCESSION

led by brash young men. Star attractions -- JACK, JOAN and the JEWEL. Small children dance behind them. Women in blood red robes laugh loudly, point, taunt.

JACK

(to Joan)

Think you sold any books here?

CHIEF'S HUT

Dappled white to stand out from the others. Stepping out is a very tall, ageless man, his grey hair arranged in thick corn rows. The other NUBIANS step back, leaving Jack, Joan and the Jewel in front.

JOAN

(to the Jewel)

Can you understand them?

JEWEL

Some words.

JACK

Some safe route through the mountains.

The CHIEF offers a toothless grin. His words squish out.

JEWEL

(translating)

He begs to know if we are going over the mountain.

JACK

That's right. Khartoum. Got that? We're headed to Khartoum. OK? OK?

The CHIEF smiles at Jack. Nods. Speaks again.

JEWEL

(translating)

He says the mountain is very high,
very old, very powerful. He
wishes us a good journey...

JACK

Thank him...

(to Joan)

This'll be a cinch.

JEWEL

...after you pay the toll.

JOAN

A toll?

JEWEL

(translating)

One million dollars!

JACK

A million... the old guy's off
his rocker.

An ugly murmur starts in the village. The CHIEF speaks
quickly.

JEWEL

(translating)

He knows all Americans are very
rich.

JACK

Tell him rich doesn't mean stupid.

JOAN

Jack! ...Just tell him we have no
money.

JACK

Broke, Leroy.

He pulls out his pockets, dusts them. The CHIEF laughs.
Jack does a little dance with his pockets out. Every-
thing seems fine.

JACK

(to Joan)

They think I'm cute.

The CHIEF talks aside with the Jewel.

JEWEL

You don't have to pay it. ...
Instead he will take Joan for one
hour.

Jack stops dancing. Looks at Joan.

JOAN

He's kidding.

JEWEL

Just one hour.

JACK

(teasing)

Well Joan, now you can do something
serious. Something that really
matters.

(to the Chief)

Go ahead.

The NUBIANS laugh as Jack offers the CHIEF Joan's hand.
All one big joke. Until the CHIEF starts pulling her
into his hut.

JACK

OK... fun's fun... hey, that's it.

Now Jack grabs the CHIEF. Wrong move. He's immediately
seized by six young toughs. Joan becomes scared. The
CHIEF talks roughly.

JEWEL

(translating)

He wants to know if you are
married?

JOAN

No.

JEWEL

(translating)

Any babies?

JACK

No. ... look, what's the difference?

The CHIEF now pushes Jack in the chest.

JEWEL

Then decide. Either he takes
Joan for an hour...

JACK

Or...?

JEWEL

You will lose your leg.

A terribly OBESE NUBIAN steps forward with a broad AXE on a long handle. The other young toughs stretch out one of Jack's legs. Tension is unbearable. They realize the CHIEF is serious.

JOAN

Jack... I... I have to.

JACK

(straining against
their holds)

NO!! I forbid you.

JOAN

You can't.

JACK

(screams for all
he's worth)

NOOOO!!!

The CHIEF looks at Joan. A wave of his hand and the OBESE NUBIAN raises his axe. Joan turns to the CHIEF. Touches her chest.

JOAN

Yes. Now.

JACK

(half-crazed)

Cut the leg.

(at the Chief)

DAMN IT! CUT OFF MY GODDAMNED LEG!!

JEWEL

That is your decision?

JACK

(really scared)

Yes...

JOAN

Jack...

ON THE AXE

High in the air. A beat, then down it comes. BAM! Into the dirt next to Jack. A great CHEER goes up among the Nubians. They start to dance in simple, sweet ecstasy.

JACK - BEING BEAR-HUGGED BY THE CHIEF

ready to faint, looks to Joan, then to the JEWEL.

JEWEL

(translating)

We are free to go now. ...The Nubians are hopeless romantics. Some tribes enjoy tests of strength. ... They like to test love.

JACK AND JOAN

are hoisted on shoulders and carried around the village.

CUT TO:

THE FAR BOUNDARY OF THE VILLAGE

From here a narrow path heads straight towards the top, obscured by clouds. The CHIEF talks again. The entire village has turned out to say good-bye.

JEWEL

(translating)

He says there's a cave at the top to spend the night.

The CHIEF gives Jack a big kiss, shakes Joan's hand. Two Women give them sacks of food. Just as Jack turns to wave good-bye to the villagers. His hand drops.

JACK

They couldn't...

ZING!

Bullets cut the stone around them.

MOVING TOWARDS THE NUBIAN VILLAGE

Omar's WARRIORS have dug in behind large rocks.

BACK TO THE CHIEF

Surprisingly calm, he yells orders to his men. The villagers take the time to wave good-bye to Jack and Joan before running back down to their huts.

JOAN
We have to help them!

JEWEL
No, he says to go on. They are ready.

Jack, Joan and the Jewel run up the trail.

COMING OUT OF THE HUTS

The NUBIANS have taken out large MASKS of nightmarish demons -- Wardrobe. Then they run SCREAMING towards the WARRIORS. It doesn't take long. The WARRIORS hightail it back down the mountain.

ON THE TRAIL - JACK'S POV

Already high above the village. Jack, Joan and the Jewel watch the rout. The NUBIANS nudge each other, laughing, pleased with their performance.

Now Jack and Joan and the Jewel slow to a leisurely pace up the trail. Jack is chewing a BLACK ROOT from one of the food sacks.

JACK
Great guys... what is this stuff?

JEWEL
That is mokassa root.

Jack tears off another huge hunk.

JACK
Really tasty.

JEWEL
Yes... and the Nubians believe it is a strong aphrodisiac.

CUT TO:

JACK'S EYES

wide as plates, watching in real or imagined aphrodisiac-induced stupor...

A CREAMY WHITE THIGH

belonging to Joan Wilder reflects the dim glow of a fire. Her hand moves slowly across it bathing it gently with a wash rag.

WIDER ANGLE

Inside the cave. Joan sits by the fire washing her legs from a pot of melting snow. Jack, frozen by the sight. The Jewel in the corner, his back to them.

JOAN

It's nice and warm in here.

JACK

(breathing heavy)

Yeah...

He starts to move towards her.

JOAN

Feels good to relax.

JACK

(breathing heavier)

Yeah...

Moving closer.

JOAN

It all seems so far away.

JACK

(unable to breath)

Yeah!

Almost to her.

THE JEWEL

appears between them. As if from nowhere.

JEWEL

We only have one blanket.

JACK

No problem, Joe. Why don't you take it yourself and hit the hay. You must be wiped out. We'll make do.

JEWEL

No. We need to share the heat.

JACK

Couldn't we maybe each have our own heat?

JOAN

I think it's sweet, Jack.

JACK

Sounds to me like another vote's been taken.

JEWEL

I will go prepare our bed.

He goes to the corner of the cave.

JOAN

Thanks for being nice to Joe.

JACK

Sure...

(not yet giving
up)

Have you tried this Mokassa root?
It's really good. Pungent.

He produces a piece from his pocket.

She walks back into the corner -- the Jewel is already stretching out.

JACK

(to himself)

Don't say that unless you mean it.

THREE PEAS IN A POD

The Jewel lies between them in the "bed". His umbrella is a makeshift canopy. His eyes are closed. Jack looks over to Joan.

JACK

(whispers)

Joan!

JOAN

Shh... you'll wake him.

The Jewel's eyes pop open.

JEWEL

Much journey remains. Rest is required.

Jack jumps up, exasperated, angry.

JACK
Don't you ever have any fun?

Jewel thinks, smiles then opens his eyes.

JEWEL
I do a little magic... actually
just one trick.

JACK
(hands on hip)
So let's see.

JEWEL
(closes eyes)
You will... when the right time
comes.

Jack throws up his hands -- walks to the mouth of the
cave.

JACK'S POV -- OUTSIDE THE CAVE

It's snowing! A wonderland beneath the mountain peaks.
Downy flakes sweep across -- Jack takes a step. His
hair is dusted by the snow... then JOAN is next to him.

They watch the snow, a beat. Silent.

JACK
I spent so much time in paradise
I forgot about snow.
(beat)
I guess I forgot about a lot of
things.

He and Joan turn to each other.

THE SNOW FALLS ON ANOTHER CAMPFIRE

In another part of the mountain. The DERVISHES camped
for the night. The horses are safe under an outcrop
of rock. But the DERVISHES are in the snow, juggling
snowballs, laughing. Two play instruments.

ON RALPH

Miserable by campfire -- by himself under the rock.
Looks at them.

RALPH
Loonies...

Kital sits down beside him.

KITAL

Come join us.

RALPH

(sullen)

I hate snow, OK?

KITAL

It's not good to be alone.

(looks up)

Each snowflake is different but together they are beautiful. You will learn to enjoy life.

RALPH

On this miserable mountain!

Kital yanks him into the snow.

KITAL

Everywhere!

THE DERVISHES

Arms out -- are spinning, round and round, faster and faster -- yells of freedom and fun.

Kital forces Ralph's arms out.

RALPH

Hey... don't. C'mon.

The DERVISHES come over and start to twirl him.

KITAL

Spin! Throw off your doubts and pain... Spin!

CLOSE ON RALPH

Turning recklessly in the snow. On the edge of nausea. Surrounded by DERVISHES. He spins.

CUT TO:

BACK IN THE CAVE

Loud snoring from the Jewel. In another corner, Joan and Jack lay entwined. They've made love. Joan is chewing on something.

JOAN

This is good. What did you say
it was called again?

JACK

Mokassa root. I wonder if you can
smoke it?

JOAN

Jack... I'm sorry I got people
shooting at you again.

JACK

Are you kidding? We're great at
this. We'd be the perfect couple
if we could find somebody to shoot
at us everyday...

(beat)

I'm not so good on the off days.

JOAN

No. It's both of us. You're
wonderful the way you are. I
have no right to ask you to change.

JACK

(sincere)

If I could...

They kiss.

JOAN

I guess we'll say good-bye in
Khartoum... if we make it alive.

JACK

I promise I'll get you there.

They kiss again.

JOAN

(talking through
it)

And the old man, too?

A LOUD SNORE

from the Jewel.

JACK

(looking over)

The old man, too.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL MUD STATION - DAY

Along an endless stretch of railroad track that follows the Nile. A crowd of over a hundred villagers, both Moslem and African are camped out waiting for the train. Several fires are set for cooking.

A SMALL BARN

The DERVISHES have paid to have their stallions fed. RALPH is grumbling outside. The Kital comes over. Ralph stands at attention.

KITAL

Watch for your friend. He's in great danger!

RALPH

I'm looking, I'm looking.

He keeps a smile on til Kital goes back into the barn.

RALPH

And when I find him, I'll kill him.

Ralph touches his head. Still dizzy from last night.

LOUD TRAIN noise off in the distance.

Ralph heads off through the crowd, walking at a tilt.

CIRCLE OF PEASANTS

Ralph sneaks behind several large men. In front, women and children kneel. All are watching a SNAKE CHARMER with a thick PYTHON squirming over his extended arms and legs. Rising slowly from a small basket is a winged COBRA, mesmerized by the drone of the CHARMER'S hymn.

The COBRA sways. Then Ralph jumps forward, pointing.

RALPH

Look! Reggie Jackson!

They all turn. Ralph grabs the COBRA -- disappears.

BACK AT THE BARN

Ralph runs with the COBRA at arm's length. The snake writhes and jerks.

RALPH
You are disgusting.

Grimacing, he manages to hurl it into the window. A beat.

OUT OF THE BARN

the STALLIONS come thundering. Stable boys run to find the DERVISHES. As the commotion grows, the TRAIN pulls into the station.

ANGLE -- from INSIDE THE TRAIN

A stampede. Peasants hurl themselves into windows. Many clamber on top. Handing pigs, goats, bags, to friends. Ralph pushes his way through, mounts the last car.

AS THE TRAIN PULLS OUT

Ralph watches the DERVISHES reigning in their stallions.

RALPH
So long, boys! I'll send you a picture of the Jewel after I sell it.

Ralph cackles and drives his way into the car with his elbows.

RALPH
Watch out, I'm coming through.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

A steeply sloped path of loose rock and sand. Jack runs as best he can, more falling than anything else. A beat, then ZOOM! Joan and the Jewel shoot by on their backsides, almost out of control, laughing as they pass Jack.

AT THE EDGE OF A BLUFF

On come the skids. Joan helps the old man to his feet. He claps his hands. Jack pops between them. They all peer over the edge.

CLOSE ON THE THREE PILGRIMS

Dazzled, speechless.

REVERSE ANGLE - THE VISTA BELOW - THE NILE

The verdant lushness of the Nile Valley. After the desert, it seems like a dream. The river sparkles. Jewel giggles like a young boy. Jack turns his back to the Jewel.

JACK
(over his
shoulder)

Hop on! Free ride to the river.

Joan beams at the old man, more thrilled for Jack than for him. A running leap and the Jewel LEAPS onto Jack. Points his umbrella. Off they go! Joan runs behind.

ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER NILE

The JEWEL sits by the river -- liquid sapphire, swift, silent -- eyes closed and face to the wind. At its edges, the river breaks into a hyacinth and papyrus marsh.

JOAN
Khartoum is on the other side?

JEWEL
(eyes still
closed)
The train to Khartoum is on the
other side.

ON JACK

He's found an age old PUNT, a flat river boat, half in the water. A pulley system has been rigged since forever to cross the current. A ROPE is looped around two trees, one on each side.

JACK
(standing in the
punt)
This wreck will never hold more
than two at a time.

JEWEL

I will wait here.

JOAN

(worried)

No, no... you should be the first across.

JACK

Joan... what's the difference?

Joan wonders if now is the time to tell Jack. Not yet.

JOAN

What if the train comes?

JEWEL

(winks at Jack)

Time to vote!

JACK

Good idea.

(in one
breath)

All-in-favor-of-Joan...?

Both Jack and the Jewel raise their hands. Joan relents.

JACK

Democracy redeemed!

Joan steps into the punt, kneels, while Jack pushes off from the shore. PULLING HAND OVER HAND, he guides it into the current.

JOAN'S POV - THE JEWEL

receding on the shore. He bows, both hands clasped to his head. Joan bows back. They move past the shallow marsh.

OUT INTO THE NILE

Jack strains to maintain control. Joan tries to shelter her tender nose. Drags one hand in the water.

JACK

Need any dramamine?

Joan SPLASHES him lightly. Suddenly it seems like a carefree Sunday afternoon. Joan looks down in time to see scungy water froth into the four corners of the punt.

JACK
(groaning)
This thing's a bitch.

JOAN
Jack... I think we're sinking.

Jack lets out a moan and starts pulling madly. Joan can't help but laugh.

JOAN
Full speed ahead, captain.

CLOSING IN ON THE FAR SHORE

The nearer they get, the lower they sink. Pull for pull. About five yards from solid ground, the water completely covers the punt. Joan remains seated, up to her waist in gooey shallows. Jack slops into the mud and pulls Joan ashore.

JACK
Women and writers first!

They tumble onto the bank, laughing. Jack shakes his wet head at her like a dog.

Now a soft buzzing SOUND becomes audible. Joan stands up.

UP RIVER - OUT OF THE MARSHES

A long, powerful SWAMP BOAT, driven by a giant propeller on its flat stern. Skims atop the river. The black galabehs are unmistakable. OMAR'S WARRIORS. Joan grabs Jack, pulls him to the sunken punt.

JOAN
(desperate)
We have to go back!
(looks again)
Oh, no...

ON THE OTHER SIDE

The JEWEL has disrobed entirely except for baggy long underwear. He is standing hip deep in the NILE, singing, splashing water reverently over his head.

IN THE SWAMP BOAT

Omar's men have spotted the old man. They change their course for him. The BUZZ shifts to a higher pitch.

JACK AND JOAN

Jack opens his arms.

JACK

I'm sorry.

JOAN

But we have to do something.

JACK

Joan, there's nothing to do. Look at the boat. He can't swim across. We'll only get ourselves killed.

Off in the distance, two haunting BLASTS sound.

JOAN

(terrified)

The train! Oh Jack...

JACK

(he grabs her)

Let's go. We'll make it to Khartoum... and call somebody... or something. The old guy's pretty wiley.

JOAN

But you don't understand! He's --

She winces.

JACK

He's what?

Now it's time.

JOAN

(crying)

He's the Jewel.

Jack screws up his face. Laughs a beat, then stops.

JACK
He's the Jewel of the Nile?

JOAN
 If he doesn't get to Khartoum,
 Omar...wins.

JACK LOOKS ACROSS - POV

Still splashing in the river, the old man doggy-paddles in pleasant circles. Oblivious to the approaching swamp boat.

JACK
 You didn't tell me!

JOAN
 I couldn't.

Jack tries to steel himself.

JACK
 Well... too bad... we have to save ourselves. ...If he has one magic trick, this better be the time.

The train SOUNDS AGAIN, now a little closer.

ON THE JEWEL

The old man has sloshed onto shore, starts to dress again. Now he sees the swamp boat skimming towards him. He starts waving his umbrella at Joan from afar.

Jack makes one last attempt to get Joan to leave with him.

JACK
 They've got him. ...You can't expect me to swim over there and take on all those guys in a fast boat!

Joan looks him right in the eye and starts by herself into the river. Jack throws up his hands and yanks off his boots. He runs past Joan and splashes into the current.

ACROSS THE RIVER

The swamp boat floats just off shore. Their robes ballooning in the water, two of OMAR'S WARRIORS have the JEWEL, quickly moving him into the water and onto their flatboat. The propeller never completely stops. It drones into a blur and the boat skips off.

ON JOAN - starts screaming and pointing at Jack.

ON JACK

Half-way in the river, he suddenly finds the swamp boat heading on a course that takes it approximately on top of his head. Treads water a beat, then reaches up for the PUNT GUIDE ROPE and goes UNDER WATER, using the rope like an anchor in the current.

ON THE BOAT

as it passes directly where Jack just was. The rope CATCHES IN THE PROPELLER, breaks off, and starts winding around the propeller axle. The slack goes taut... then...

JACK

shoots out of the water at the other end of the rope.

JOAN

hands drop to her side.

JOAN

Oh, my God.

BACK TO JACK - WATERSKIING!

bouncing barefoot over the water, Jack is being dragged along the river Nile. He's not elegant but he's above water.

In the boat, the JEWEL turns to watch, leaning on his umbrella. OMAR'S WARRIORS nudge each other and laugh as Jack struggles to maintain his balance.

JACK'S POV - TWO GRAY HIPPOS

suddenly surface to see what the turbulence is all about.

JACK

Ohhh, shit...!

He LEAPS!... and makes it, to his amazement, back on his feet.

JOAN

cheering on the shore.

JOAN

Go for the gold!

Around the axle, the rope WINDS AND WINDS, pulling Jack closer and closer to the blade. The airstream blinds him. One of the WARRIORS stands and takes aim with his rifle.

ON THE JEWEL

He sighs, kisses his UMBRELLA, and throws it into the blade. CRUNCH! The propeller jams and the inertia jerks Jack forward onto the boat - crash - knocking off a WARRIOR. Rocking wildly, the boat starts to move into shore.

Jack slams two WARRIORS into each other and flips them overboard. But another WARRIOR snares the rope around Jack's neck. Jack flicks his head. CRACK! into his assailant's nose. He loosens his grip. Over he goes. The JEWEL butts the last one into the river. Bows to Jack.

THE SWAMP BOAT

floats gently onto the shore. JOAN helps the old man onto the bank. Jack drops, supine, exhausted.

JACK

I'm dead.

TWO BLASTS FROM THE TRAIN and then, finally, moving into view is the old Cairo-to-Khartoum Express.

Jack and the Jewel struggle to their feet. Joan pulls at them both.

JOAN

You can't stop now!

Pushing, yanking, she goads them both into a trot, then a run ... then across the fields towards the train for all they're worth.

ON THE TRAIN

slowing for a wide curve. Covered with PEASANTS like ants on a honey-covered twig. Jack is the first one to reach a car. He gives his hand to a MAN in a red robe. The man shakes his hand.

JACK

(running)

No, grab me!

He just watches as Jack leaps for the iron hold and swings up. The JEWEL is lifted by 3 BOYS.

Jack hangs out the door.

JACK
Move your ass, Joan Wilder!

ON JOAN

running like she's never run before. She's close. Jack reaches out his hand. Several MEN immediately slap her away.

MEN
Hariym! Hariym!

A skinny BOY high up on the roof shouts down.

BOY
No good birls. Boy car! Girl there!

Jack steps back in. Looks through his car. Pokes out again.

JACK
(yells at Joan)
You've got to make it to the women's car!

THE NEXT CAR FORWARD

packed with WOMEN and GIRLS. Many are veiled. The African women wear short hair and colorful dresses. Most others are in dark caftans.

BACK TO JOAN

one last effort. She runs madly to the car. A young African GIRL helps her up, head first -- with a somersault she shoots through the window.

JACK

looks for her. Joan pops her head out. Waves. Jack smiles and goes back inside.

DOWN THE TRAIN AISLE

Sallow-faced men, many asleep with arms and legs wrapped around each other. Men drinking tea in the aisles, gambling. Jack pushes his way through.

THE JEWEL

is stretched out on a seat, taking up two spaces. Jack pushes his legs on the floor. Plops down.

JACK

Done. End of story. Now it's Miller Time.

Relaxes.

JEWEL

Omar knows I must be at the temple in Khartoum by sundown. He waits.

The Jewel closes his eyes to sleep. The last thing Jack could do now.

CUT TO:

WOMEN'S CAR - THE NEXT CAR FORWARD

Joan feels as though someone is watching her. Turns.

IN THE CORNER

a nervous woman averts her eyes, pulling her black robe across her face.

JOAN

moves to the door that separates her car from Jack's car. Tries it. It's LOCKED. She leans against the window.

THE MEN'S CAR - BEHIND

The JEWEL snores, his head resting on Jack's shoulder. Jack sees Joan and moves away. Weaves though the car towards the front.

DOOR

tries it. It's LOCKED as well. Clears an area of the dusty window.

JACK'S POV

He sees Joan staring out into the countryside. She looks wild and lovely, suntanned, strong. He remembers how he fell in love with her. Jack knocks on the glass.

JOAN

hears the knocking. Sees Jack, gives a tiny wave.

JACK

talking through the glass.

JACK

(to himself)

What an asshole I am.

(to Joan)

I love you.

Joan bends her ear. Shrugs. Mimes, 'I can't hear you.'

JACK

(full on shout)

I said ... I'm an asshole!

Joan still doesn't get it. But all the MEN in Jack's car laugh.

BEHIND JOAN

the NERVOUS WOMAN is walking down the aisle towards her. Bent over, hands folded, she stands right behind Joan.

She turns.

A GUN

pointed right in Joan's stomach.

LITTLE WOMAN

throws back her veil. A stubbly face peers out.
RALPH!

RALPH

You guys really touch my heart.

JOAN

You! ... God, you look terrible.

RALPH

OK, Miss Wilder, there ain't no time to tell you what knowing you has meant to me. So I'll just say, "fork over the Jewel or else."

JOAN

What jewel?

Ralph's voice is an hysterical whisper.

RALPH

I knew you were gonna say that!
What jewel? Any of 'em. I want
a cut. I want my share of the
money.

JOAN

I'm going to the American
Consulate in Khartoum. I can
arrange for a wire.

The train is ROCKED by a loud detonation.

A second and a third EXPLOSION sends women tumbling from
side to side. RALPH'S disguise is torn off. He stands
there bareheaded, in just a dress. The other women
see him. One points and wails.

WOMAN

Rajul!

Joan sticks her head out the window.

ALONG THE TRACK - THE END OF THE TRAIN

Four jeeps carrying RASHID and a detachment of WARRIORS
are boarding the rear of the train. One of the jeeps
is speeding along.

JOAN'S CAR

Two men suddenly appear from the other end. Throw
off their galabehs. Point at Joan. The women are
screaming wildly. Pushing both ways. The MEN start
after Joan.

JOAN

tries the locked door. No use. She slides down the
window all the way and CLIMBS OUT.

JACK'S CAR

The MEN are up and shouting. Some dive out the window.
Omar's men are pushing down the length of the train.
Jack runs back to the JEWEL.

JACK
We should go up top.

JEWEL
(sincere)
You have brought me a long way.
Now save yourself.

JACK
Forget it, pal. Omar's got one
more coming.

He helps the JEWEL to his feet and out the back door.

INSIDE THE WOMEN'S CAR

Ralph has been set upon by a horde of screaming women. They pummel and kick him, hurling Arabic curses.

RALPH
I wish Phil Donahue could see this.

The women manuever him toward a window and upsy-daisy, out he goes.

ON TOP OF THE TRAIN

Joan is on all fours. She carefully stands up. Some of the peasants are pressed face-down. It's a human obstacle course with luggage and animals.

THE NEXT CAR BEHIND

Jack ties the Jewel to a loop for safety. Stands. He sees Joan.

JACK
Over here!

Starts across the top of the train towards Joan.

JOAN

is tip-toeing towards Jack. Shakey, she sways as the train rockets along the tracks.

THE REAR OF THE TRAIN

swarms of Omar's men moving quickly toward Jack. Jack sees that his car has been lost.

JOAN

stands on the other side of the coupling from him. It could be a thousand miles.

JOAN

Jack! Jack! Jump over here.

Joan reaches her hand out. Jack extends his to meet it. Only their spirits touch.

HE TURNS

to see soldiers closing in on the Jewel. He is taken!

JEWEL

Go! Save yourself!

JACK LOOKS TO JOAN

behind him a soldier raises a rifle butt to strike him. Jack turns and overpowers him. Then: IT HITS HIM! - the way to save Joan.

He pulls the pin from a live HAND GRENADE clipped to the soldier's belt. Then rolls the soldier off the car.

The soldier falls down - lies across the coupling between the cars. Jack flattens himself as the BLAST erupts. The couplings are blown.

JOAN'S CAR - JACK'S POV

Jack watches as Joan's car and the engine start to pull away. She stands true and tall. His last vision of her.

REVERSE SHOT - JOAN'S LAST LOOK AT JACK

JOAN

Jack!

Jack waves back. He shouts to her:

JACK

Don't come back! Get to the
Consulate! Get out of the country!
I LOVE YOU!

SEVERAL SOLDIERS

grab Jack as the rest of the train comes to a stop.

THE JEWEL

is already being taken below.

ON JACK

watches Joan disappear from view.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN - JUST OUTSIDE KHARTOUM

The old engine and its remaining car lumber past patchwork shanty towns. Most of the car windows are shattered. JOAN sits on the roof, squeezed between several OLD WOMEN. She dozes lightly until one WOMAN wakes her with a sharp shove. Points.

DOWN THE TRACK - OMAR'S WARRIORS

tracks are blocked with trucks. The Warriors are flagging down the train.

JOAN

walks quickly, now easily, along the top. The Arab WOMEN PASS HER hand to hand until she can drop safely to the ground. A gape-toothed African WOMAN throws Joan a dark shawl. Joan squats, wraps it around her head, and runs across the tracks.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GREAT TEMPLE OF KHARTOUM

The great Temple is set on ashen bluffs overlooking the shallows of Khartoum, where the Blue Nile and the White Nile blend their waters. Simple, unadorned, its milky white minaret looms high over the city.

THE MAIN GATE

carved delicately a great STAR and a DOVE. An endless stream of TRIBESMEN pass through the checkpoint, leaving their weapons behind. A large pile of knives, swords, guns once used by the Italians in World War II, grows bigger every minute.

THE TEMPLE COURTYARD

A sea of multicolored tents and tabernacles, each representing a different tribe, billow in the wind. Carts of fruit, racks of meat set over blazing campfires, all in preparation for the election. A circle of THRONE CHAIRS is arranged in the center in the central garden.

THE THIRTY-SIX TRIBAL ELDERS

are separated -- They greet each other with great ceremony.

HIGH IN THE MINARET

OMAR watches secretly from the balcony. Waiting for his great triumph.

CUT TO:

A WATER RAT

Its quivering nose pokes into a dank, stone room. AN INCH OF WATER on the ground. The stone walls have wide shelves piled with thousands of skeletons. These are the Temple CATACOMBS - a network of tunnels that spread darkly from under the Temple through the city.

ON JACK

tied by ropes to a cross beam.

SEATED NEXT TO JACK - THE JEWEL

hands tied to an old wooden chair. The huge rat fearlessly creeps to the Jewel. The JEWEL scowls -- and the RAT turns, darts away.

JACK

Don't tell me that was your "one" magic trick.

JEWEL

Magic is just hope in the face of disaster.

Jack surveys the levels of bones around him. Smiles.

JACK
I hear this place is going condo.

JEWEL
(watches Jack
grin)
Good laugh means a good man.

JACK
I hope I keep laughing when Omar
gets around to us.

CUT TO:

KHARTOUM - THE OLD CITY

Mixture of the modern and the eternal. Joan has been moving non-stop for almost an hour. Now it's a half-walk, half-limp. She staggers across a small city park.

THROUGH THE PARK

filled with children. Joan is bothered by venders and beggars. Two furry feet start following her.

A DANCING BEAR

dressed for a cruise on the Nile -- white dinner jacket, black slacks, and a red sash around his middle.

His owner -- in a threadbare suit -- pokes Joan. Points to the money cup. The Bear seems embarrassed. Joan hurries across the street. She stops before an anonymous Victorian building, left over from Colonial days.

CLOSE ON JOAN

resists the temptation to kneel down and cry.

JOAN'S POV -- BRASS PLAQUE BY THE DOOR

reads -- AMERICAN CONSULATE

A round intercom SPEAKER is built beneath the door bell. Joan hesitates. Mission completed. She RINGS the bell. Beat, RINGS again. The intercom comes alive.

VOICE

(soft, woman's
voice)Hello, this is the American
Consulate in Khartoum...

JOAN

(almost cries,
sniffles, fights to
stay calm)Yes... please... this is Joan
Wilder, and...

VOICE

...due to budgetary restraints,
the Consul will be sharing his
time with Addis Ababa. This office
will reopen in three months.

Should you wish to leave a message, after the BEEP ...

Now it's impossible to keep from crying. She sits
down on the street. Breath on her neck -- the BEAR
is back again. His owner presses again for money.
The BEAR sees something -- moves --

VOICE (OS)

Back off Smokey!

RALPH -- HIS LAST HURRAH

the BEAR -- puts an arm around Ralph -- he wants to
dance. Ralph pushes him away. In his shredded Caftan,
he makes for Joan.

Surprise, Joan runs and HUGS Ralph.

JOAN

(won't let go)

Oh, thank God... you've got to
help me! Jack's in trouble!

Ralph pulls her arms off.

RALPH

Look Lady...I've just spent two
days in the desert with guys so
nuts even I don't get it. Now,
all I want is my share.

JOAN

I've been trying to tell you. The
Jewel is with Jack.

Ralph's lower lip quivers as if he were going to cry.

RALPH
You mean... back there?

JOAN
(pulls)
Hurry, we still have time!

Ralph -- his feet won't do it. One too many close calls.

RALPH
NO! Not for the Jewel of the Nile, not for the Jewel of the Amazon, not for the Jewel of the goddamned Passaic am I going back there! Good-bye, Lady!

JOAN
But you can't leave me.

Ralph waves 'Bye-Bye'. But when he turns, he freezes. His eyes bulge.

RALPH
Oh, no!

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD

A thousand TRIBEMEN now sit in concentric circles waiting for the vote to be taken.

INNER CIRCLE

The elders have taken their seats. A beautiful white URN stands at the center of the circle. Each elder has one white stone -- to signify his approval of OMAR.

CUT TO:

RASHID

the first time we've seen him running -- through the Temple.

OMAR'S ANTECHAMBER

as RASHID pushes through the doors. Out of breath, genuinely upset. OMAR has changed into a magnificent black silk kaftan.

RASHID
 (*subtitled*)
 She is back...

Before he can explain, JOAN marches into the room.
 OMAR is startled, then amused.

OMAR
 You are very foolish not to have
 left the country.

JOAN
 I have the pleasure of introducing
 to you the First Consul of the
 government of the United States
 of America.

CLOSE ON - OMAR - stunned.

ON THE DOORWAY

a beat, then stepping in quickly, almost as if he were
 shoved... is... RALPH, dressed in a white dinner jacket,
 black slacks and a red sash. Directly behind him is
 KITAL, for the first time in his life, clean shaven.
 He plays the assistant but his hidden sword suggest
 his role as persuader.

RALPH offerw a straight handshake to Omar.

RALPH
 Julius LaRosa, from the states.

As if he drank a potion, OMAR immediately reverts back
 to the charming, debonair seductor we first met.

OMAR
 Omar is honored!

RALPH
 Good! Get him in here!

JOAN
 (through her
 teeth)
 He is in here.

Kital's face is speckled with bits of tissue paper
 where he knicked himself. He rubs his hand over his
 smoothe chin -- astonished. But keeps an eye on Ralph.

RALPH

grows into his role more each second he continues to get away with it. JOAN tries to hide the fact that she is ready to faint when Ralph starts fingering the precious CRYSTAL animal carvings on OMAR'S TABLE.

RALPH

Hear we got us a little problemo, Omar-arino. This lady says you're holding an American citizen. Why I'd no sooner believe that than I would believe that... well, that I myself would call in a B-1 strike on your miserable village.

RASHID gives OMAR a look saying, 'Could this be an American consular official?' Omar can't take the chance.

OMAR

I will send my man to check the records, Mr. LaRosa.

(Rashid hurries
out)

Can I offer you a drink?

RALPH

Hell yeah!

CUT TO:

TEMPLE COURTYARD

Moving stealthily through the crowd are FIVE FIGURES wrapped in dark, woolen cloaks -- the other DERVISHES.

ON THE ELDERS

The late afternoon sun paints pastel colors on the tiles. The men wait to vote. The stark, white MINARET now casts a shadow in the garden.

CUT TO:

OMAR - PACING NERVOUSLY

as RALPH slowly kills a fine decanter of brandy. A door behind Omar opens. JOAN stands, fights the urge to run.

ON JACK - HANDS STILL TIED

bloody but still cocky, he winks at Joan. Looks at Omar.

OMAR
(growing impatient)
I believe this is your man,
Mr. LaRosa.

Jack reacts when he sees RALPH strut over to him.

RALPH
Mr. Coulter is it?

Kital looks to Joan -- confused, angry.

JOAN
Yes... er... I believe there
were two prisoners.

OMAR
(less and less
polite)
But only one American. I advise
you to take him and leave.

Joan gives Jack a look. Now's not the time. They start for the door. Ralph is extremely nervous. Kital opens the door -- stands outside.

RALPH
Thank you for your politic
cooperation, sir. Should you
ever desire to visit New Jersey,
please... do...

As He turns for the door, he bumps into Rashid.

RALPH
(tries to grab
his arm sleeve)
Uh-oh.

Too late. A CRYSTAL CAMEL falls and crashes to the floor in a million glittering pieces. A beat, then...

We hear the click of RASHID'S UZI.

AT THE DOOR

Kital slams it and disappears outside. Joan and Jack and Ralph are caught inside.

OMAR

Kill them all!

Ralph puts his hands over his eyes. Jack steps in front of Rashid.

JACK

(to Omar)

Wait!... Marry us!

JOAN is shocked. Eyes fill with tears.

OMAR

But you're about to die... you want to marry her now?

JACK

(straight at Joan)

If she'll have me.

Joan runs to Jack. But Rashid pulls her away.

JACK

For God's sake... Let the Jewel marry us. ...What difference could it make?

Joan looks for a sign from Jack. Is it romance? Or something else?

OMAR

(considers, then, smiles)

A good omen before my victory. Omar will give the bride away!

CUT TO:

TEMPLE COURTYARD

The vote has started. The ELDERS slowly pass the URN from man to man. Each holds up his stone and drops it into the deep vessel.

THE DERVISHES

tense, unsure what to do, waiting for a sign. Kital appears! They huddle around him.

CUT TO:

CATACOMBS

the JEWEL rubs his hands, now free. He smiles at Joan and Jack.

JOAN'S hands are entwined in Jack's. He strokes her hair.

JACK

Better late than never.

JOAN

...to last for the rest of our lives.

ON RALPH

cringing from the skeletons. OMAR and RASHID watch skeptically.

The JEWEL holds his hands over Jack and Joan.

JEWEL

As Peace is the life force of a strong country, so Marriage is the life force of a strong love. I...

OMAR

Enough! Finish it now. I'm bored.

JEWEL

The ceremony ends with the final blessing.

IN HIS SLEEVE - THE RED HANDKERCHIEF

drawn out slowly. The JEWEL looks first to...

JACK

smiles... then to...

JOAN

ready... and then to...

OMAR

amused...

THE JEWEL

holds the handkerchief over Jack and Joan's locked hands.

RASHID

relaxes his fervid guard, leans in to look...

RALPH

actually smiles.

JEWEL

Arise! Arise! and let the truth
be known!

THE HANDKERCHIEF

begins to ripple, slowly at first, then rapidly as it
rises, higher, higher...

A WHITE DOVE!

breaks out into the room, its long, powerful wings
propelling it right at RASHID! Rashid backs, trips.
His gun goes off.

JACK

leaps at Rashid. They roll. The DOVE circles back
to the JEWEL'S hands. He and JOAN dash past OMAR
up the stairway.

Ralph grabs for OMAR -- can't hold on. OMAR follows
Joan and the JEWEL up the stairway into the MINARET.
Locks the door behind him.

RASHID is crushing JACK against a stone wall. A THIGH
BONE WHACKS Rashid in the head. Ralph at the bat.
Jack kicks out, catching Rashid in the groin. The
big man swats them both away and runs into the
dark catacomb tunnels. Jack takes off after him.
Ralph starts -- then decides against it.

CUT TO:

TEMPLE COURTYARD

The great URN has almost completed its circuit.
KITAL and his DERVISHES wait for the sign.

CUT TO:

CLIMBING HIGHER IN THE MINARET

Solid white walls go round and round the old stone
stairs.

JOAN and the JEWEL

running as best they can. The DOVE is a white ball in the old man's wrinkled hands.

FOOTSTEPS SOUND just behind them. Now the JEWEL looks doubtfully at Joan for the first time.

JEWEL

(breathing heavily)

What do you say about my one trick, Justjoan?

JOAN

I say ... screw Omar!

She stops and turns back. The JEWEL goes up and up. Joan waits against the wall ... counts, one, two, and ... cranks back and SMACK! A fast ball to OMAR, square on the nose.

JOAN screams and clutches her hand -- not like it looks in a movie punch. Omar is staggered, but he takes out a STILETTO, shoves Joan to the floor.

THE TEMPLE COURTYARD

The next to the last stone drops not very far into the URN. Almost full. Heavy enough for three men now, it is carried and rested in front of the 36th ELDER.

INSIDE THE MINARET

Last few steps. The JEWEL'S legs are too heavy. At the crest of the stairs, the walls balloon out into the onion dome. Two large balconies overlook the great sea of tribesmen below. The JEWEL looks behind.

OMAR! swings his knife at the DOVE. It cuts deeply into the old man's side. He stumbles and falls onto the balcony. But ... he opens his hands and the DOVE flies free!

THE BALCONY BALUSTRADE

The DOVE lights for a moment unseen. OMAR stalks it quietly, his knife on Joan. With a cry, the JEWEL grabs his leg. Omar trips. The DOVE shoots out into the air!

COURTYARD

The LAST ELDER opens his hand, holding the last stone high. Places his hand over the urn. The DERVISHES watch. Just for the faith, Kital looks to the MINARET one last time.

FLUTTERING HIGH OVER THE TEMPLE

The great DOVE sweeps in wide arcs. Now Kital yells! The DERVISHES climb magnificently onto the great archway. Kital - high above the Garden, points!

KITAL
(screaming)
al-Jawharah!

AROUND THE COURTYARD

one by one, like a sea of wheat bending to the wind, the tribesmen stand, pointing to the sky.

AND THE DOVE

the fluidity of perfect motion, grace, lightness, gentility and beauty. Deep gliding drops, lower and lower, until it finally lights upon the STAR in the arch. CRASH! All heads turn to the MINARET.

ON THE BALCONY

OMAR stands over the JEWEL with his stiletto held high.

KITAL - A BOW AND ARROW - JUGGLED UP BY HIS MEN

He shoots. The arrow flies straight and true and pierces OMAR'S chest. He drops his knife. Falls down the spiralling stairs.

ON JOAN

She SCREAMS as OMAR staggers around the corner. The arrow halfway in his chest. He laughs and tears off his robe. The VEST is underneath.

OMAR
You will save Omar's life as
you saved the Jewel's.

Off down the stairs they go.

CUT TO:

DARK CATACOMBS

OMAR pushes Joan through fetid water. Bits and pieces of earth above them crash around them.

TUNNEL OPENING

onto the shallows by the docks of Khartoum where the great old wooden SAILBOATS have travelled between Aswan and Khartoum for centuries.

RASHID

Preparing a boat to sail. Noises - he turns. OMAR and JOAN step onto the boat. RASHID hurries the preparations - the boat is OMAR'S escape valve.

JOAN

You had this here all the time.

OMAR

Even Omar feared the Jewel deep inside.

JACK (O.S.)

Hey, honey ...

JOAN turns --

ON THE BOOM

JACK ... suave as a Pirate King

JACK

Write me a line.

RASHID charges Jack.

JOAN

(smiles)

Try ... "and this is the end of the evil OMAR!"

Jack pushes off. Swings around. KICK! Off goes RASHID.

JOAN starts with her hand ... thinks better of it ... then elbows OMAR - Jack arrives to complete the combination punch - OMAR falls down between them.

CUT TO:

KHARTOUM

A TAXI is screaming toward the jetty. Stops short. Out pops RALPH in an elegant double-breasted silk white suit. Throws two large BILLS at the cabbie.

RALPH

(rushed)

Keep it!

The cabbie is astounded by the denomination of the bills.

ON AN OLD SAIL BOAT

Across the back has been painted: ANGELYNE II

ON DECK - LARGE CIRCLE OF GUESTS

Guests, locals, most dressed in white kaftans wait impatiently. RALPH comes leaping onto the boat. Pushes through the guests to the center.

RALPH

Coming through!

JACK AND JOAN

are at the center, hand in hand. The DERVISHES in attendance. All eyes turn after Ralph takes his place next to Jack.

THE JEWEL

smiles at Jack.

JEWEL

Now ... we can start. Do we have the ring?

JACK reaches into his pocket. Freezes. Pats it. Tries the others. The guests, the Jewel and both Jack and Joan all slowly turn to Ralph. ... Ralph smiles, opens his palm.

THE RING

RALPH

(blushes)

I was just kidding.

HANDS JACK THE RING. JACK LOOKS AT JOAN - TURNS
TO THE JEWEL -

JACK

Let 'er rip.

PULL BACK

as the great Nile carries the SAIL BOAT towards the
pyramids.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON - GLORIA

in her office, reading an air mail letter filled with
exotic stamps.

JOAN (V.O.)

Of course, that was a while
ago. We bought Ralph his
restaurant in Asbury Park ...

ASBURY PARK - BOARDWALK - A HUGE, BAROQUE PIZZA
PARLOR

Ralph is throwing a pizza - by twirling as a
DERVISH.

JOAN (V.O.)

... we thought that was the least
we could do after everything. Oh,
and Jack and I decided on that
farm in Connecticut ...

FARMHOUSE - CONNECTICUT

A country cottage with horse stables, sheep, and
two stationwagons.

JOAN (V.O.)

... that was the agreement.
Six months near New York. I'll
write one book shop, go to the
theater, and Jack can annoy
the neighbors. We should be
there soon as Jack's six months
are up ...

THICK JUNGLE

sloping up an active volcano in the heart of BORNEO.
SLASH! A machete cuts through the vines. JACK
COULTER, every inch a man, wipes his brow with his sleeve.

COMING UP BESIDE him, slashing just as hard, just as
fast, is one happy adventuress.

JOAN (V.O.)

... providing I don't tell him
how much I like it!

CLOSE ON - JACK AND JOAN

PULL BACK - until we lose them in the greenness
of the earth.

FADE OUT