

FADE IN:

Title Card: Katera - Desert Nation

EXT. DESERT - MORNING

SUNLIGHT blares, stark light traveling across sand dunes.

Sounds of WAR CHANTS as CAMERA PANS footsteps in the sand.

KATERA NATIVES, peoples of African descent, congregate at a ceremonial gathering. They have identical tribal TATTOOS on visible on their shoulders.

SOUND of haunting cries.

Ceremonial leader, **TEYABA (45, thin-framed)**, in a trance, projects loud cries, soon convulsing as he raises a sharp BLADE in the air. He stands on a large boulder, a ceremonial platform.

The tribal king, **DRION, (40, extremely tall, muscular, tribal tattoos on one half of his face)** sits in a ornate chair made out of elephant bones. Two, beautiful FEMALE ATTENDANTS stand on either side of King Drion, holding up their spears, which maintain three, sharp, large, prong-like blades.

Three hundred KATERA WARRIORS, surrounding the King, stand at attention. (There is no specific formation. Some are decorated with other tribal weapons.) As the King raises his hand, the chanting and screaming stop.

Drion holds a skull-like cup and from it, drinks the rose-colored blood. CAMERA PANS to a BLOOD-STAINED ROCK ALTAR. This is a sacrifice ceremony.

The winds picks up as a few MOTHERS and CHILDREN look on with dejected countenances.

CEREMONIAL LEADER

Tribe of Katera! We make a sacrifice  
to Dradosh! What better way than to  
incur the power for Drion, our King?!

The CHANTING stirs up again. At the front of the assembly, a **MOTHER (35)** holding a **BABY** (known as **UDARI**). The mother, crying uncontrollably, caresses her child. A **BURLY WARRIOR(25)** forcibly pries the baby away from her.

The man gives baby Udari to Teyaba, who in turn starts shaking the child. Baby Udari also has a tribal tattoo, identical to the other natives. Soon an OLDER TRIBAL WOMAN throws gold dust on baby Udari, causing her to cry.

Teyaba raises the child in Drion's direction. Drion lifts up a ceremonial CUP, awaiting for the blood sacrifice.

As Udari's mother screams, ONE of the warriors slash her across the stomach, killing her. Her last look is one of shock as she falls to the ground. A FEW NATIVES, still CHANTING, look away as Udari's mother is dragged away from the ceremonial site, her body leaving a trail of blood in the dust.

The WIND picks up, causing dust FLURRIES --

The CHANTING ceases as Teyaba proceeds to lay baby Udari on the ceremonial altar -- Teyaba raises the dagger, moving it toward baby Udari's stomach.

TEYABA  
 (to the baby)  
 Daughter of Katera, the time has come  
 for you to honor your god.

The baby begins to cry as the leader angles to stab her but suddenly, the passing wind has changed into an intense, dreary WINDSTORM.

DION  
 (furiously to Teyaba)  
 What is this?!

The natives, now covered by dust, panic and disperse, soon rushing, in some cases, running toward the nearby caves.

Teyaba locks eyes with the confused DRION who is now being draped with a huge black cloak by his two Attendants--

Teyaba holding baby Udari passes the child to the same warrior who killed her mother.

TEYABA  
 Preserve the child until the storm  
 passes.

The warrior takes the child and passes her to a **TEENAGE GIRL**. The girl begins for the caves, eventually stepping over the baby's dead mother. She was beautiful.

SAND CAVES of various sizes and moulds are in the distance.

INT. ROYAL SAND CAVE - SAME

Drion marches into his cave while Teyaba and the Attendants follow. It's a large rock cave with polished, marble-like walls and gold furnishings.

There's also a large gold platform with an identical elephant bone throne, except this one is larger and gilded with gold.

DRION

(roaring)

Teyaba, are the gods of Katera not honored?!

TEYABA

Yes, Drion, my King, they are.

DRION

Then why the storms?

TEYABA

Master, perhaps you need more sacrifices to appease them. This can and will draw upon the power of all kings who have gone before you.

Drion gets in Teyaba's face, choking him.

DRION

Who before me was ever greater?! I am more powerful than any and all of them!

Drion lets his large grip linger on Teyaba's throat. He slowly releases, moving toward his golden throne.

DRION (CONT'D)

Perhaps what I must do... is conquer other kingdoms, proving to them that I am a great king.s.

Teyaba slowly approaches Drion, who mounts atop his throne.

TEYABA

Yes, my King. This will then confirm that you are all powerful. That you are blessed and eternal.

DRION

(pointing outside)

Prepare more sacrifices for I will not rest until this is done.

EXT. DESERT - SAME

The teenage girl, relentlessly blasted with sand and wind, trudges toward the BORDERING FOREST while still cradling baby Udari.

The girl falls down almost crushing the child. The child is safe underneath her, smiling. The teenage girl shakes her head, leaving the baby abandoned in the sand.

INT. NATIVE'S CAVE - SAME

Teyaba and a few soldiers storm inside a native's cave. A FATHER stands in the corner along with his two WIVES and four CHILDREN. In the hands of one of the Wives is a BABY GIRL. Teyaba approaches, eyeing the child.

TEYABA

Your daughter for the king.

The father gestures for his family to stay away:

FATHER

Lord Teyaba, the way of our people is not one of killing and sacrifice. You can't be sure that these requests are from the gods.

Teyaba gestures for the soldiers to take the child. The soldiers move closer to their target.

FATHER (CONT'D)

(crying out)

Please, my Lord. What god would ask for my child?

TEYABA

The gods of King Drion!

FATHER

(crying)

Please --

ONE of the warriors lifts his spear, quickly LODGING THE WEAPON in one of the Father's chest. The father, limps to the ground dying as the Soldier snatches the child. The family nearby shudders in fear, ONE of the wives CRYING OUT.

EXT. KATERA'S DESERT VILLAGE - SAME

A SAND STORM covers the kingdom village. SCREAMS from women and children as warriors snatch BABIES from FAMILY MEMBERS. Mass killing as they slit the necks of YOUNG MOTHER and FATHER.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. KATERA DESERT - DAY

The storm has subsided. Baby Udari CRIES but a GROANING SOUND overpowers her cries.

A brown **BALOK (a flying stingray shaped creature)** hovers near the child. The creature alights on the ground, nudging the child with its amorphous body --

The Balok rises to the sky, ascending in a hovering motion. Baby Udari lies atop its back.

EXT. WANUNI MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - DAY

A mountain range inhabited by the WANUNI PEOPLES.

WANUNI CITIZENS hike the incline, a pathway leading to an expansive and gigantic mountain range. A few Baloks with RIDERS soar above.

In the distance is a VALLEY.

EXT. WANUNI VALLEY - SAME

YOUNG WANUNI BOYS race against each other, LAUGHING among themselves. One of the boys, **TEMPO (3, tall)**, leads the pack. At least a mile ahead, slowing at the border of the forest, Tempo soon hears the MOANS of a Balok in the bordering forest.

It is the same Balok from earlier. It's covered with dust. Meanwhile, baby Udari sleeps in the center of the creature's back. Tempo looks at the Balok with suspicion.

LATER

Tempo runs toward the mountain settlement, at times looking up in the sky at the hovering Balok, which soars in the same direction --

Tempo runs toward the village's seer, **GONJABI (70)** who motions for Tempo to cease in his tracks. Tempo points to the sky.

TEMPO

(rapidly)

Gonjabi, Gonjabi! Tempo has found a baby from the sky. A baby and a Balok... in the dust!

GONJABI

(calmly)

Quiet, Tempo. Quiet.

(MORE)

## GONJABI (CONT'D)

Such blubbering will offend Selah.  
Now, let peace give you utterance, my  
boy.

Tempo takes a big breath in and then out. In a calmer tone:

## TEMPO

Gonjabi. A baby has fallen from the  
sky. Come and see.

LATER

Gonjabi and Tempo stand near the resting Balok. The two inspect  
baby Udari, who sleeps on the ground next to the Balok.

## GONJABI

Heee, I see. This is a sky baby, my  
boy.

## TEMPO

(pointing to the TATTOO on  
her back)

No Gonjabi, she is Katera; she is  
filled with the desert.

## GONJABI

Well, she is now a child of Selah. And  
Selah has sent her to the nation of  
*Wanuni*.

(a beat)

Keep quiet for now. I'll find the  
king.

EXT. WANUNI MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Wanuni king, **PIATI (50, muscular, stern in appearance)**, walks up  
the mountain incline with Wanuni Philosopher, **KAYPESH (55,  
dwarfed)**. They walk into the egress of a mountain.

## KAYPESH

How could a flower grow into an apple?  
Or a bird into a tiger? It can only  
express what's in its DNA.

## PIATI

Kaypesh, I beg to differ. Being a king  
is not the only thing in my DNA. A  
king is more than just a king. He is  
everyman. He is your servant and your  
friend. Your brother and sister. Your  
father and your mother.

They two smile at each other. Gonjabi approaches, interrupting the two, carrying a sling filled with something heavy. Gonjabi kneels down before Piati.

GONJABI

My king, I will not rise until you  
bless me.

Piati senses an urgency.

PIATI

You are blessed, Gonjabi. Rise and  
speak.

Gonjabi stands, looking at Kaypesh.

KAYPESH

I will leave you two.

Gonjabi watches as Kaypesh stride off.

PIATI

What it is my old friend?

GONJABI

King Piati, you know the fruit of thy  
loins?

Looking at the Teyaba with a wry smile on his face:

PIATI

I do. My loins have very distinct  
seeds.

GONJABI

Then, my King, what about the fruit of  
the loins of Selah?

Gonjabi opens the sling, showing the sleeping Udari. The child wakes, forcing her way through the slit of the sling.

King Piati looks at Udari, wiping the dust from her face.

PIATI

Who is this, Gonjabi?

GONJABI

She is a child of Selah, sent from the  
sky.

King Piati notices the tribal tattoo on the child. He looks at Gonjabi.

PIATI

Then, what is Selah's is also my own.

The two men share an understanding.

FADE TO BLACK

Title Card: The Year of the Sun

15 Years Later

FADE IN:

EXT. WANUNI VALLEY - MORNING

An OLDER Gonjabi (**85**) stoops on the ground examining huge crags in the earth. He takes a group of ANIMAL BONES out of a small knapsack and rolls it like dice onto the hard crusted earth. A look of alarm on his face.

He gets up, the sun glaring behind him.

INT. WANUNI MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - SAME

The philosopher Kaypesh, (**58**) from the beginning, teaches a class. Wanuni's **ROYAL CHILDREN** (the "Kabila") sit on the floor, paying attention. Among the group is an older Udari (**15**; "sky daughter") and **KOFET (15, lean but muscular)**. From behind, we see Udari's Ketara, tribal tattoo. Also among them is an older Tempo (**18**).

King Piati (**65**) stands near the opening of the rocky conclave without being seen.

KAYPESH (O.C.)

I want you to hear me, all of you. You are Wanuni, but also the children of the Kabila. Royal blood, chosen for a set time. Kofet, you are the son of the king. Udari, his daughter. In times to come, this kingdom shall be yours and when that time comes, you will give your kingdom back to Selah, the one true God.

UDARI

And if Selah owns this kingdom, then what need is a king of Wanuni? The king, rather, is nothing more than a servant.

Kofet whispers something to Udari:



KOFET

Quiet sister.

KAYPESH

Selah is a great God, Udari, that chooses men to stand in his stead.

UDARI

What man is good enough to represent a god? Or rather, Selah lower his world for a man?

PIATI (O.C.)

You defy Selah, Udari?

Udari as well as the whole class kneel down as Piati approaches. In unison, all of the class:

CLASS

King Piati, I will not rise until you bless me.

PIATI

Blessings to all of you. Now rise.

UDARI

(shyly)

Forgive me, Father. I did not mean to offend you.

PIATI

You're full of blatant defiance for all Wanuni, your king, and Selah. You are a blasphemous child and that is a shameful thing!

Tempo glances at Udari, feeling some pity for her. Kofet, instead, has a smirk on his face.

EXT. WANUNI VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Tempo, breathing hard, looks at the mountain, his eyes zoning on a small circle (hole-in-the-wall) in the mountain side.

The WANUNI BOYS, led by Kofet, run at top speed, approaching Tempo.

KOFET

Your speed may put you ahead of the others, but it is I who will always be before you as your king.

Kofet playfully hits Tempo who smiles, soon sharing a brotherly handshake.

Tempo turns his attention back to the hole in the mountain.

INT. WANUNI MOUNTAIN - SAME - SELAH'S PRAYER CAVE

A small, prison-like cave filled with sunlight streaming through a single circle window - the hole in the wall.

Udari, kneeling on the floor, recites an incantation over and over.

UDARI

Forgive me, Selah, for I have offended  
Thee. Forgive me, Selah, for I have  
offended Thee. Forgive me, Selah --

EXT./INT. WANUNI MOUNTAIN - SAME - SELAH'S PRAYER CAVE

Kaypesh and Udari's mother, **NOMINTA (50, beautiful, regal and adorned with colorful jewelry)**, watch Udari from a distance.

NOMINTA

What has she done now?

KAYPESH

Assert her curiosity, only at the  
expense of truth.

NOMINTA

The truth about what?

KAYPESH

(smiling)

The truth about everything, my Queen  
Nominta.

NOMINTA

Hah, I see. Your daughter Udari has  
somehow inherited Piati's will... and  
perhaps my obstinance.

They two grin at this.

EXT. WANUNI MOUNTAIN - CONTINUOUS

Wanuni BOYS run toward the mountains while King Piata and Gonjabi, moving in the opposite position, walk toward the valley.