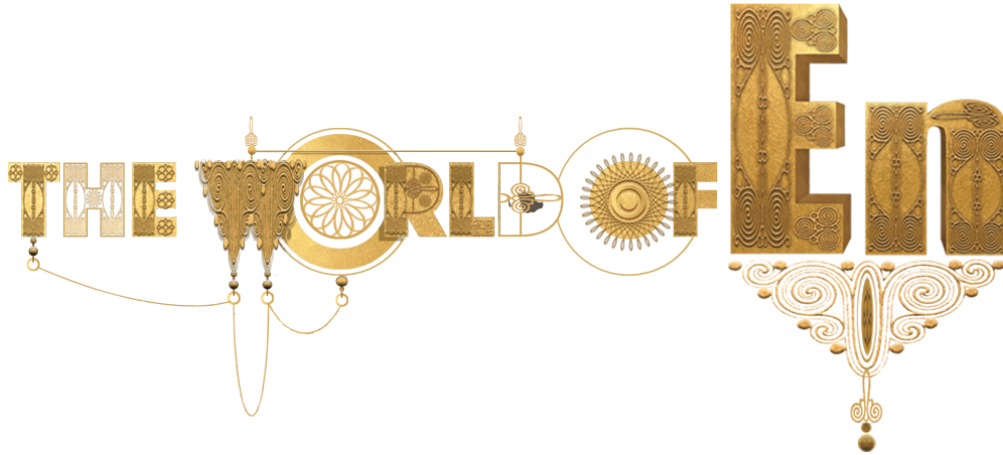


## STORY TREATMENT



**By Olivier Tossan**

A black screen opens on a dark room. The camera backs up from a large table on which is unrolled a long band of an ancient parchment, covered with indecipherable signs.

As the camera slowly scans the document from above we hear a voice—the voice of an old man with a strange accent who begins to intone:

*“There once was a world in decline. The people of that world believed in a prophecy that said that someday, lights would fall from the sky, and like a grain of sand in an oyster makes a pearl—something beautiful was about to be created from tragedy...And once it appeared, the world would never be the same...”*

Then, the movement of the camera stops at the end of the parchment, the voice goes quiet and the image fades to black.

**BLACK SCREEN**

**a title appears**

**“Studio XXX presents”**

**then disappears and suddenly...**

**BOOOOMMM !!!!!**

The scene opens on a huge explosion and we realize we are on board a huge space vessel in ruin. Alarm sirens ring from all sides. Red lights flash. Smoke envelops the corridors and gangways and panicked people are running in all directions.

The gigantic ship shakes violently.

In the midst of this chaos two people emerge: a [stout / heavy-set / corpulent] older man and a skinny teenager. He appears to be about 16. He is EN, the hero of our story. But for the moment, they are running, looking to save their skins. They stop in front of a door. The man taps nervously on a small keyboard and door panels slide open on the tight interior of a spherical escape pod. The man pushes EN into the pod first, but just as he starts to follow, a strong shudder causes him to fall backward...

Suddenly the doors slam shut and the pod is ejected, along with the young man—alone and panicked!!!

As the tiny sphere streaks like an arrow through space, in the distance we see the [enormous / mother] ship blow up in an enormous explosion in the form of an atomic mushroom cloud. EN's entire universe, his home annihilated. Everything is lost.

"What now?" wonders En flattened in his tiny space ship quickly surrounded in a hail of debris... Suddenly the vessel accelerates, drawn in by a large planet that appears out of the void. The pod containing EN accelerates faster and faster toward the celestial body... The ship penetrates the planet's atmosphere as EN grabs an oxygen mask.

We find ourselves in a lush forest. As we raise our eyes we notice long incandescent trails criss-crossing the sky. EN's vessel falls crashing violently, wedged among the branches of a large tree. EN, unconscious, hangs upside down from a branch, suspended by a cable wrapped around his right ankle. He is covered with thousands of butterflies...

Suddenly the boy starts to vigorously wave his arms and free leg about to chase off the insects which transform into a multi-colored cloud around him before scattering into the forest air. The branch holding EN breaks. He falls but manages to catch on to another branch which in turn breaks... A cracking from above: the branches supporting the escape pod start cracking and the smoking ball of metal starts to drop.

There's no time to lose. He has to get himself out of the tree to safety or risk being crushed by the machine. EN clammers down branch by branch and finally jumps into the void. He lands on something [slimy / viscous], and with barely time to realize where he is, a creature—half plant half animal—encloses him, like a big egg. EN struggles inside, then jumps out of the voracious creature having forced open its "jaws." He is out of breath, covered in slime... The discovery of a hole in mask of his helmet finishes off the young man. He turns green and collapses like a dismembered doll.

## **BLACK**

### **"WORLD OF EN" appears**

Accompanied by the voice of child that says, "He has arrived."

EN lies immobile on the ground, face down. In the background we see the smoking carcass of the escape pod in ruins. A small mouse like creature creeps up to the huge boy and sniffs carefully. The boy sits up suddenly and the little animal scurries away...

En rubs his eyes and stares dumbfounded at his surroundings. He finds he's in a sumptuous forest with lush and generous vegetation. Flowering bushes perfume the air which is velvety and breathable. The evening light is salmon pink and soft. Everything around him seems welcoming and benevolent. EN has the sense he's escaped from hell and arrived in paradise.

The young man walks alone in this new world. We see him taste some fruits. Some he spits out with a disgusted look. He gorges himself on others—his cheeks bulging like a hamster's, sweet juice dripping running down his chin, a satisfied look on his face.

He walks into a thicket. We hear a frightful noise and the young man reappears running... Without knowing what it was.

He bathes in a lake escorted by magnificent schools of fish. We see him standing on a huge branch, trying to amuse himself, dancing and singing. Then suddenly his moods shifts. He furiously kicks the trunk of the tree, dislodging a large fruit which plops softly on his head...He can be heard sobbing as he falls asleep in hole in the tree trunk. Ghostly images of his parents—barely decipherable—pass before his eyes. It was so long ago, this old wound that won't heal. A bad beginning...from before his life on the ark.

It's now three weeks that he's alone in this world that's beginning to resemble a golden prison. A heavy rain falls on the forest. EN is running, seeking shelter, when he slips, then falls and finds himself sliding down a slope, dragged along by a torrent of mud. His fall is interrupted when he bumps into a wall that appears across his path. He looks up. It looks like a huge dome of vines and roots braided together. In the rain, EN follows the wall. He notices here and there some abstract ornaments. No doubt, there is intelligent life in this world. He caresses the dripping surface with his hand, when suddenly he hears a little click, and an opening appears. Without hesitation, the boy enters. He barely has time to discover a large structure of tangled vines, beams and platforms when he's struck in the head from behind: "OUCH!" And there he is, our EN, unconscious on the ground.

EN slowly opens his eyes and realizes at once that's his back is tied to a pillar. He can't move. He jumps in amazement. Across from him, a group of strange beings scrutinize him in silence. They are small—about 4'7". Some of them are half man half monkey, others seem more like cats. They wear very little, but their bodies are decorated with tattoos, paint, gems and flowers. EN and the group remain staring at one another in astonishment for some minutes. A young woman comes forward and offers En a cup of water from which he takes a mouthful. Then smiling, he says "Thank you..." to cries of emotion from the group which takes a step back. A man steps forward and approaches the boy. He is nearly naked, his body covered in red paint. We guess he's the chief. He addresses EN in an incomprehensible language. Then, turning to his tribesmen, he designates 4 young men, who looking very concerned, post themselves around EN. One of them is holding his spear backwards. He is SIMO, a little man with a big heart.

Evening. EN is still tied to the post, but the atmosphere seems more relaxed. Children play at being scared while getting as close as possible to the alien, while he (pretending not to see

them) suddenly turns with a huge cry of “BOOOOOO!!!” The children scatter running through the village laughing loudly. SIMO, who is supposed to be guarding the prisoner, laughs to the point of tears.

Night. Silence... The long feather that Simo has in his hair has bent forward and falls in front of his face. It rises and falls with the rhythm of his breathing in and out and his light snoring. He is deeply asleep... Suddenly, a brutal shock makes him sit up all at once. En, lying on the ground, his hands tied has just kicked him rather hard! “THE PRISONER IS TRYING TO ESCAPE!!!”, cries Simo. And En finds himself once again surrounded by villagers pointing their spears at him. Simo takes a step back and jumps. On the ground he discovers the remains of a sort of scorpion, huge and very venomous and then sees some bits of the animal on the heel of En’s [foot / shoe?]. Had the alien just saved his life?

En is stretched out nonchalantly on the large branch of a tree. The sun’s rays shine through the foliage, dappling him with light. It is a warm beautiful day... His appearance has changed. He looks full of life. He has adopted the dress of the villagers with whom he now lives. But he has kept his old T-shirt—his “good luck charm.”

Simo is seated across from him. They take turns tossing a round fruit back and forth. With each toss, En says a word in English, which Simo repeats in his language with each catch. En gets a thoughtful look when while holding the fruit in his hand he thinks he sees the face of a child take shape in the skin of the veined fruit.

Later, while En and Simo are busy hauling some large jars, a young villager runs up to En, quickly kisses the strange star-shaped spot on En’s left collarbone and takes off running, red-faced, to rejoin his gang of adolescents who are all snickering from this challenge : Who dares to kiss the “stranger with the star?”

Night. Everyone is assembled at a great feast. The Red Chief is speaking to En, and Simo does his best to translate... “Forest and people in danger... Bad city people killing the forest... When forest dead, village dead!”

The villagers ask their guest how he came to be there.

EN tells them his story. His arrival on this planet that the villagers call “Cuatli.” He describes the land that he’s from, its beauty. He talks about his life aboard the great ark... his work as a kitchen boy: the dirty dishes, the garbage, scrubbing floors and peeling vegetables. Simo accompanies his laborious translation with big gestures.

While the young man continues to speak, the image fades into another image—a close-up on a mouth which continues the recitation in En’s voice. The camera pans out and we discover the pale face of a young child speaking with En’s voice.

His eyes are shut. He has a small snout in place of a nose, like the people of this world. He is Prince Pentu. He’s no more than eight years old. Lying in a sort of large round nest, he appears very weak.

His cocoon is separated from the rest of the large hall by long hanging curtains on which halos of light take on the form of the young prince shaman's visions. In this world, an ancient belief tells of a civilization that existed on Cuatli millions of years ago: the SEMIRS. Before disappearing completely from this world, they are said to have hidden a treasure of inestimable value, a treasure that would grant absolute power to over everyone and everything to he who possessed it. The myth also said that one day, the last representative of this culture, the "Sem," would return to Cuatli to reclaim the hidden treasure.

At a respectful distance from the sleeping child we see a colorfully dressed crowd, heads bowed, on one knee in a sign of respect. These are pilgrims come to venerate the prince whom they believe to be the "Sem."

It is the great Lady Ptahshepses who created this cult. She is the Prince's mother and she knows that as long as the people believe in Pentu's divinity, she will command absolute power! This evening, she remains at her sickly son's bedside. While the voice of EN continues to come from the mouth of the prince, large moving images show the young intruder running about in the forest...

Ptahshepses watches this spectacle with concern and exclaims in her language (which will be subtitled), "What does all this mean?"

An old man, bent under the weight of a heavy robe embroidered in gold threads approaches the Lady and whispers in her ear. Together, they leave the hall.

They enter a dark room that looks like the one from the film's opening... Two assistants bring in a heavy box from which they produce a dusty scroll which they unroll on the large table. As the old man points to signs on the precious document, he tells Ptahshepses that a multitude of luminous trails falling from the sky had been observed a few months earlier above the site of the ancient tower. This unexplained phenomenon could be related to the appearance of the young alien that the young prince Pentu just revealed in his vision. If the people make this connection, they might start to question the legitimacy of her son Pentu as the SEM.

The Lady tenses immediately. She recognizes that the presence of EN in her world is a threat to her power. She orders her lieutenant Olyan to take a squadron to capture the intruder and discreetly bring him back to the palace—alive.

### **Fade out / fade in**

In the heart of the forest, we see a broken down tower of wood and rusted metal. We are at an abandoned construction site, a reminder of the forest decimated by Ptahshepses' ambitions. It sits at the edge of what was a huge crater—now a lake. From the top of the creaky edifice, children are diving into the water. On the shore, EN gazes at the face of a child which covers his own reflection in the water. It's the same face that appeared to EN in the fruit... From atop the tower Simo shouts, "EN, EN look at me." The young man raises his head as Simo pirouettes into space. Everyone applauds. EN returns to the reflection, but the child has disappeared. Suddenly, the shouts and laughter stop abruptly. There is silence. EN rises. Everyone is looking in the same direction. Far off, above the tree we see a thick column of black smoke rising. A

group of frightened villagers burst from the thickets screaming at EN in words he doesn't understand. Simo, dripping wet, turns to EN and shouts, "EN, Run! RUN!!" An arrow has just thudded into a stump at the young man's feet. No time to lose! EN sets off running, followed by Simo who shouts to him, "Simo comes with you!..."

We see our two friends scurrying, belly to the ground, into the dense forest. Behind them, a horde of armed men, astride massive mounts whose gallop makes the earth tremble come dangerously close. Suddenly, the leader Olyan raises his arm and savage horde stops abruptly. They have lost their two fugitives!

We back up and discover two large vegetal eggs which shake violently from inside—to the point of rupturing. Like two devils rising from their coffers, EN and Simo, surge from their hiding place, covered in sticky slime. They have just barely escaped! Simo invites his friend to seek refuge at the top of a large tree.

Night falls on the forest... EN and Simo sit calmly on a high branch. They understand that the warriors had come in search of EN. EN tells Simo how sorry he is to be the cause of so much misfortune for the village. Simo responds, "Village like big family. En is like brother... Village do everything for brother..."

But what to do now? Where to go? For the moment, it's time to sleep. Tomorrow is another day.

En is seated cross-legged in the berth of the spaceship where he lived. Across from him in the same position a young child dressed in white and very pale smiles calmly at him. After a few moments, the child extends his frail arm to EN and slides a small pearl into his hand. Within seconds, the pearl starts to glow red and grows brighter and brighter, obscuring the cabin. En can see nothing but this glowing red point which flashes irregularly in the dark. As quickly, the red light disappears and En feels a hand caress his cheek. The long blue hand moves slowly toward his neck, and transforming into a serpent, starts to strangle him. EN cries out. Simo wakes with a start, "What happened?!?" "Nothing, just a nightmare" says EN. They fall back to sleep.

At dawn the two boys wake with a start, to the sound of a violent cracking which vibrates through the tree where they have taken refuge. Simo shouts "Traschken!!!" (Earthquake!!!). The tree starts to move, swaying from right to left then slowly leaning more and more to the left. En and Simo roll along the large branch where they spent the night before being thrown into thin air before landing in some other branches. The enormous tree falls and collapses in a huge cloud of dust and leaves... The sound of birds screeching accompanies the disaster. Silence returns; the dust subsides. We hear voices approaching. From the tangle of branches, two silhouettes appear covered in dust : En and Simo, shaken but unhurt! Snorting, the two look at one another... Yikes! What a tumble! But Simo tells En they have to get out of there, on the double. Hidden in the undergrowth, Simo points to a group of men starting to scale the fallen tree saying, "City people! Bad people...forest killers. Bad people don't see En! Danger!!

Simo is walking ahead. En follows, looking grumpy. He is thinking of his lost friends from the great ship. He wants his old life back.

Simo turns around, but En is nowhere to be seen. Retracing his steps he finds En on all fours, engrossed by the spectacle of a kind of ant pushing a ball of dirt at least five times bigger than it. En murmurs to himself, "Home! I got to go home...back to Earth..."

Simo says, "En coming?" En, a little irritated says, "YES!!!" And the two start off again.

Suddenly, Simo stops, his face shining with anticipation! A large beautiful tree stands before them, its branches bending under the weight of a bounty of large purplish fruits. They are Ovos—extremely succulent. With a bit of luck, one might find the very rare purple Ovo, the king of all the fruits of the forest. Simo gets set to climb the tree and asks his friend, "En coming?" Still looking glum, En responds, "No, I'll wait for you here..." And he crouches at the base of another flowering tree.

He murmurs to himself, "But how to get off of this planet? How to get back to earth from here?" His head buried in his shoulders, he reaches into his pockets. With a start, he withdraws one hand, and opening it, sees he's holding a small pearl. A pearl, exactly like the one he was given by the pale child in his dream... He looks stunned!

But his attention is quickly drawn to a small ball of smoke which dropped from the tree and stops in front of his face. It looks like a little smiling mask. The ball of smoke disperses, then is replaced by another smoking form which also drops. This time EN recognizes a hand, and then two hands which shake one another in greeting. Again, EN rubs his eyes! He looks up and sees a man perched on a branch. The man who is smoking a little pipe greets EN with a big smile... He speaks a few phrases in a dialect that EN doesn't understand. Then, drawing on his pipe, the man exhales a jet of smoke that descends toward the boy. The smoke splits into two tiny smiling heads. They greet one another, then reunite into a large ball which starts to spin until it finally resembles a planet.

"This is Earth" En says to himself, recalling the images of the blue planet he had seen on his tablet on the Ark, living among his own kind. He is filled with enthusiasm. The man in the tree winks at him. En exclaims, "Do you know how to take me back to Earth!?!!" The man nods his head, still smiling broadly. Then he jumps from his branch landing directly in front of EN. Fascinated, En watches as the man bows deeply before him. The man gestures to EN, indicating that he should follow. As if hypnotized, the boy obeys...

From the top of the tree, Simo cries with joy. For the first time in his life, he has spotted the magnificent purple ovo. But between him and the prize there is a huge void and a hundred or so tiny creatures. They are Kullums—part Saimari monkey, part squirrel—with the same desire for the sweet prize as Simo's. The competition is going to be harsh indeed!

Our young native inches as far as possible onto a slim branch which bends under his weight. The fruit is so close. Simo extends his arm and grabs the sweet prize with a triumphant air. But one of the long-tailed monsters drops onto Simo's back causing the branch to break. Simo pitches into the air, dropping the fruit as he does. It tumbles before being snagged by one of the

monkey-squirrels who fumbles it himself. The precious fruit drops into Simo's hand again, as he is suspended from a branch. And there we are, caught up in a sort of aerial basketball match between Simo and this horde of long-tailed little monsters!

The young villager drops to the ground, proudly grasping his precious purple trophy. He is followed by the pack of Kullums who look determined not to let it go at that. Simo wants to show his treasure to his pal EN, but the place where he last saw him is empty. EN is not there! Simo notices some trampled plants and footprints. He takes off following them.

Crossing a big field of tall grass, En's new friend entertains him with extraordinary shapes in smoke from his pipe. They arrive in a clearing and the pipe smoker points to a clear spot in the center, then blows a spiral of smoke into the air which takes the form of a man sitting cross-legged...

Excited, EN runs to the spot and sits, assumes the position, his eyes closed and smiling in anticipation of a big surprise. Instead a huge net drops on the young man. He thrashes about trying to free himself. Quickly he's surrounded by about twenty soldiers under the command of Olyan. They seize EN, tie him up and throw him over one of their huge mounts, like some kind of cargo. Olyan rides over to the false friend and hands him a purse. The traitor turns to the poor prisoner and blowing smoke that turns into a donkey, he bows deeply smiling all the while. En watches, helpless and red with fury. The soldiers head off into the forest with their captive.

Far above in a tree, we see a dejected Simo, surrounded by Kullums envious of the fruit in his sack, as he contemplates the sad scene.

Little Prince Pentu is seated on his bed, his mother Ptahshepses seated behind him. She is gently rubbing his bare back. The moist cloth passes over a birthmark on the boy's left collarbone—remarkably shaped like a star. They are alone in the grand hall, but the lady starts, sensing a presence. "Who goes there?"

A soldier, bowing low, emerges from the shadow and says, "Your Highness, The Alien has been captured." Ptahshepses, exultant, says "Take me to him!" The prince tenses...

It is night in the encampment of Olyan and his men. A large round cage is suspended from a tree. EN is inside, asleep. A group approaches bearing torches. In the torchlight, we recognize Ptahshepses and Olyan. With the aid of a reed, Olyan exposes the young prisoner's left shoulder. Seeing the star-shaped stain there, Ptahshepses recoils in amazement. "Bring him to the palace tomorrow!" she orders.

From his branch high above, Simo has seen everything. There's no time to lose. As soon as the group withdraws, he shinnies down the cable holding the cage. He's forgotten about the little monsters obsessed by the purple fruit who are still around. They follow Simo, climb on him as he tries to chase them away without making a sound. Until, one of the adorable little Kullums bites him on the calf causing him to cry out.

**CUT:**



We discover En and Simo, together again—both of them in the cage... The massive Olyan speaks to them in his own language, with a menacing tone. He ends his discourse by drawing his hand across his neck as he walks away, laughing.

In his comfortable nest, Prince Pentu starts to fidget. Suddenly his eyes open wide and a bright light appears above him. Simultaneously, the same light appears in the starry sky above Olyan's camp where his men are gathered around the fire. Three men stand guard over the cage containing Simo and EN. The light continues amplify—it is a huge ball intensely luminous that appears above the soldiers. They are all standing now, staring at this strange phenomenon, shielding their eyes with a hand from the blinding spectacle. From their cage, EN and Simo are also fascinated. They stare intensely, until suddenly it occurs to EN that this is the time to make their escape!

As Simo watches incredulously, En grabs the fruit that they managed to hide from the soldiers and waves it toward the crowd of monkeys on the lookout. All at once, they rush to the cage, stretching their little arms through the bars to grab their part of the prize fruit. On they come, 10... 100... 200... 500...

The branch holding the cage bends under the weight of hundreds of these little bodies and finally, breaks with a loud crack, though it doesn't disturb the soldiers still enthralled by the giant star. The round cage crashes to the ground and starts rolling downhill. At the moment the cage crashes to earth, hundreds of panicked Kullums fly in all directions, landing on the men of the garrison—shocking them back to reality. Seeing the broken branch and the cage and its prisoners gone, they mount up and gallop into the night after the escapees.

The cage continues its downhill fall. Inside, EN and Simo are tossed all about. The crazy trip comes to an end when the cage hurtles into a large tree, and breaks apart. Our two friends are thrown from the cage and land unceremoniously groggy from the trip and crash landing. They've barely regained their senses when the deafening rumble of the galloping mounts as they approach lets them know they'd better disappear—NOW! The two throw themselves under a huge root. The horde rushes by without stopping. Whew! They weren't seen. They come out from their hiding place only to jump back again when a herd of horned Hatis appear out of nowhere. They are fleeing the bright star illuminating the night. WOW! Our little team has once again managed to come out alive.

Lady Ptahshepses and her escort approach the Palace lit up by the celestial ball of light. Her expression is hard—she has already learned that Olyan had lost the stranger. Raising her gaze toward the palace, she sees a powerful ray of light coming from one of the openings to the room where the prince is. She hastens the convoy on and hurries into the hall where the child is resting. At the same instant, the bright light above the prince and the huge star in the sky both are suddenly extinguished.

Ptahshepses is furious... She has figured out that the Prince had effected En's escape by through the diversion of the star. She also knows that they share a single lineage, since they both bear the same mark on their left shoulder. So, the people were right. Her son really is the

reincarnation of the “Sem.” She sends orders to Olyan to kill EN as soon as he is found. And now, the dear child is going to be smart and tell his “Dear Mummy” where to find this precious treasure! “Mommy Dearest” is patience itself.

Back in the night forest. EN and Simo have taken refuge in the trunk of a tree. EN seems lost in thought. Sim says to him, “EN wants talk to Simo?” The young boy tells him that he wants to go home—to earth—but doesn’t know how. He also recounts how he has no memories of earth, that he only knows it from pictures he saw on the space ship. He says he wants to see his mother, whom he barely remembers; she abandoned him when he was very little. He wants to know why she did that...he wants to understand. Simo is touched by his friends story... And the two boys fall asleep.

At first light, EN wakes and notes that Simo is gone. He bounds from their hiding place and scans in all directions. Nothing! EN thinks to himself, “Looks like everyone abandons me.” At that moment, a nut plunks him on the head and he looks up. He spies Simo, perched in the very top of the tree, motioning EN to join him. EN who is far less agile at climbing than the natives throws himself into the ascent as best he can. Once at the top, Simo points toward the horizon, showing EN a small red flashing light. What can it mean? En thinks, “I know that light”. “Let’s go”, he says to Simo. There is surely some kind of answer to be had from this curious phenomenon. “Let’s go,” says Simo.

Back on the ground, the two boys suddenly see that they are surrounded by Olyan’s army. They throw themselves into the thick vegetation, frozen with terror. “Shhhhhh...” Not a sound! We hear the heavy breath of the warrior mounts and the growling of their wild dogs, ready for the hunt... EN and Simo look at one another, worry in their gaze. This time it’s going to be difficult—*very* difficult. They start to crawl through the undergrowth—slowly—carefully. But the wild dogs suddenly become agitated and start barking. Suddenly, Simo jumps up and shouts, “RUUUNNN!!!!”

And with a start, the two start running like the wind—straight ahead. The soldiers release the dogs. EN and Simo throw themselves into a tree and start climbing...Arrows whistle all around them. Simo is faster than EN... He jumps easily from branch to branch, while EN climbs laboriously...He misses a branch and starts to fall, catching himself at the last minute, mere millimeters from the jaws of a wild dog...

Calm pervades the hall of the Prince. Ptahshepses, surrounded by shamans and servants solemnly approaches her son’s bed. In her hand she bears a chalice which everyone believes contains a cure for the feeble prince. In reality, its contents are designed to keep him sickly and dependent, thus assuring his mother’s status and ambitions. Leaning over she, gently raises his head and prepares to bring the chalice to his lips. But the child’s body suddenly stiffens and slowly rises from his bed...

Ptahshepses drops the cup which shatters on the ground and backs away stunned. The boy begins to levitate and at the same instant, images of light are displayed on the large hangings

surrounding the bed. All kinds of animals showing speed and agility : flocks of flamingoes, herds of antelope, leopards, eagles, etc...

Back in the trees, to EN's astonishment, he feels suddenly swift and agile. He jumps from branch to branch and quickly rejoins his friend.

Prince Pentu continues to rise and as he rises, EN gains in speed and strength. The boy starts to whirl and spin ! "YOOHOO!!!" Despite the danger surrounding them, EN is thrilled at these new powers growing in him.

A flock of luminous birds swirls around the Prince suspended in air.

Our two fugitives land brutally in a large nest, smashing a large blue egg as they do. Cries shower them from above. It's the mother bird, enraged—a large bird with colorful plumage. Without thinking En and Simo each grab on to one the great bird's feet as she rises up, taking them aloft. Hundreds of arrows whistle on all sides.

Prince Pentu continues his slow ascent.

The huge bird is struck by an arrow. The two boys fall to earth once more. If they don't run immediately, they will lose the advantage gained over their pursuers, thanks to their improvised flight. Frantic, they take off running... until suddenly the earth disappears beneath their feet and they find themselves falling into emptiness...

The little Prince suddenly starts to fall from on high, bringing with him the huge screens and the structure that supports them. It all crashes with a huge roar. The attendants cry out... we find the boy's inanimate body in the ruins.

EN and Simo fall and fall until with a SPLASH!! they land in an underground lake at the bottom of a huge crevasse, a circular opening pointing skyward. Despite their disorientation, the two manage to reach the shore—exhausted. What a tumble!!!

After a few breathless minutes on the bank, EN gets up and examines his surroundings and large hole far above. How to get out of this huge well? He sees there are large vines hanging from the edge of the crevasse all the way to the ground. EN grabs one and starts to shinny up. It quickly breaks and the boy tumbles back. He chooses another sturdier one, but it, too, breaks. Simo tries as well also without success. The two boys search for one that will take their weight, but one after another they all break.

EN becomes enraged at finding himself trapped like this. He picks up a rock and throws it with all his might. It lands somewhere with a metallic BONG! Intrigued, the two head toward the spot where the unexpected noise came from. They clear away some undergrowth and branches and discover a metallic surface—completely rusted. Finally, they come across door set sideways. EN grabs the handle and begins to pull with all his might. The door resists at first, but quickly gives under EN's force, skinny though he is. The door flies off its hinges and lands to one side... A swarm of bats fly out of the opening.

A stairway leads into a dark hole. EN and Simo exchange troubled glances, then EN enters the dark tunnel. Simo, raises his eyes to heaven, then resigned, follow his companion. The stench is awful and the two cover their nose and mouth. As they move forward, dim light shines through small holes in the ceiling and the air gets better... En and Simo arrive in a room whose walls are covered in white ceramic. There are signs on the wall incomprehensible to Simo, but which EN deciphers: "Men" and "Women." What can it mean?

There are other doors as well. The two enter other rooms. Here the walls are black and oozing. EN heads immediately toward a large imposing door. He has to push hard before one of the panels opens. Their jaws drop as they enter an immense rectangular hall, high ceilinged and gloomy.

Gold ingots are piled high—covering every inch of wall. Large columns surround a central nave. Here and there the floor roots have come through the floor pavers. The two young men advance. The silence is broken by the sound of Simo's teeth chattering with fright. En discovers a sort of box in the center of the space, which they approach. It is metal, completely rusted. EN notices a small hole in the center of the box's cover...

At the palace, the lifeless body of the tiny prince has been placed on a bier covered draped in gold. Ptahshepses kneels by her son, solemn, devoid of emotion. Surrounding this scene, courtesans weep as a shaman invites the Great Lady to begin the ritual.

Back in the hall of ingots, En kneels beside the rusted box and withdrawing the pearl from his pocket, places it in the hole. At once, the box trembles and springs open with a soft mechanical sound. A neon light blinks on and we hear a crackly far-off voice start to speak. In a language En understands, because it is his own we hear: "...this message has been recorded for any human living in this world that, in the future will be able to hear my voice. Whoever you are, *please*, listen very carefully to what follows..."

At the same instant, in the Palace, the young prince whom everyone thought dead, opens his eyes and begins to speak. But this time, it is the voice of his mother, Lady Ptahshepses that comes from his mouth. She tells how, with the aid of mild poisons, she has been able to keep her son in a lethargic state, thereby exercising full power over his lands. She also says that by leading her stupid people to believe the Pentu was indeed the SEM, she has been able to gut and destroy the splendid jungle in search of the Semir's treasure for her sole benefit...

In a panic, Ptahshepses interrupts: "Don't listen to him. The child is ill and obviously delirious. Rather, let us rejoice that the SEM is alive and with us!" But her voice continues to speak through Pentu: "I understood that the SEM is like a coin with two faces. Without these two entities, the SEM is powerless, like a knife with no blade; a lock without a key: Good for nothing, useless! Henceforth, I possess both parts of the SEM. They are reunited, under my control. They shall speak, and my power shall soon be limitless!!!... And then? Then, I shall eliminate them."

Ptahshepses screams! She throws herself on Pentu. Guards and courtesans rush to hold her back. The lady attempts to regain her composure, the crowd shouts and boos. Ptahshepses

stiffens, and glares malignantly at her court. Now the entire assembly boos her. The Lady ceremoniously takes her leave and disappears into the recesses of the palace...Forever.

In the vault, we hear the scratchy voice coming from the box: "Joe speaking... Manhattan, New York, May 31st 2096...Do not repeat our mistakes..." Then the light goes out, and the rusty box closes. EN remains silent for a moment. He looks more mature now.. He gets up and heads toward the exit, followed by Simo, who has no idea what's going on. Behind them, we see a large inscription on the wall, partially obscured: "Federal Reserve, City of New York." Once again outside, EN marvels at the magnificent forest. He looks calm, serene. He mumbles, "Mother didn't reject me... She saved me!" Then turning to Simo he says, "This is Earth; I am home!"

Escorted by guards, EN and Simo enter the grand hall. Pentu is seated on a great throne, and smiling, watches EN and Simo, bowing down before him. Suddenly EN stands preparing to make excuses, but is silenced by a gesture from the young prince placing his finger to his lips in a sign hush. The child rises, and with some difficulty and the aid of a cane joins the two boys. He signals them to rise, and the Prince commands that the Great Golden Mantle be brought forth and placed on EN's shoulders. EN can't believe what's happening to him. Then he asks EN to follow him.

We see them in the hall where Pentu as spent so many months in his "cocoon." The veils have all been replaced. For the last time, Pentu takes his place. He has a surprise for EN. The tiny shaman closes his eyes and lights begin to move on the panels... Eyes wide, EN watches the spectacle in amazement. The lights start to take form and finally EN sees a the silhouette of a person coming toward him. As it approaches, it comes more and more into focus, until EN's face blanches, his mouth wide, a tear rising in his eye. He recognizes the woman on the veil...she is his mother!! She gazes at him tenderly, smiling. Suddenly, the Prince recoils in fear. The image has just detached itself from the screen. Made entirely of light, yet autonomous, it moves toward EN who has collapsed. The apparition takes her son in her arms and says to him, "I am so proud of you, my boy... I was always with you through all these years. EN with tears in his eyes responds, " I know Mom...I know." As he finishes, the apparition disappears...

The entire village is celebrating. They cheer the triumphal return of EN and Simo, accompanied by Prince Pentu. The three of them are seated on a palanquin. The crowd cheers them. The heroes are set down in front of the village Chief—the old man in red. Everyone bows before Pentu and EN.

The old chief takes EN's by the hand and says to him, "You see, by saving our own Prince Pentu, you have saved yourself. And by saving yourself, you have saved our forest and our people. I joining the two broken parts in you, you have discovered the most precious of treasures: your strength, your unbelievable life force. As when an irritating grain of sand gets in a body, it once in a while turns into a precious pearl..."

The celebration continues as the camera pulls back...

**theme music!**

**Fade to black with credits and**

We are in the vault, it is dark and silent. Suddenly, we hear hear tiny noises and follow a mouse, some bits of straw in its mouth. She clammers up the pile of gold bars. Finding a hollow between two ingots, she carefully places the straw, making a nest for her brood. Life goes on...

**The credits continue**

West Hollywood, Jan. 2019