

YANGA

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Based on a True Story

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WGAW & U.S. (c)



YANGA

FADE IN:

SUPER: 1578 SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

EXT. SPANISH SHIP - DAY

On the deck of the ship, sailors begin milling around near the hatch leading down into the hold of the ship. From below, they hear a man screaming and a loud, continuous banging sound. The captain walks up and joins them.

INT. SPANISH SHIP - HOLD - DAY

Sixty African captives are tightly packed and chained together. Openings in the ship's sidewall along the ceiling provide the only light.

YANGA (25) is the only captive who is secured inside an iron, barred cage. He has a foreboding presence and powerful physique.

Yanga screams loudly, over and over again as he rocks the cage back and forth, banging it against the ship's sidewall. He looks and acts like a caged, enraged wild animal.

BABAJI (25) and KOOFOO (25), who are both chained with the group of sixty, stand and begin screaming along with Yanga. They take the chains that bind their wrists and bang them against the sidewall along with Yanga.

Babaji is smaller than Yanga, but in excellent physical shape. Koofoo has a thin build and is very limber, like a contortionist. He has a wily look on his face, is wide-eyed and has a funny laugh.

The rest of the captives stand along with Babaji and Koofoo and join in, banging their chains against the sidewall and the floor of the hold. The roar is deafening.

EXT. SPANISH SHIP - DECK - DAY

The clamor from the screams and pounding coming from below has grown louder. Five sailors holding whips approach the group milling around near the hatch. The captain nods to them. They open the hatch and climb down.

INT. SPANISH SHIP - HOLD - DAY

One by one, the five sailors reach the bottom of the ladder and begin to whip the captives. Yanga continues to scream and bang. After a short time, the sailors manage to quiet the group of captives who hunker down. Then they turn toward the cage.

The five sailors steady the cage and try to strike Yanga through the bars. They tussle with him, trying to grab his arms and fists. Yanga manages to land some blows onto the faces and bodies of the sailors through the bars.

One of the sailors picks up a water barrel and tosses the water onto Yanga. Yanga reaches through the bars and tries to grab the sailors. They whip his arms.

A sixth sailor climbs down the ladder into the hold holding a large bucket filled with steaming hot water. His fellow sailors step aside and the sailor tosses the scalding water onto Yanga.

Yanga places his hands over his eyes and drops to the floor of the cage. He appears exhausted, with knees curled up against his chest.

The sailors wait a moment to check his reaction. Then they begin to climb back out of the hold. While they wait for their turn on the ladder, they whip the captives.

As the last sailor begins up the ladder, one of the captives lurches at him, dragging the two beside him in the same direction. He wraps the section of chain between his two wrist restraints around the sailor's neck and pulls him to the floor and tries to strangle him.

The other sailors reverse down the ladder and restrain the captive. They decouple him from the two captives on either side of him and drag him up the ladder onto the deck.

EXT. SPANISH SHIP - DECK - DAY

Three sailors have the captive under control. One of the SAILORS (40) explains the incident to the CAPTAIN (55).

SAILOR

Tried to choke him, captain.

CAPTAIN

Bad seed here. Can't have a rotten apple in the barrel.

(to captive)

Don't want to go to New Spain?

(MORE)

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Alright.

(to sailor)

Let him swim back to Africa.

He nods toward the side of the ship. Four sailors drag the captive to the side and toss him off overboard.

INT. SPANISH SHIP - HOLD - DAY

Babaji and Koofoo are seated and chained together against the sidewall. Both have a look of concern on their faces as they regard Yanga. Yanga looks defeated, curled up with his head between his knees.

KOOFOO

They're lucky they have him in that cage.

BABAJI

He would tear them apart.

Koofoo sees something a few feet away against the wall. He struggles to reach for it. It's a short length of metal. He shows it to Babaji. Babaji smiles and nods. Koofoo tries to pry his restraints apart.

CLOSE UP: WRIST RESTRAINTS

The restraint separates and he squeezes his hands out.

Koofoo begins prying the shackles that bind the wrists of Babaji. After some effort, Babaji manages to squeeze one hand through. Then he squeezes his other hand through.

They move over next to Yanga's cage and sit down.

KOOFOO

Are your eyes alright? Can you see?

Yanga looks up and blinks a few times. He slowly regains his vision.

BABAJI

Where are they taking us?

YANGA

The sunrise comes from the stern.
We're heading west.

BABAJI

The New World.

KOOFOO

Maybe we can get back somehow,
eventually.

BABAJI

These ships only go one direction.

YANGA

Our life in Africa is gone.
Everything.

There is a moment while they process their loss.

BABAJI

We're slaves now.

KOOFOO

Maybe we can escape.

YANGA

We will escape.

KOOFOO

When? Now?

YANGA

No. After we reach land. We have to
be patient. We'll devise a plan.

BABAJI

We have to make them pay.

YANGA

(nods)

They will pay. They'll wish they
left us back in Africa.

Koofoo and Babaji smile and nod.

They hear a noise from above and move back to their places
against the wall. One of the CAPTIVES (20) leans over toward
Babaji.

CAPTIVE

Who is that?

BABAJI

Yanga.

Several nearby captives lean in to listen to their
conversation.

CAPTIVE

That's Yanga? How did they catch
Yanga?

Babaji and Koofoo look at each other as if to ask, which one
should tell the story. Babaji begins.

BABAJI

We had a big celebration. It was
the king's birthday.

KOOFOO

Yanga's father. His fiftieth
birthday.

BABAJI

And we had many visitors.

KOOFOO

From the tribes in our alliance.

BABAJI

King Kilonji came all the way from
Angola. And when they left to go
back, the Fulanis set a trap.

KOOFOO

With the Spanish.

FADE OUT.

SUPER: "GABON AFRICA - 1578"

SOUND OVER BLACK SCREEN:

RUMBLING BASS, CHEERING, CROWD EXCITEMENT, MEN STRUGGLING.

FADE IN:

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE - ANIMAL CORRAL - DAY

Two young boys race towards a raucous crowd. They each choose
nearby small trees and climb for a better view.

Within the corral, encircled with strong wooden fencing, two
men are fighting and wrestling. Yanga has a look of
determination permanently chiseled into his face.

His opponent, a FULANI CAPTIVE (30), grips a spear in his hands. He is smaller than Yanga, but well-built. He lunges the spear at Yanga, who deftly moves to avoid it. He lunges again and misses.

Yanga makes a move toward the opponent, who swings the spear at him. Yanga grabs the shaft of the spear, controls it, and kicks the captive in the knee. He buckles.

Yanga strikes him in the chin and he flies onto his back. Yanga raises the spear above his head and thrusts the tip at the captive's face. The spear embeds itself into the ground, a few inches from the captive's ear.

The crowd goes wild. Yanga saunters around the corral with a sinister grin. The captive picks up the spear, points it at Yanga, and throws it.

Yanga leans to the side and deftly catches the spear out of mid-air and displays it above his head. The crowd goes wild. Many begin to shout out Yanga's name.

Yanga tosses the spear back to the captive. He swings it at Yanga like a baseball bat.

Yanga ducks one swing, then another, and on the third, grabs the spear, wrests it out of the captive's hands and tosses it to one of his comrades outside the corral.

Now the two men go at it in hand-to-hand combat, wrestling and slugging. While the captive displays some prowess, he is no match for Yanga.

Once exhausted, Yanga picks him up and throws him violently against the wood fencing.

Yanga's comrades, Babaji and Koofoo, from behind the fencing, drag the captive up onto his feet. They place the spear shaft against his throat and pin him back against the fencing. Yanga thoughtfully sizes him up.

BABAJI

Let's feed him to the pigs.

YANGA

He is too ugly. His ugliness might kill the pigs.

KOOFOO

We could cut his arms and legs off and roll him around the village.

The crowd likes that idea.

YANGA
 (to captive)
 You're a fighter?

The Fulani captive nods his head.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 You're no fighter. You're weak. Are
 all Fulani warriors as weak as you?

He offers no response, then spits toward Yanga. Yanga cold
 cocks him with his fist. His head whiplashes back and forth,
 with his chin resting against the spear handle.

BABAJI
 Is he dead?

Yanga slaps the captive, who slowly regains his senses.

YANGA
 (to captive)
 Do that again.

He thinks better of it.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 We've been watching the Fulani.
 Your clan attacks peaceful
 villages, one by one, expanding
 territory. But you attacked the
 wrong village. A member of our
 alliance. Now, the Fulani will be
 destroyed.

KOOFOO
 Let's kill him now!

YANGA
 We will decide what to do with him
 later at council. He may be useful.

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE - VILLAGE PERIMETER - DAY

A parade of sorts is underway, with a throng of well-wishers
 lining two sides of a parade route that circumvents the
 village.

KING MAGHAN (50), Yanga's father, is atop a decorated white
 horse, being led by a small cadre of young warriors. He waves
 and smiles warmly.

Riding immediately behind King Maghan atop dark horses are
 his two sons, Yanga and Adjoa.

Walking directly behind them is a group of visiting dignitaries and tribal leaders, including King Kilonji.

As the procession moves along, voices from the crowd can be heard shouting, "fifty years", and "fifty more years".

Behind the visiting dignitaries is a drumming group of a dozen men playing Djembes, Djun Djun's, cow bells, wood blocks, and talking drums.

Behind the drummers is a troupe of female dancers, who dance with abandonment.

Behind the dancers is a small cadre of heavily armed warriors, displaying traditional African weaponry, along with a dozen matchlock-armed musketeers.

The procession makes its way to the front of the council house. King Maghan remains atop his horse, with his sons on either side. They turn to face the crowd.

The visiting dignitaries stand alongside. The drummers surround the dancers and the remaining villagers crowd around to observe.

Male dancers take over the performance, and with their talking drums, engage in a call and answer. Finally, the drummers and dancers complete a choreographed sequence with a big finale, then silence.

A visiting TRIBAL CHIEF (40), stands before King Maghan. Women scurry up, leave bouquets before King Maghan's horse, and scurry away.

TRIBAL CHIEF

(To the King and throng)

Only the greatest of the great
kings lives in this world fifty
years. The council of the tribes of
Gabon prays that our spiritual
leader, King Maghan, may live fifty
more, and fifty more beyond that!

Cheers from the crowd.

TRIBAL CHIEF (CONT'D)

We honor you, as we honor your
family.

The Tribal Chief bows his head. The crowd cheers and shouts its approval. The vocal outburst quickly subsides when King Maghan raises his hand.

KING MAGHAN

It is we who are blessed to have so many friends here, at one time. Some of you have journeyed great distances.

King Maghan makes eye contact with King Kilonji.

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

Our good friend, King Kilonji has journeyed from Angola and will introduce us to his daughter, the princess Nzinga.

(to the crowd)

You may stay here with us as long as you like. You will be well-fed and provided for.

(sniffs the air)

Is that your food I smell?

The crowd laughs with enthusiasm.

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

Enjoy the feast! Now, we will retire to the council house.

King Maghan swings his leg over his horse and dismounts.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The Council House is a semi-permanent structure with stone half-walls rising four feet from the earth, and large, open-air windows. The sides and roof of the Council House are constructed with bamboo and heavy thatching.

The interior is open with a wooden flooring. The King's chair is ornate and prominently displayed. Around the perimeter of the interior are fifteen short tree stumps, padded and decorated, upon which council members sit.

Behind King Maghan's chair is the trunk of a large, living tree which is incorporated into the building's rear wall.

King Maghan is seated on his chair with his two sons, Yanga and ADJOA (22), seated on either side. Next to Yanga sits King Kilonji.

A few COUNCIL MEMBERS (40-50) are still settling into their seats. Babaji and Koofoo stand as sentries, flanking the entrance, both grasping long hardwood sticks.

KING MAGHAN

(to Yanga)

Perhaps we should begin with the Fulani captive.

(to group)

What do we know about him?

COUNCIL MEMBER #1

He is a commander. We killed his fighters.

KING MAGHAN

Then he knows much. He could be helpful.

(to Yanga)

Get him.

YANGA

Babaji!

Babaji and Koofoo go out and quickly escort the captive into the council house. He faces the king, with Babaji and Koofoo flanking him nearby.

KING MAGHAN

(to captive)

Do you know who I am?

FULANI CAPTIVE

You are the King of Gabon.

KING MAGHAN

Good. Do you know what day this is?

FULANI CAPTIVE

The day of my death.

KING MAGHAN

Perhaps. Today is my birthday. I'm fifty years old. Would you like to live to be fifty years old?

The captive stands silent and motionless.

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

Long ago, my ancestors established a tradition. At special times, like the king's birthday celebration, the king makes a gesture of supreme grace. Such as sparing someone's life. Or perhaps blessing the birth of a new foal. We are preparing for war. War against your people. This has created an opportunity for you.

(MORE)

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

(to Yanga)

Explain this to him.

YANGA

You attacked one of our villages.
The men are all dead or
disappeared.

(rises to his feet)

When you attack one of our villages
you attack me! You attack all of
us. Look around you. Each one of
these tribes commands an army
larger than yours. Soon, your
people will not exist and all of
your lands will be ours!

KING MAGHAN

There is nothing you can do to
prevent this. You have some
information that could be helpful
to us. Number of fighters,
movements, locations of armories
and villages.

YANGA

We will seize all of your villages.
Then we will destroy your army.

KING MAGHAN

With the right information, we
could prevent the loss of many
fighters. Fewer widows and orphans
is always desirable. I realize that
contributing to the destruction of
your people is a distasteful
thought. Tell me, do you have
family in one of these villages?

The captive nods affirmatively.

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

Now, if you were to tell us which
village your family lives in, we
could see that their lives are
spared.

YANGA

You have a choice. You provide
information, you live. Your family
lives. Otherwise, you will hang in
the morning.

KING MAGHAN

In the spirit of celebration, I
will sweeten your prospects.

(to Babaji)

Bring in the woman.

Babaji leaves the chambers and soon returns with a young woman. He walks her beside the captive. The two appear to be a good match. She sizes him up.

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

(to the captive)

We recently lost a brave fighter. His widow now has no husband, no way to fulfill her destiny as a mother of noble warriors. If you choose life, you will become this woman's slave. You will serve her day and night. You will father ten children. Then you will be given your freedom and we will accept you into our tribe.

(to Babaji and Koofoo)

Take him away. And let us know if we need to prepare the gallows.

Babaji and Koofoo lead the captive out of the chamber and the woman follows the men outside. Yanga takes his seat.

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

(to the council)

I have a matter of great importance to share, and with all of you gathered here, this is the most opportune time. I am announcing my line of succession. Upon my death, Yanga will succeed me and bear the title of "King of the Tribes of Gabon". Until that time, he will continue to command the tribal armies. Adjoa will retain his title as prince and will administer agriculture, mining and trade. Upon the death of Yanga, his first-born son will succeed him as King.

There is a stir amongst the council members. Yanga and Adjoa both appear to have been previously informed.

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

Now, because our tribe's future succession will depend on Yanga producing a son, he will, of course, need a wife.

(MORE)

KING MAGHAN (CONT'D)

A wife that can help strengthen our alliance with Angola. Our ally and good friend, King Kilonji, has most generously offered his daughter, Princess Nzinga, as a wife, for Yanga, to help produce Gabon's future king.

King Maghan nods affirmatively toward KING KILONJI (50).

KING KILONJI

It is with great pride that I present my daughter, Nzinga, Princess of the Kingdom of Angola.

King Maghan motions to Babaji to retrieve her, and a moment later, NZINGA (20) stands before Yanga and the two kings. Nzinga is dressed in an elaborate garment of animal skins, decorated with jewels and beads. Her ankles, wrists and neck are wrapped with gold. She exudes confidence.

Yanga has a scowl on his face.

YANGA

(to King Maghan)

You said nothing about marriage. You just decided. The two of you, and said nothing to me, that I would have to marry this girl?

NZINGA

Woman.

KING MAGHAN

Princess. Show her proper respect.

YANGA

I don't need a wife. I have concubines.

KING MAGHAN

Yanga, you must produce an heir. Nzinga will be an asset to the tribes. She has military training.

KING KILONJI

Yes, complete training with the boys, since birth. And she is an interpreter, fluent in Portuguese.

KING MAGHAN

Say something to Yanga in Portuguese.

NZINGA

Pareces uma cabra e cheiras a peixe morto.

SUPER:

"You look like a goat and you smell like dead fish."

KING KILONJI

Nzinga has gathered some recent intelligence. Tell them what you've learned.

NZINGA

(to the Kings)

The Portuguese and the Spanish now have the same king.

King Maghan raises is hand.

KING MAGHAN

Wait.

(to King Kilonji)

Is this true?

KING KILONJI

Yes.

KING MAGHAN

So now, the Portuguese and Spanish are friends.

NZINGA

Best friends.

KING MAGHAN

This changes some things. We will discuss this later. What else?

NZINGA

The Portuguese have another island. It is a port.

KING MAGHAN

A port. A port for what?

NZINGA

Captives. They have large stockades where they have collected thousands of captives.

KING MAGHAN

Thousands? For what purpose? Are they forming an army?

NZINGA

They load captives onto Spanish ships. And these ships sail due west.

KING MAGHAN

West! Hmm...slaves.
(to Nzinga)
What else?

NZINGA

The Spanish prefer English guns. They're more reliable, more accurate, and they last longer. The entire Spanish army is changing to English matchlocks.

KING MAGHAN

English guns.
(to Yanga)
Some traders were here. They claim to have armaments. We'll discuss this later. You see, Nzinga is the ideal wife.

Yanga is upset. He stands and paces around the open area in the center of the council house. As he speaks, Nzinga shadows him and paces directly behind him. She grabs a spear out of the hand of one of the council members.

YANGA

I will select a wife from our tribe. There is plenty of time.

Nzinga goes into a martial arts routine with the spear, occasionally lunging it at Yanga. When he turns, she freezes in place.

KING MAGHAN

Yanga, you have disrespected King Kilonji. All of this has been decided.

YANGA

Not by me. I have my concubines. She will just get in the way.

KING MAGHAN

(angry)
Yanga!

YANGA

I refuse to marry this girl.

Nzinga has heard enough. She grasps the spear handle like a clean-up hitter, shouts a battle cry at the top of her lungs, and charges Yanga, leaping and swinging the spear.

At the sound of the battle cry, Yanga turns. The belly of the spear handle catches him squarely in the throat. His eyes cross from the shock of the impact.

Yanga grasps his throat and drops to his knees. Nzinga continues her spear routine, swinging, twirling, and thrusting at Yanga. She takes a swing and slaps him upside the head. Then she quickly spins and slaps him upside the head again.

Yanga is too dazed to be angry...yet.

Nzinga squares her stance and takes a full swing at his head.

SLO-MO CLOSE-UP:

Yanga's eyes enlarge as the end of the spear handle misses his nose by an inch.

END SLO-MO:

The men in the council house react with concern over Yanga's condition as they delight in Nzinga's antics. Yanga continues to hold his throat as he struggles for air.

Then he glares at Nzinga with fire in his eyes, stands and lunges for her. Nzinga deftly avoids Yanga's charge.

She swings the spear at him again and this time he grabs it in midair, takes control of it and breaks it over his knee.

Nzinga's facial expression shouts...oh no!

He lunges at her again. She jumps, kicks him in the chest with both feet and he loses his balance. Then she runs for the exit. On the way out of the council house, she grabs the hardwood stick out of Babaji's grasp.

Yanga gets to his feet and runs after her. The two kings stand and quickly run outside to watch the two go at it. The rest of the council members follow behind.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

In the open area in front of the council house, Yanga stalks Nzinga. She has a sassy look on her face as the two maneuver.

King Maghan and King Kilonji take seats directly outside the council house.

The rest of the council members form a large circle around the combatants and a crowd begins to gather.

In this dogfight, Yanga is the Rottweiler and Nzinga is the Jack Russel Terrier. He is big and powerful and wants to devour her in one bite. Nzinga is faster and more agile and uses hit and run tactics.

KING MAGHAN

They make the perfect couple.

KING KILONJI

Yes. They can actually fight, instead of just yelling at each other.

She pokes Yanga with the hardwood stick and backs away. Then she does it again. Yanga is mad.

NZINGA

I would never marry you. You're not a man. You're an animal.

Nzinga uses more quick hit and run assaults, both with the stick and with kicks. Yanga tries to control the stick, but she manages to twist it away from him each time.

YANGA

Nobody's going to marry you.

NZINGA

Oh yeah? And why is that?

YANGA

Because you'll be dead.

Yanga wrests the stick away from Nzinga. She charges, jumps and flies into the air and gives him a good kick in the torso. Yanga loses his balance. He throws the stick to the side and squares up with Nzinga with fire in his eyes.

Nzinga's expression changes. Yanga charges her and she turns and runs. He chases her for ten paces, until it becomes obvious that he can't catch her. He turns and faces the crowd. They break out in a massive cheer.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - FIRING RANGE - DAY

Yanga and Babaji are leading a group of soldiers in archery target practice with a combination of European crossbows and heavy longbows. Their targets are twelve-inch-long stumps, placed and hung at various heights and distances.

Yanga and the others suddenly hear the exotic call of a talking drum. Yanga turns to see Koofoo approaching from across the field, striking a talking drum.

BABAJI

It's Koofoo.

A Portuguese soldier (25) in light armor walks beside Koofoo.

Yanga grabs a nearby talking drum, stuffs it into his armpit, grabs an arced stick, and answers back. He and Koofoo engage in a call and answer, until the three men are face to face with each other.

YANGA

(to Soldier)

Where are these weapons? And what kind of guns do you have?

PORTUGUESE SOLDIER

(to Koofoo)

How does he know we have guns?

KOOFoo

I told him.

He strikes a short rhythm.

KOOFoo (CONT'D)

That means gun.

He strikes a different rhythm.

KOOFoo (CONT'D)

That means traders.

PORTUGUESE SOLDIER

You communicate with these?

YANGA

The talking drum can be heard from a great distance. Our warriors share information.

KOOFoo

The traders are here, with the King.

YANGA
Portuguese?

KOOFOO
(nodding)
They want to see you. They asked
for you.

YANGA
They asked for me, by name?
(to soldier)
How do you know my name?

PORTUGUESE SOLDIER
Your father, King Maghan. Famous
warrior. Conqueror of many tribes.
His name is feared and respected up
and down the African coast. They
say you have become an even greater
warrior. Now they fear you.

Yanga's face shows curiosity, concern, and skepticism.

YANGA
(to soldier)
Show us what you have.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

King Maghan, King Kilonji and Yanga are seated outside the council house, as two PORTUGUESE TRADERS present their wares. Other tribal leaders observe from nearby, including Babaji and Koofoo. Nzinga stands behind her father.

On a large skin spread on the ground are a half dozen weapons, including four types of guns, a sword and a battle axe. The lead trader hands a wheel-lock pistol to Yanga, who inspects it carefully.

PORTUGUESE TRADER
A new gun called a wheel-lock. It
uses no match.

YANGA
No match. So there is no smell, no
smoke from the match.

PORTUGUESE TRADER
(nodding)
One of its advantages.

KING MAGHAN
How does it light the powder?

PORTUGUESE TRADER
With a spark from a piece of flint.

KING MAGHAN
Better in the rain.

PORTUGUESE TRADER
And they reload in half the time.

YANGA
What about English matchlocks?

PORTUGUESE TRADER
Yes, we have English guns too. And
many types of armaments...swords and
battle axes...only the finest steel.

The second trader picks up the sword and battle axe and
displays them for the prospective buyers.

YANGA
How many rifles do you have?

PORTUGUESE TRADER
Hundreds.

KING MAGHAN
And you want gold.

PORTUGUESE TRADER
Yes.

KING MAGHAN
Very well. Koofoo, make
arrangements for our guests.
(to traders)
We will tell you what we want in
the morning.

EXT. VILLAGE HUT - DAY

Yanga is entering into his private hut. Nzinga comes up from
behind.

NZINGA
Yanga.

Yanga stops halfway in and looks back at her. She looks
contrite and has stars in her eyes. Yanga turns and faces
her.

NZINGA (CONT'D)

I, I wanted to say something to you.

Yanga smiles. He gives her a warm embrace and Nzinga appears intoxicated.

YANGA

Walk with me.

Nzinga holds his arm as they walk.

EXT. TROPICAL GARDEN - DAY

Yanga and Nzinga walk casually together.

NZINGA

I'm sorry about hitting you, with the spear. I'm sorry I hurt you.

Yanga chuckles.

YANGA

It's alright. You made your point.

They acknowledge the double entendre.

NZINGA

(emotion builds)

I...you see, my father arranged this with your father, and when I found out, I was...I couldn't sleep. I couldn't eat. I was so happy at the thought of marrying you. It's all I could think about. And then, when you said you wouldn't marry me, I...

YANGA

(interrupting)

Stop. Don't say anything. I do want to marry you. I changed my mind.

NZINGA

You do? I mean, you do?

Yanga chuckles. He sits on a big fallen tree trunk and she sits beside him.

YANGA

Yes, I do. I was mad at my father that he didn't say anything to me. I wasn't mad at you.

They gaze into each others eyes. She can see that he is sincere. She throws her arms around him, on the verge of tears.

NZINGA

Oh Yanga!

They gaze into each others eyes again.

YANGA

He should have let us meet each other, naturally, and then get to know each other.

NZINGA

Oh!

She hugs him again and then plants a kiss onto his lips. She stands and then he stands. They hold hands.

NZINGA (CONT'D)

We have to go back to Angola first and make arrangements, and then return in a couple of months, with my friends and also my brother. We leave tomorrow. Now I can leave happy.

YANGA

We'll have a big celebration and I promise, you'll have a wonderful life here.

NZINGA

You're not still mad, I hope. I mean, you'll be nice, you won't hurt me?

YANGA

(naughty grin)

I am going to hurt you. And you're going to like it.

Nzinga's eyes widen. She blushes and gives him a playful love slap across his face. He grins. She runs off screaming.

EXT. ANIMAL CORRAL - DAY

Yanga and Babaji try to calm down a horse while koofoo tries to place a blanket over his back. A young VILLAGE BOY comes running toward them.

VILLAGE BOY

Yanga, Yanga, your father, he sent me! He wants to see you! King Kilonji has been captured!

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

King Maghan, Yanga, Babaji and Koofoo question two of KING KILONJI'S MEN (30). The woman who was in the council house, and who was partnered up with the Fulani captive, stands off to the side. King Maghan motions toward her.

KING MAGHAN

(to Yanga)

The captive ran off, she says some time yesterday.

Yanga shares frustrated looks with Babaji and Koofoo.

YANGA

(to Kilonji's men)

How many of them?

KING KILONJI'S MAN

Twelve or fifteen.

YANGA

Fulani?

KING KILONJI'S MAN

I think so.

YANGA

Did they have guns?

KING KILONJI'S MAN

No. Spears and swords.

KING MAGHAN

How did you get away?

KING KILONJI'S MAN

They weren't paying attention. They walked off without us.

KING MAGHAN

(to Kilonji's man)

Can you lead Yanga there?

KING KILONJI'S MAN

Yes.

KING MAGHAN
(to Yanga)
Take thirty men. And guns.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The man leads Yanga, Babaji, Koofoo and the rest of Yanga's troop of fighters to a vantage point. A short distance away, through the vegetation and slightly downhill, Yanga sees a group of men with spears and swords in a clearing, surrounded by jungle foliage. The men are guarding the king and Nzinga, and their small entourage.

YANGA
(to his men)
We'll charge them from here...kill them or chase them off. Then we'll escort the king to the river where their boat is moored.
(waving)
Spread out.

Still concealed behind jungle foliage, Yanga takes the point position. He looks around to make sure everyone is ready. His men acknowledge him and nod affirmatively.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga screams a battle cry and charges the captors. A few of his men fire a volley of musket rounds. Three of the captors fall to the ground. When Yanga's men reach the captors, they engage them with spears and swords.

King Kilonji, Nzinga and their three guards take off running and disappear into the nearby jungle.

A moment later, fifty Spanish soldiers in battle armor charge Yanga's men from behind the jungle foliage. Musket shots ring out and ten of Yanga's men fall.

Yanga's twenty remaining fighters engage the Spanish with spears and swords but without armor they are at a disadvantage. Ten more of Yanga's fighters fall. Yanga, Koofoo and Babaji fight valiantly.

Koofoo and Babaji are taken to the ground by soldiers. Three soldiers charge Yanga and tackle him to the ground. Two soldiers appear with heavy rope netting and wrap it around Yanga and begin to lace it with rope strands.

LATER:

A line of soldiers has Yanga, Koofoo and Babaji secured in rope netting that is threaded by long poles. They carry them along a jungle trail.

INT. SPANISH SHIP - HOLD - DAY

Koofoo and Babaji finish up their story.

BABAJI

So, that's how we were captured.

KOOFOO

It's the only battle we've ever lost.

CAPTIVE

Now, Yanga's a captive too, with us, going to the New World.

SUPER: 60 DAYS LATER

EXT. SPANISH SHIP - BIRD'S NEST - DAY

A sailor scans the horizon with his spyglass. He stops, wipes the lens and looks again. He smiles broadly.

INT. SPANISH SHIP - HOLD - DAY

The captives are sleeping as best they can in the cramped conditions. Two gulls enter in through the portals and fly around the hold. Koofoo spots them.

KOOFOO

Birds! Look, birds!

The captives quickly awaken and regard the birds.

YANGA

We have reached land!

EXT. VERACRUZ PORT - DAY

The line of captives, including Yanga, Koofoo and Babaji, are shackled and chained together wearing leg restraints with their hands bound behind their backs. They march slowly along a muddy pathway, with Spanish soldiers guarding and leading the way.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

In his well-appointed office, VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO (50) is seated at his ornate wooden desk reading. There is a knock and a LIEUTENANT (25) opens the door, announcing CAPTAIN RODRIGUEZ (40).

SUPER: VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

LIEUTENANT

Captain Rodriguez, your excellency.

The captain enters, stands before the Viceroy and does a deferential head bow. The lieutenant exits.

CAPTAIN

Your excellency. The slaves have been unloaded.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

Alright, split them up. Thirty to my plantation. March the other thirty up to the silver mine.

CAPTAIN

Your excellency, there are only fifty-nine.

The Viceroy gives him a questioning look.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

One of them apparently fell overboard.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

Very well then. Twenty-nine to the mine.

CAPTAIN

Yes, your excellency.

EXT. VERACRUZ VILLAGE - DAY

As the procession slowly moves along through the rustic settlement, they witness the scene around them. Aztecs labor for Spanish overseers. Africans carry heavy loads. One is being whipped.

They pass by a row of rustic shops. Tanners dry their skins. Traders display their wares.

Yanga notices a row of tall wood spikes with human heads displayed on top, half rotted away.

A twelve-year-old AFRICAN BOY with a water bucket and a ladle walks up to Yanga and offers him a drink. Yanga queries him.

YANGA

What is this? Where are we?

AFRICAN BOY

(points up ahead)

Silver mine. Where are you from?

YANGA

Gabon. Some from Angola.

The procession continues moving.

EXT. SPANISH MINE - DAY

The procession reaches the small mining settlement. Yanga sees a dead body being piled onto a cart with two other bodies.

YANGA

(to water boy)

Who are they?

AFRICAN BOY

Aztecs. They're all sick, dying.

The slaves around the mine include both African and Aztec men and women. A group of African women are seen washing cloth.

A group of Africans pounds large chunks of rock into small pieces. Others shovel the gravel into a cart.

Soldiers separate the new arrivals. They march ten of them off. Babaji and Koofoo remain with Yanga.

AFRICAN BOY (CONT'D)

Better to be out here.

(pointing to mine
entrance)

It's hell in there.

YANGA

How many guards? Where do they
sleep?

AFRICAN BOY

(motions discreetly)

Over there. I don't know, twenty or
thirty.

Yanga sees a row of log structures with soldiers milling nearby.

INT. MINE SHAFT - DAY

Inside the mine, torches and lanterns provide light for twenty laborers. A short distance from the Africans, four armed soldiers mingle together and occasionally glance at the ongoing work.

Africans hammer away at the rock wall of the mine interior. Others pound boulders into smaller pieces, while others load raw ore into heavy carts.

An officer approaches the guards. He motions to them and they follow him, away from the laborers and out of view. Yanga gets Babaji's attention.

YANGA

Babaji, go keep an eye on them.

The laborers set down their tools and sit for a break.

AFRICAN #1

Yanga, we know who you are. We've heard stories about you.

AFRICAN #2

How did they capture you?

KOOFOO

We were ambushed. It was a trap.

YANGA

We will not stay in captivity.

AFRICAN #1

Escape?

AFRICAN #2

When?

YANGA

Soon. We need to know who is with us.

Yanga and Koofoo look around at the miners. They all regard each other and nod their heads.

AFRICAN #1

We're with you. But how?

YANGA

We need information. Everything that goes on here. Then we'll make our plan.

AFRICAN #2

What should we do?

YANGA

Pay attention to everything. Especially the soldiers...what they do. Count their weapons and where they keep them. When they sleep. We'll use these tools for weapons. We have superior numbers.

AFRICAN #1

Others have escaped. Many of them. They're up on the mountain. The Spanish can't find them. They call them maroons.

YANGA

When our time comes, we will go and find these maroons, and join them.

Babaji races back to the group.

BABAJI

They're coming!

YANGA

(to the group)
Back to work.

EXT. SPANISH MINE - DAY

Yanga and three fellow laborers push a heavy cart filled with large chunks of ore toward the area where slaves are pulverizing the chunks into gravel.

The cart hits a bump and a large chunk falls off, onto the foot of one of the laborers. He tries to continue, but he is injured and trips and falls. A soldier lashes him.

Yanga grabs a chunk of rock, but Babaji restrains his forearm to stop him. A soldier brandishes his sword.

The laborers continue to push the cart, while the injured man is dragged off.

INT. MINE SHAFT - DAY

Koofoo has his shirt off, while his comrades secure a spade against his back with rope. Then he puts his shirt back on, over the spade.

EXT. SPANISH MINE - DAY

The laborers are marched single file, away from the mine to a small stockade where they are secured for the night.

EXT. SLAVE STOCKADE - NIGHT

Inside the stockade, Babaji and some fellow laborers work to dig a tunnel under the wall. A nearby campfire provides light and warmth.

When ready, Koofoo crawls through the short tunnel to the outside.

Once outside, he does reconnaissance, observing soldiers eating, drinking, smoking, relaxing, and abusing Aztec and African women.

He notices where the soldiers have collected their guns. He observes the soldiers who are guarding the stockade.

The laborers inside the stockade pass a prefabricated and disguised wooden hatch through the tunnel. As Koofoo crawls back inside the stockade, he positions the outside hatch in place.

Then they place another hatch over the hole inside the stockade, and cover it with dirt.

 YANGA
 (to Koofoo)
 How many guarding the stockade?

 KOOFOO
 Six.

 YANGA
 Armor?

 KOOFOO
 Light.

 YANGA
 Helmets?

KOOF00

No.

Yanga nods.

EXT. WOODLAND - DAY

Yanga and ten laborers are felling trees with saws, axes, and hatchets, preparing mining timbers. The water boy arrives with his bucket. He cautiously removes two loaves of bread from beneath his shirt and hands them to Yanga.

AFRICAN BOY

I'll get more. When are we going?

YANGA

A few days, when the moon is right.

AFRICAN BOY

The women want to come.

YANGA

Women are slow. They'll have to keep up. We will not wait for them.

EXT. SLAVE STOCKADE - NIGHT

A bonfire provides light for Yanga as he reveals his plan to his men. Babaji is sharpening a shiv against a stone.

With a stick, Yanga scrapes the ground, creating a diagram of the mine layout.

YANGA

Six soldiers here, guarding the stockade. Six cabins, four sleep in each. Their long rifles are here. Their armory with powder here. We are sixty, a two-to-one advantage. Our initial weapons will be tools, hammers, shovels, axes. And these.

Babaji hands his shiv to Yanga.

YANGA (CONT'D)

We have six of these. One for each guard. They must be killed quietly. Take their swords. Eight men will be assigned to each cabin. If we still have the advantage of surprise, you will rush into the cabins and kill them as they sleep.

(MORE)

YANGA (CONT'D)

If not, we will kill them as they escape through the doors and windows. They will all be killed. Then we will collect weapons and supplies.

INT. MINESHAFT - DAY

Yanga and his men strap tools against each other's backs and torsos with ropes.

EXT. SLAVE STOCKADE - NIGHT

Yanga gives his militia of maroons their final marching orders.

YANGA

Tonight, we take back our lives. These soldiers stand between us and freedom. They will be destroyed. You all have your assignments. If every man does his job, soon, we will celebrate victory.

EXT. SPANISH MINE - NIGHT

A soldier, followed by a dog, exits one of the cabins and enters a crude outhouse.

Forty crouched maroons, slowly and cautiously make their way, single file, toward the cabins.

Twelve maroons, including Koofoo and Babaji, crawl toward the six guards.

The soldier in the outhouse completes his business and exits.

Out of the darkness, the twelve assassins jump the guards. The struggle creates a stir, which alerts the dog. The dog growls loudly. The OUTHOUSE SOLDIER sees what's going on, and runs toward the cabins, shouting.

OUTHOUSE SOLDIER

Attack! Attack! Aviso! Attack!

The twelve assassins struggle with the six guards, fighting with shivs, shovels, rocks, and clubs. Two maroons are killed. Three guards are killed. Their swords are secured by Koofoo, Babaji and another maroon. The three remaining guards fight on.

Babaji and Koofoo, along with the remaining maroons, overwhelm them and finish them off with swords and shivs.

A soldier rushes out of a cabin and is met with a sledge hammer to the face. His sword is secured.

Two soldiers fight their way out of another cabin with swords. Three maroons fight them with clubs and shovels. The maroons fight valiantly, but are killed.

Yanga appears with a sword, engages the two soldiers and kills them both.

A soldier tries to crawl out through a window and is met by two maroons, who pound his skull with clubs.

Another soldier attempts to crawl out of a different window, and is beheaded by Yanga.

As Yanga surveys the battlefield, he is jumped from behind by a soldier and his sword falls to the ground. The soldier picks up the sword and swings it at Yanga.

Yanga picks up a club off the ground and uses it to defend himself. He waits for an opening, clubs the soldier in the head, secures his sword, strikes him in his face, then plunges it into his heart.

Yanga sees two maroons struggling with four soldiers. He runs over and engages two in a sword fight. Babaji and Koofoo appear and engage the other two. More maroons swarm the fight and help Babaji and Koofoo neutralize their opponents. Then they swarm one of Yanga's opponents, while Yanga kills the remaining soldier.

The maroons have surrounded a cabin, with two soldiers trapped inside, who are pleading with them. A MAROON FIGHTER calls out to Yanga.

MAROON FIGHTER

Yanga! Two inside. They want to
surrender.

Yanga goes to a nearby campfire, grabs two burning branches, and heads for the cabin. Babaji and Koofoo follow his lead and grab burning logs.

The fiery logs are tossed into the cabin through the door and windows and the interior ignites. As the soldiers exit the flames, they are met with swords and axes.

Yanga surveys the field, looking for soldiers.

YANGA
 (to the maroons)
 Groups of four. Search the area.
 There may be more, hiding.

The four-man squads canvass the mine grounds.

EXT. VERACRUZ - CAMINO REAL - DAY

A series of shots shows Yanga's fifty-three maroons trekking along the rustic roadway, followed by ten African women and ten Aztec women. Some of the men are dressed in Spanish garb, including a few in light armor.

The men are bandaged, with some limping. They are laden with guns, swords, tools, and backpacks. The women carry satchels and balance loads on their heads.

The group is resting and drinking water beside a river, at the confluence of two converging streams.

Yanga addresses his men.

YANGA
 We have to get away from the road.
 (to Koofoo)
 Lead everyone up this stream. Stay
 in the streambed, or on rocks.
 Don't disturb any plants.

KOOFOO
 It will be slow.

YANGA
 Slow, but safe. Babaji and I will
 create a false trail up there, to
 that hilltop. Then we'll join you
 upstream.

EXT. FOOTHILL - DAY

As Yanga and Babaji climb the hill, they use sticks to disturb the foliage.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

The men are on a rocky hilltop, carefully surveying the terrain.

BABAJI
 I don't see any Spanish.

YANGA
Not yet. We'll have two days.

He points toward the northwest.

YANGA (CONT'D)
See that ridgeline? Let's go find
what's behind it.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - RIDGELINE - DAY

Yanga and Babaji walk carefully, stepping on rocks,
intentionally avoiding plants.

Yanga stops and looks downward. He points.

YANGA
A village.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - TROPICAL VILLAGE - DAY

Yanga and Babaji walk slowly through a small, abandoned Aztec
village. An old dog cautiously approaches them and sniffs.

They look inside huts and discover personal objects.

BABAJI
Where are these people?

Yanga visually surveys the compound.

YANGA
Hiding. Leave everything. Let's go.

They leave the village on a trail.

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL - DAY

As they walk, Yanga occasionally turns to glance behind.
They approach an area of rock outcroppings and boulders.

YANGA
We're being followed. Keep going.

Yanga darts off the trail. He climbs a large boulder, and
waits.

Suddenly, he jumps down to the ground. As he lands, he finds
himself amidst five Aztec women.

The women are alarmed, but do not run. As Yanga sizes them up, they size him up.

An OLDER WOMAN (55), apparently the oldest of the five, takes a step toward Yanga, reaches into her satchel, pulls out a guava and offers it to Yanga.

Yanga accepts her offering and bites into the fruit. He smiles and continues eating.

Babaji has backtracked and finds Yanga with the women.

BABAJI

You alright?

YANGA

These women have taken me captive.

The women and men size each other up, smiling. The older woman pats Yanga on the stomach and motions for everyone to follow her into the jungle.

She finds a guava tree. One of the younger women shimmies up the trunk, pulls fruit and drops them down below.

Everyone enjoys the guavas, as they stash more for later.

Babaji points to the fruit and asks one of the women:

BABAJI

What is this?

NATIVE WOMAN

Guava.

BABAJI

Guava. We don't have these in Africa.

(to Yanga)

Where are their men?

YANGA

Probably taken by the Spanish.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - JUNGLE STREAM - DAY

The Aztec women lead Yanga and Babaji up a streambed.

Now the group is hiking along a ridgeline above a small gorge and stream. They can hear the voices of their fellow maroons below.

SPANISH SOLDIER #4

The weapons are gone, and powder.

SPANISH SOLDIER #2

They took all the tools.

SPANISH CAPTAIN

Of course. This was organized.

(enraged)

I will have this organizer's head
on a spier!

(to himself)

The Viceroy isn't going to like
this.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - DAY

The older Aztec woman leads the long line of maroons. She occasionally looks back and smiles at Yanga and he returns the gesture.

She leads Yanga and the maroons up a hill where, from the elevated prominence, she points out a secluded valley in the distance. Yanga and the maroons appears awed. He smiles and nods.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - SECLUDED VALLEY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga and his maroons march out of jungle foliage and into a large, open meadow. In the distance, they see smoke rising and a rustic settlement. He smiles at the old woman who smiles back.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A group of maroons goes about their daily routine, working, cooking, and socializing. They are mostly males, both Africans and Aztecs, with a few children running about and playing. A dozen crude huts are clustered together.

A BLACK VILLAGER (25) comes running, pointing.

BLACK VILLAGER

Runaways! Runaways! Coming this
way. Many of them!

The entire village comes to life and everyone hustles toward Yanga and his entourage.

BLACK VILLAGER (CONT'D)
 (to Yanga)
 Where were you? In the cane fields?

YANGA
 Silver mine.

BLACK VILLAGER
 Welcome. We will make food and
 celebrate!

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

Viceroy Luis de Velasco gazes nervously out a window. There is a knock on the door and the Lieutenant announces GENERAL LOPEZ (45).

LIEUTENANT
 General Lopez, your excellency!

Lopez enters and stands before the Viceroy. The lieutenant exits.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 Thirty dead? An idle mine?

The two men gaze at each other in silence.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO (CONT'D)
 Why weren't they secured for the
 night?

GENERAL LOPEZ
 They followed protocol. Shall we go
 after them?

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 Of course go after them! Take a
 platoon! Bring back as many as you
 can find. We'll execute them in
 front of the other slaves.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY

The villagers, in a celebratory mood, surround Yanga and his men. One of the villagers is an INTERPRETER (35).

Five men beat out a rhythm on crude drums. Two African women pass out food. Aztec women tend to the wounds of the new arrivals.

BABAJI

(to villagers)

Yanga is the prince of Gabon. It is because of him that we are free.

YANGA

(to Black Villager)

How many are you?

BLACK VILLAGER

About thirty here. But there are more, here on the mountain.

INTERPRETER

There is an Aztec village, not far. Their leader is a great warrior. His name is Chicahua.

YANGA

Can you take us there? I want to meet him.

BLACK VILLAGER

Yes, we will go tomorrow.

INTERPRETER

I know their language.

EXT. AZTEC VILLAGE - DAY

Yanga, Babaji, Koofoo, the black villager and the interpreter enter the village. There are twenty simple dwellings scattered around with campfires going and people milling about. Two dogs run up, barking. A boy runs up behind the dogs.

The interpreter says something to the boy and the boy runs off. They continue to walk into the little village.

Then they see the boy walking toward them with CHICAHUA (40), a foreboding-looking Aztec man. He has fiery eyes and a fierce demeanor. Side-by-side, Chicahua and Yanga look like peers.

Other men from the village crowd around.

The interpreter explains something to Chicahua. Chicahua smiles. He bends down and scoops up some earth in his hand, then raises his hand to his mouth and kisses the soil. Yanga then copies the gesture, by scooping up soil and kissing it. Both men smile.

YANGA

(to the interpreter)

Tell him we are going to form a large community. We're going to organize an army to protect the mountain from the Spanish. We want to join forces with him.

The interpreter explains this to Chicahua and he responds to the interpreter.

INTERPRETER

(to Yanga)

He said it will give him great pleasure to kill every Spaniard in Anahuac.

YANGA

Invite him to our village tomorrow. We will have a feast. Tell him to bring some of his warriors with him.

The interpreter explains this to Chicahua. Chicahua smiles, nods and responds to the interpreter.

INTERPRETER

He says they will demonstrate some of their weapons.

Yanga smiles and nods.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - NIGHT

The maroons relax around a large bonfire. The old Aztec woman is seated nearby.

YANGA

(to interpreter)

Ask her what happened at her village, to her people.

The interpreter and the woman converse back and forth.

INTERPRETER

Some Spanish came and took everyone away. She escaped.

YANGA

Were they soldiers? Did they wear uniforms?

He asks her and she shakes her head, no.

YANGA (CONT'D)
Where did they take them?

The interpreter asks and she answers.

INTERPRETER
To a sugar plantation.

YANGA
Does she know where it is? Can she
lead us there?

He asks her and she nods affirmatively.

YANGA (CONT'D)
Tell her we will get her people
back.

INTERPRETER
You want to go there?

YANGA
We will all go there.

The villagers react with surprised looks.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY

The maroons have set up a crude target range with two sets of Spanish armor strapped to two bales of grasses. Yanga and Chicahua stand together with the interpreter. Yanga is holding an atlatl, a device that whips spears with greater force.

Babaji takes a spear and throws it at one of the bales. The spear dents the armor and falls off.

Then one of Chicahua's AZTEC WARRIORS (30) loads a spear into an atlatl and whips it at the armor. The spear penetrates the armor and sticks into the bale of grasses.

Yanga and Chicahua share a look. Yanga hands the atlatl to Koofoo.

YANGA
(to Koofoo)
Make fifty of these.

One of the Aztec warriors hands a bow to Babaji. The black villager hands Babaji an arrow. Babaji fires the arrow into the armor and it dents the metal and bounces off.

Babaji hands the bow back to the Aztec warrior. He takes one of his own arrows and fires it at the armor. The arrow penetrates the armor and sticks into the bale.

Chicahua shows the arrowhead to the interpreter and explains.

INTERPRETER

(to Yanga)

He said this stone is very hard and easy to sharpen. They're all over the mountain.

Yanga hands the arrow to Koofoo.

YANGA

A thousand of these.

Koofoo's expression suggests that a thousand may be a lot.

Yanga and Chicahua make eye contact. Chicahua extends his arm toward Yanga with the elbow bent. Yanga matches the gesture. Chicahua locks the inside of his elbow against the inside of Yanga's elbow. Both men share an understanding look.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - RIDGELINE - DAY

The Spanish Captain and the Lieutenant wait patiently atop horses, while their men search for the trail. A soldier approaches them to report.

SPANISH SOLDIER #5

We've lost their trail.

SPANISH CAPTAIN

Lost! Where?

SPANISH SOLDIER #5

Here. There is no trail.

SPANISH CAPTAIN

(angry)

Where are these phantom maroons?

EXT. AFRICAN HILLTOP - DAY

King Maghan and his son, Adjoa, are atop horses on a hilltop surrounded by their personal guards. Down below, they survey a village. The king nods to three archers. They light their arrow tips and fire them into the air.

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Gabonese soldiers see the flaming arrows and swarm the village.

The villagers are taken by surprise. Those who resist are killed. The rest are quickly rounded up.

LATER:

The male captives have their hands bound behind their backs, and are linked together with ropes, secured around their necks.

The unbound women and children are lined up behind, closely guarded by soldiers.

In the rear are cows and mules, with pigs, goats, and chickens loaded onto mule-led wagons.

King Maghan signals to one of his officers, who orders the long procession of captives to begin their march.

ADJOA

What shall we do with them?

KING MAGHAN

Keep the children. Some of the women. The rest, we'll trade to the Portuguese.

ADJOA

Maybe the Portuguese have information about Yanga.

KING MAGHAN

Yanga is gone. Now, the Fulani are gone.

ADJOA

We can enjoy peace.

KING MAGHAN

There will be no peace. Not with the Spanish and Portuguese here. Wars create captives for them.

ADJOA

They have many friends here. And they bring guns.

KING MAGHAN

That's why we'll never get rid of them.

EXT. VICEROY'S SUGAR PLANTATION - DAY

Yanga and his maroons observe the plantation layout from a vantage point. The Aztec women, looking like plantation raiders, are nearby with the interpreter.

Koofoo crawls behind fencing, bushes and work carts, to survey the Spanish plantation hacienda.

Another maroon cautiously surveys log structures, with Spanish men resting and milling about.

Babaji observes armed Spanish guards, who lead African and Aztec slaves away from the cane fields, toward the slave stockade.

With sunlight waning, using sugar cane to hide behind, three maroons observe a group of Spanish men, as they secure the slave compound for the night.

EXT. VICEROY'S SUGAR PLANTATION - HILLTOP - NIGHT

From an elevated vantage point, armed with swords, shovels, axes, hatchets, and spears, Yanga and his fifty fighters observe campfires and the plantation house below.

YANGA

We'll attack at first light. The guards will be killed or captured. We'll secure the family inside the slave compound. Then we'll collect everything of value.

EXT. VICEROY'S SUGAR PLANTATION - DAY

As first light of the new day glows on the horizon, on Yanga's signal, three maroons rush the plantation house and quickly break in through doors and windows.

From the cane field, Yanga leads the charge against the Spanish guards, who attempt to defend themselves. They are overwhelmed from surprise and the maroons' superior numbers.

The Aztec women cautiously enter the plantation house with the interpreter, armed with a spear. The plantation house is a two-story structure with a large balcony on the front second floor.

Babaji and Koofoo tear off the timbers that are locking the slave stockade shut. African and Aztec slaves pour out joyously.

The interpreter and the Aztec women escort the family from the plantation house to the slave stockade. The family includes an older woman (50), a young man and woman (25), and two small boys.

The interpreter and the Aztec women approach Yanga, who is standing nearby.

INTERPRETER

They want food and water to be placed in the stockade, with the family.

YANGA

Do it.

INTERPRETER

This plantation, it is owned by the Viceroy. This is his family.

Yanga nods and thoughtfully scans the layout of the property.

EXT. CAMINO REAL - DAY

Yanga's procession has doubled in size, with maroon fighters and freed Africans and Aztecs. Animals and wagons take up the rear, piled high with tools, weapons and provisions.

At the front of the procession, Yanga and his men relish their victory.

Directly behind Yanga, the Aztec women walk amidst a crowd of their fellow villagers who treat them like rock stars.

BABAJI

Six Spanish dead, fifteen in the stockade.

(looks around)

And I don't think anyone is hurt.

KOOF00

Two wounded.

TAYANNA (20), one of the freed Aztec women, breaks off from her group, then hustles up to the front and walks behind and to the side of Yanga, as if she is eavesdropping.

BABAJI

I think we have about fifty new maroons.

KOOF00

And weapons.

YANGA
How many women?

BABAJI
Around twenty, I think.

YANGA
Good. We need women.

KOOFOO
We caught them completely by
surprise!

YANGA
This time. Next time will not be so
easy.

Babaji and Koofoo regard each other.

KOOFOO
Next time?

Tayanna quickens her pace slightly so that she is now beside
Yanga.

Yanga notices her and turns forward. They walk together, side
by side, both apparently at ease.

He turns and smiles at her and she smiles back. They walk
five more paces.

TAYANNA
Who are you?

YANGA
What do you mean?

TAYANNA
Are you Francisco Matosa?

YANGA
No.

TAYANNA
Last night I contemplated ending my
life, and now I'm going home.

They continue to walk side by side for five more paces,
silently.

TAYANNA (CONT'D)
Where did you come from? Why did
you do this?

He weighs his response.

YANGA

I like to have a lot of people around, especially Africans. But all the Africans here are slaves. So, if I'm going to have African friends, I have to go to the plantations and get them. You understand my language.

TAYANNA

Yes. I know many languages. When ever I meet someone and I don't know their language, I learn it.

YANGA

How did you learn African languages?

TAYANNA

We had twenty African men living in our village. That's why the Spanish came. Because they were there. When they came, they just took everybody.

YANGA

So now, we just took everybody back.

TAYANNA

Yes, yes you did.

They continue to walk together for six more paces, at ease with each other.

YANGA

Why do you learn languages?

TAYANNA

To get to know people and what they're like, and where they come from. They say Africa is a lot like this.

YANGA

It's true, except for the mountain.

TAYANNA

Orizaba. My name is Tayanna.

Yanga smiles at her and continues walking. She looks like she's waiting for him to introduce himself, but he doesn't.

TAYANNA (CONT'D)
 When you were born, did your
 parents give you a name?

Yanga breaks out in laughter, and she joins in.

YANGA
 Yanga.

TAYANNA
 (smiling)
 Yanga.

They process the moment.

YANGA
 Will you teach me Spanish?

TAYANNA
 (smiling)
 Yes, I will teach you Spanish.

They walk together for six more paces.

TAYANNA (CONT'D)
 Do you have a woman?

Yanga looks at her and sees she has a sheepish smile. He
 looks away and they walk six more paces.

YANGA
 I don't know. Do I?

Their shared look broadcasts their sudden chemistry.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 All of you will join us in our
 valley. We'll build a community
 together.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

The Viceroy fumes with anger as he paces around his office.
 General Lopez and Captain Rodriguez stand at attention.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 Six men dead! Forty slaves gone!
 Unharvested cane. The mine and now
 this! What next!?

GENERAL LOPEZ
 Your family is safe. No one hurt.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
I want you to find these maroons!
Find them. Find them!

GENERAL LOPEZ AND SPANISH CAPTAIN
Yes your excellency!

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - JUNGLE - DAY

A platoon of twenty Spanish soldiers plods through the dense jungle, with the Spanish Captain and Lieutenant on horseback at the rear. The horses are impeded by the thick foliage.

The procession stops. Soldier #5 walks back to address the officers.

SPANISH SOLDIER #5
The trail ends. It's just jungle
ahead.

SPANISH CAPTAIN
Keep moving forward. We'll pick up
the trail.

The soldiers continue to fight their way into the jungle. Monkeys appear in the trees overhead.

The soldiers break through into an open area, with monkeys suddenly surrounding them.

The monkeys begin jumping on the soldiers and onto the two horses. The horses react and one rears up, throwing the lieutenant off.

SPANISH CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Go back! Retreat!

With monkeys hanging all over them, the soldiers retreat out of the area, post-haste.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

The Viceroy interviews Captain Rodriguez with General Lopez observing.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
Monkeys! Monkeys? You were
defeated by monkeys.

SPANISH CAPTAIN
No, not defeated. Just, chased off.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 Chased off.
 (to General Lopez)
 They were defeated by monkeys.

He stands, throws a nearby helmet against the wall and shouts.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO (CONT'D)
 Find these maroons! And bring me
 the head of this man.

He looks to General Lopez.

GENERAL LOPEZ
 Yanga.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 Bring me the head of Yanga!

SUPER: 1580 - ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAINSIDE - VISTA POINT - DAY

From a prominent vantage point, Yanga, Babaji, Koofoo and Chicahua survey the 270-degree vista before them. In the distance is the Gulf of Mexico and Veracruz. Below them, they see the winding Camino Real dirt roadway.

The interpreter explains everything quietly to Chicahua.

BABAJI
 We can see them coming,
 (points)
 about two miles off.

YANGA
 Not enough time to prepare. We'll
 use drums. How many soldiers?

KOOFOO
 It depends. Sometimes ten,
 sometimes thirty.

YANGA
 Thirty means valuable cargo. Maybe
 people, maybe powder and guns.
 We'll start with a small one. What
 about locations?

BABAJI
 There are many.

YANGA

Good.

The men hear a bell in the distance.

YANGA (CONT'D)

Everyone is here.

The men turn and walk away.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga and his three companions march through a cornfield. As they exit the corn, they encounter a group of cows. Then the rhythm of drums and cowbells begins.

The men approach their large stockade, constructed with vertical timbers. The stockade has three sides, with sentry posts atop each corner. Around the top of the stockade interior wall is a wide catwalk.

Many villagers, two-third Africans and one-third native Aztecs, have lined the path to the stockade entrance. They offer their sincere respects as Yanga passes, then fall in behind him.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - STOCKADE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As Yanga enters the stockade, he encounters Tayanna, who is elegantly dressed and very pregnant. He gives her a humble head nod. She smiles broadly. He takes her hand and they walk together toward the center of the compound.

YANGA

You are the most beautiful queen in all of the New World. And you carry a future prince in your belly.

TAYANNA

Or princess, perhaps.

They share a warm smile.

Chichahua walks a few paces behind Yanga and Tayanna. He passes a group of Aztecs and they fall in behind him.

Around the perimeter of the compound interior are dozens of small, tightly-packed huts. The council house, in the center of the compound, is the largest and most well-built structure and is positioned against a large tree.

A small stream runs through the middle of the compound, with a wide foot bridge spanning across.

When they reach the front of the council house, the couple stands in front of two wicker chairs. They enjoy the drumming and festive atmosphere. Some women move and sway to the beat. Yanga raises his hand and the drumming stops.

Yanga and Tayanna take their seats. Chicahua, Babaji and Koofoo sit nearby. Most of the throng of three hundred sits cross-legged at their feet, with some men standing behind. Several of the women cradle babies in their arms.

Yanga takes a moment to quietly gaze around at everyone. He stands and takes a deep breath.

YANGA

This is our mountain!

The crowd cheers wildly.

YANGA (CONT'D)

Our land!

More cheers.

YANGA (CONT'D)

We are a tribe, we are an army!
We will be no man's slave!

Wild cheers. Chicahua stands and raises a spear in the air. Yanga waits until everyone settles back down.

YANGA (CONT'D)

The stockade is now complete. Our defenses are in place. We are secure. The Spanish don't know where we are. If they find us, they will pay a heavy price! We will continue to increase our numbers with raids.

Yanga helps Tayanna to her feet.

YANGA (CONT'D)

And with children.

The men smile while the women cheer and clap.

YANGA (CONT'D)

Now, I invite the commanders into the council house. We will make plans for the future.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga and Tayanna are seated prominently on a thatched platform which abuts a large tree, built into the backwall of the structure. Chicahua, Babaji and Koofoo are seated nearby. Twenty African and Aztec warriors are packed within, most sitting cross-legged, with a few standing at the rear.

YANGA

Up to now, we have assigned one fourth of the men to the army. Now that the stockade is built, we will increase the army to one half.

BABAJI

We need more weapons.

KOOFoo

And supplies.

MAROON FIGHTER

Are we planning more raids?

YANGA

Yes, but not plantations. Veracruz is too far. We need horses and cows, and cows are too slow. We will begin raiding the caravans that use the Camino Real. They will provide us with weapons, animals, and provisions.

BABAJI

And more fighters.

YANGA

Yes.

KOOFoo

If we grow the army large enough we can defeat the Spanish.

Some of the men support the notion.

YANGA

They have a large army and access to guns and powder. We want them to fear us, to tolerate us and to leave us alone. We will prepare battlefields in the jungle that we create, with trails leading to them.

BABAJI

Traps.

YANGA

Yes. If they come looking for us,
we will have the advantage. They
will realize they cannot defeat us
and give up trying.

Suddenly, Tayanna begins moaning and holding her belly,
clearly in severe pain. Yanga stands.

YANGA (CONT'D)

(to the men)

Get the women! Hurry!

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

Yanga paces about frantically, with anxious villagers looking
on.

They hear an infant's loud cry. An AZTEC WOMAN emerges from
the council house.

AZTEC WOMAN

It's a boy!

Cheers from the crowd.

AZTEC WOMAN (CONT'D)

What will you call him?

KOOFUO

What's his name?

YANGA

Gaspar Yanga!

AZTEC WOMAN

(beaming)

Treasure of Yanga!

INT. VILLAGE HUT - NIGHT

Candles illuminate the interior of their dwelling, as Yanga
and Tayanna cuddle in bed with their baby.

TAYANNA

He looks like you. See his curls?

YANGA

I hope he looks like you.

TAYANNA

Lucky boy. Son of a great man.

YANGA

Son of a great woman. This community depends on you, the interpreter. The girl I was going to marry, in Africa, she was also an interpreter. Portuguese.

TAYANNA

What was her name?

YANGA

Nzinga.

TAYANNA

Nzinga. Were you two in love?

YANGA

Not really.

TAYANNA

(amused)

You weren't in love?

YANGA

(shakes his head)

I liked her. I respected her.

TAYANNA

Was she pretty?

YANGA

Not as pretty as you.

TAYANNA

(still amused)

Why were you going to marry her?

YANGA

To please my father and her father. Nzinga is a princess. But now, I am married to a queen.

They kiss and Tayanna cuddles up against Yanga.

EXT. CAMINO REAL - DAY

A Spanish caravan is making its way westward along the rustic highway. Six mounted Spanish guards lead the caravan, with ten foot soldiers marching at the rear.

Directly in front of the foot soldiers are six African men carrying large loads, and six African women carrying small loads. Another six African men are paired up, pulling three small wagons, like two-horse teams.

The caravan is comprised of a variety of rolling stock, including three horse-drawn wagons piled high with goods.

There is one fancy enclosed carriage and two open-air passenger wagons filled with Spaniards.

There is also an open buggy with three passengers; a young Spanish dandy with his two well-dressed, African female companions on either side.

EXT. JUNGLE HILLSIDE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Koofoo is watching the caravan as it passes him by. He strikes a short rhythm on his talking drum.

Up ahead, a Maroon fighter, who is poised with his comrades atop a large boulder, answers back with his drum.

EXT. CAMINO REAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

At the front of the caravan, the mounted guards regard each other curiously, then two turn around to observe the caravan behind.

In the buggy, the DANDY has heard it too. He regards his two lovely African female companions, ZOLA (20) and ANIKA (20).

DANDY
(to companions)
What was that? Did you hear that?

Zola and Anika regard each other and snicker. The dandy turns to the driver of the fancy carriage behind him.

DANDY (CONT'D)
Did you hear that? That odd noise?

The six mounted guards at the head of the caravan procession, move under a canopy of trees with rocks and foliage off to either side.

Suddenly, a dozen Aztec warriors fall from the trees and onto the horses, knocking the guards off and onto the ground. Six African fighters attack the guards from nearby hiding spots and pin them to the ground. Then the Aztecs jump down and relieve them of their weapons.

The caravan halts. Forty maroons rush the ten soldiers at the rear of the caravan. Yanga and Babaji, both armed with lit matchlocks, emerge from the trees atop horses.

The maroons at the rear are able to subdue eight of the soldiers, but two draw their swords, ready to fight.

YANGA

Drop your weapons! We will not harm you!

One of the sword-wielding soldiers is rushed from behind by two maroons, who secure his sword. The other engages in a sword fight with three maroons and is wounded. His sword is secured.

From atop one of the open wagons, full of Spanish travelers, a man rises to his feet with a matchlock and points it at Yanga. An arrow finds his neck, and he falls off the wagon and onto the ground.

YANGA (CONT'D)

(to maroons at rear)

Armor, uniforms, boots, weapons... bind their hands.

Maroons are busy securing the slaves and hurrying them off. Other maroons have begun unloading wagons.

Yanga and Babaji ride to the front of the caravan. The guards have been laid out, prone.

YANGA (CONT'D)

Weapons, uniforms, boots, and horses. Tie them securely.

Yanga and Babaji turn their horses, and walk slowly toward the rear of the caravan, surveying all of the wagons and carriages. They stop at the dandy's buggy and dismount.

YANGA (CONT'D)

(to Zola and Anika)

You're coming with us.

He holds out his hand, as a gesture to help them out of the buggy. The dandy grabs both women by the hair and yanks them back against the seat.

DANDY

No you don't! These two are mine.

YANGA
 (to Babaji)
 They don't look like they belong to
 him. They're the wrong color.

Yanga takes the pistol-sized matchlock from Babaji's hand, grasps it by the barrel, and whacks the dandy in the throat with the pistol butt. The dandy screams, lets go of the women's hair, and holds his throat.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 (to Babaji)
 Nzinga taught me that.

Yanga and Babaji help Zola and Anika off of the buggy and Babaji walks them away. Yanga removes the Dandy's befeathered hat and tries it on for size.

Yanga walks to the fancy carriage, opens the door, and peers inside.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 Step out of the carriage.

INT. FANCY CARRIAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Inside the carriage are two OLDER MEN, an older woman, plus a YOUNG WOMAN, all finely dressed.

OLDER MAN
 Don't. Stay where you are.

EXT. CAMINO REAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga is patient, but firm.

YANGA
 I insist you step out. You will not
 be harmed.

There is a short delay, and then the young woman steps out first, followed by the others.

Maroons enter the carriage to search it. Other maroons stand at the ready. He points to the older men and woman.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 (to maroons)
 See what they have.

They search the pockets of the men and remove jewelry from the woman. Yanga sizes up the young woman.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 (to young woman)
 Remove your dress.

She wriggles out of her dress. Then she begins removing her undergarment.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 No. I don't want that.

He looks to a maroon, who is holding a blanket.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 (to maroon)
 Put that around her.

The maroon drapes the blanket around her shoulders.

YOUNG WOMAN
 How gallant. What's her name?

YANGA
 Who?

YOUNG WOMAN
 The woman who will be wearing my dress later. It's a bit small for you.

YANGA
 Tayanna.

YOUNG WOMAN
 Give Tayanna these.

She removes a string of pearls from her neck.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
 I have lots more. You're Yanga.

YANGA
 You're mistaken.

YOUNG WOMAN
 (smiling)
 You know, half of the women in Veracruz can't sleep at night for fear you and your maroons will come charging through their windows and spirit them away to your den.

YANGA
 We don't take white women. White women are trouble.

YOUNG WOMAN
Not even me?

YANGA
Especially you.

Maroons are draining large wine barrels at the roadside.

OLDER MAN
That's the finest Castilian wine!

YANGA
We need the barrels.

LATER:

Along the side of the road, the maroons have consolidated their haul.

The caravan has been reconfigured as it begins the remainder of its journey. The guards and soldiers are all in their underwear, walking barefoot.

Six of the soldiers have taken the place of the six Africans who were pulling the three small wagons. The Spaniards have just enough horses to continue on with their journey.

The maroons watch the caravan move slowly away from them.

YANGA (CONT'D)
(to Babaji)
How many guns?

BABAJI
Forty. And two barrels of powder.

They share a satisfied smile.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY

A rowdy, festive celebration is underway throughout the village.

Drummers drum and women dance. The villagers roleplay with each other, donned in Spanish garments.

Yanga, still wearing his Spanish dandy hat, regards Tayanna as she models her new dress and pearls.

While an Aztec woman holds baby Gaspar, Tayanna tries some Spanish dance steps. She snaps her fingers over her head, and Yanga snaps his fingers in unison.

Zola and Anika are seated on hay bales, being doted upon by eight excited, adoring YOUNG MAROONS. Babaji and Koofoo approach them, offering them flowers.

BABAJI

For you. Not beautiful enough.

ZOLA

Oh, they are beautiful.

ANIKA

Thank you so much!

A maroon offers them a plateful of fruit. They both reach for bananas.

ZOLA

Thank you.

ANIKA

I'm so hungry.

These exotic beauties know how to peel a banana. As they bite into their fruits, one can almost hear the bananas moan with pleasure.

KOOFOO

What else can we do?

BABAJI

Can we get you anything?

Zola and Anika regard each other.

ANIKA

We need to get out of these hot dresses and clean up.

ZOLA

Is there water anywhere?

The excited maroons repeat 'water' and 'the waterfall'.

MAROON FIGHTER

We have a waterfall.

ZOLA

Oh, a waterfall.

ANIKA

That's perfect!

ZOLA
(to the maroons)
Will you take us there?

The boys enthusiastically nod their heads.

KOOF00
Of course, yes!

Zola and Anika rise to their feet and the boys lead them away.

ANIKA
(to Koofoo)
I could use some help. Will you wash my hair?

KOOF00
Oh, yes, yes, it will be so clean.

ZOLA
(to Maroon Fighter)
Maybe you could wash my back.

Six Maroons answer.

MAROONS
Yes! Yes!

The women share a naughty grin.

ZOLA
When we woke up this morning, we were slaves. Now, we have our own slaves.

ANIKA
Would you boys like to be our slaves?

The maroons answer in chorus.

MAROONS
Yes! Yes! Yes!

ZOLA
Who wants to rub my feet?

Hands go up.

MAROONS
Me. Me. I will.

Anika picks her hair playfully with her hand.

ANIKA
 (to Koofoo)
 You realize, I have hair in two
 places.

His eyes widen.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga and Tayanna appear ecstatic.

 TAYANNA
 This dress makes me too beautiful
 for this place. What if I were to
 run off and marry a rich Spaniard
 in Veracruz?

 YANGA
 I would come and find you, and take
 you back.

 TAYANNA
 But you would have to find me.

She takes a nearby cloth and throws it into Yanga's face.
Then she takes off running.

Yanga removes the cloth and sees her sprinting off toward the
jungle canopy. He walks after her for a few paces, then
begins jogging.

INT. JUNGLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Tayanna tears through the jungle, occasionally looking back
for Yanga.

Yanga follows her as she runs through the thick foliage.

He stops, looks around, then continues. As he walks past a
boulder, Tayanna jumps off and onto his shoulders. Her new
dress blinds Yanga, and they fall into some tall grass.

They share a laugh, a smile, and a kiss.

 TAYANNA
 Everyone is so happy. You should
 raid more caravans.

 YANGA
 We have to be careful. We'll raid
 caravans when we need supplies.

(MORE)

YANGA (CONT'D)

If we attack too many, the Spanish
will come.

She cuddles in close to him.

TAYANNA

They'll never find us.

YANGA

They will find us. One day, they'll
send an army up here.

TAYANNA

I don't like it when you go off,
with the men. I feel better when
you're here with me, with the baby.

YANGA

We have to stay ready. If I had
someone, someone who could lead,
but no one is ready.

Yanga takes a moment to reflect on his exchange with Tayanna.

YANGA (CONT'D)

I would rather not fight. If we
could make peace them, with the
Spanish. There is some good
farmland down by the river. They
don't use it. We could build a
community there.

TAYANNA

Take me there.

EXT. ROLLING PLAIN - DAY

Yanga, Tayanna, Koofoo, and Babaji are all on horseback,
walking the horses through the grassy river bottom.

YANGA

This goes for miles. We could
develop a large village here.
Everyone in the same place. Crops,
animals. We have the river and we
could trade from here.

BABAJI

A nice dream, but the jungle is our
advantage.

YANGA

Everything begins with a dream.

TAYANNA

It is truly paradise.

YANGA

I want this to be Gaspar's land. I
want my son to raise his family
here.

EXT. VERACRUZ VILLAGE - DAY

Twenty African captives, bound with wrist restraints and tied together at their necks with a long chain, are marched along by a group of four soldiers. In the center of the line of captives are four women, one of whom is Nzinga.

Captain Rodriguez rides up on a horse and the soldiers halt the procession.

SPANISH CAPTAIN

Alright, the four women remain
here. Put them in the brothel.
March the men out to the Viceroy's
plantation.

The soldiers nod in acknowledgement and the Captain rides off.

One by one, the soldiers decouple the four women from the men. Nzinga is now wearing only wrist restraints with a short chain connecting them.

Three soldiers march the men off in one direction. The remaining two soldiers point in the other direction and the women begin walking, single file.

After a short distance, Nzinga sees a long stick leaning up against a small building. As she nears it, she lunges for the stick, then spins around and whacks one of the soldiers upside the head. She spins and whacks him again.

The second soldier brandishes his sword and Nzinga quickly knocks it from his grip. Then she whacks him twice. She drops the stick, grabs the sword and takes off running.

One of the soldiers is unconscious. The other one chases after her, shouting. The other three women run in the opposite direction.

SPANISH SOLDIER

Get her! Stop this woman! Stop her!

Two soldiers and two Spanish men join the chase to catch Nzinga. Then two more join in.

They chase her around artisan stands, small buildings, through foliage, over a fence. Finally, three of them corner her. She swings the sword at them but they rush her at once and pin her to the ground.

EXT. VICEROY'S BUILDING - DAY

The Viceroy and General Lopez walk down a pathway to a small clearing, where Nzinga has been placed in the stocks, guarded by one of the soldiers. He approaches her and looks her over.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

(to soldier)

Got the better of you, did she?

SPANISH SOLDIER

Knocked one of my teeth out.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

Little tiger, this one.

(to General Lopez)

Take her out to my plantation. I want her all to myself. Have them keep her in leg irons so she can't run.

(to Soldier)

Oh, and fifty lashes.

SPANISH SOLDIER

(sinister grin)

Yes, your excellency.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - YANGA'S HUT - DAY

Tayanna is seated in a chair in front of their hut next to the council building, mending a garment with needle and thread. Drumming is heard faintly in the distance.

She has a ready-to-eat, sliced papaya next to her on a thatched plate.

The now, one-year-old Gaspar, who has just begun walking, sidles up to his mother and plants his little hand into the papaya. He grins and laughs.

TAYANNA

Gaspar, you little devil. Now you've made a mess.

Gaspar turns and as he begins to waddle away, Yanga walks up and lifts him over his head and sets him back down next to Tayanna.

TAYANNA (CONT'D)
He thinks food is something you
play with.

Yanga steals a slice of papaya and quickly devours it.

TAYANNA (CONT'D)
Now, you too?

Yanga and Tayanna watch Gaspar play with a coconut.

TAYANNA (CONT'D)
You've created a community.

YANGA
Not me, everyone, especially you.

TAYANNA
Will the Spanish leave us alone
now, do you think?

YANGA
No. They are a proud, arrogant
people. They see this mountain as
theirs. And they see us as lost
property.

TAYANNA
I don't know why they even care
about Orizaba. What do they want it
for?

YEWANDE, one of Tayanna's African girlfriends, walks up and helps herself to the rest of the papaya. Tayanna rolls her eyes. Yanga offers Yewande a smile.

TAYANNA (CONT'D)
Hi Yewande. Did you get the help
you needed for your project?

YEWANDE
Oh yes, my new oven is all set.
Cookin' right now.

TAYANNA
You can always count on Yanga to
round up some manpower.

YEWANDE
Go to Yanga? Hmph! When I need
manpower, I go to them.

She motions over across the field, where Anika and Zola are holding court with their cadre of adoring young men.

YEWANDE (CONT'D)
Those two monopolizing all the
manpower around here.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - MEADOW - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Anika and Zola are seated in wicker chairs, as a group of
their male admirers dote on them.

A hot African percussion ensemble provides a scorching
soundtrack for a gathering of young male and female maroons.
A few dance.

One of the young maroons walks around the perimeter of the
group, smudging with burning sage.

Two maroons hold bowls full of flower blossoms near Anika and
Zola, while another two maroons use little hand-held fans to
fan the aroma toward them. Koofoo is on one knee, giving
Anika a manicure.

Babaji sits nearby looking distinguished and debonair.

ANIKA
(to Koofoo)
Like claws. But rounded at the
tips. Not too sharp.

ZOLA
The flowers are divine. The sage is
like the canvas, and the flowers
are the images of the painting.

They both enjoy a deep breath.

ZOLA (CONT'D)
The lilies are intoxicating.

ANIKA
(to Koofoo)
Let me see.

She checks out her nails.

ANIKA (CONT'D)
Oooh, I like.
(to Koofoo)
Here, sit here, let me try them
out. I'll scratch your head.

Koofoo turns and sits. Anika scratches his head.

ANIKA (CONT'D)

He's smiling.
 (to Zola)
 This will make Koofoo smarter.

ZOLA

(to Koofoo)
 Do you feel smarter Koofoo?

They all giggle.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - YANGA'S HUT - LATER

Tayanna and Yanga are sharing a meal together with friends, all seated on tree stumps. An Aztec woman serves up second helpings from a large pot.

The sound of the talking drum suddenly echoes into the village from a distance.

Yanga stands and listens with rapt attention. He announces the news to the people nearby.

YANGA

They have two captives, unarmed.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - COUNCIL HOUSE - LATER

Yanga, Matosa, Koofoo, Babaji, and other maroon commanders watch, as the black hoods are removed from the heads of two FRANCISCAN PRIESTS.

YANGA

This mountain is a dangerous place
 for white men.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

We're priests. Franciscans. We're
 here to minister to the people of
 the mountain.

YANGA

You are spies. We will take you
 back. If you return, you will be
 killed.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2

We may be able to help you, help
 your cause.

BABAJI

Your cause is slavery and violence.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2
 Our mission is to spread the
 message of our Lord and savior,
 Jesus Christ.

YANGA
 They're here. Unarmed. Let's hear
 them out.

INT. MAROON VILLAGE - COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The two priests are seated, facing Yanga, Babaji and Koofoo.
 As they speak, Tayanna enters the council house with two
 Aztec women, who sit quietly off to the side.

YANGA
 Christianity is confusing. You say
 it's about love.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
 And forgiveness.

YANGA
 Forgiveness. And the Spanish, they
 are all Christian?

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2
 Yes.

YANGA
 But the Spanish have no love. Your
 religion is weak.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
 We're all sinners. That's why we're
 baptized, so that Christ will
 forgive us of our sins.

Yanga signals Tayanna and she coaxes one of the women to
 stand and face the priests.

YANGA
 This woman here, she was taken by
 Spanish soldiers. They wanted to
 use her body for pleasure, but she
 was nursing her baby. So they took
 her baby by its ankles and bashed
 its brains out against a rock, so
 her baby would not interfere. And
 you say they will be forgiven for
 this?

The two priests share an awkward moment.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2
Some of our sins are very grave.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
That's why baptism is so important.

YANGA
So, if we become baptized, we can do anything. We could remove your heads from your bodies and send them back to Veracruz in a sack, and it would be alright, we'd be forgiven.

Again, the priests share an awkward moment.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2
Christ would forgive you.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
The soldiers would not forgive you.

BABAJI
If the soldiers come onto our mountain, we will remove all of their heads.

YANGA
We would like to live in peace with the Spanish. We want our own land, no slaves.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
I think that may be possible, eventually.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2
But there are some issues. The raids on caravans and plantations, the stealing must stop.

YANGA
We are not stealing! We are taking payment for our labors. Some of these men worked for years in the mines and fields. They were never paid.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2
But you were all slaves.

YANGA

We were not slaves! We were husbands and fathers and brothers living in tribes of people who looked like us. The stealing began when our lives were stolen.

FRANCICAN PRIEST #2

But it's allowed in Christianity. Slavery is acceptable, as long as slaves are heathen.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

Non-baptized.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2

Baptism is the place to start. If you're seen as fellow Christians, then perhaps there is hope for peace.

Yanga makes eye contact with Babaji and Koofoo.

YANGA

Tell your generals, we will be no man's slave. We choose death over captivity.

Someone calls out Yanga's name from outside.

MAROON (O.S.)

Yanga!

YANGA

(to Koofoo)

Blindfold them and take them back to the Camino Real.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga walks out of the council house and immediately hears a talking drum in the distance. He rings the big bell. Maroons come running and surround him.

YANGA

Listen.

They hear the distant drum.

YANGA (CONT'D)

What is that?

MAROON FIGHTER
It's Angolan.

YANGA
What is he saying?

MAROON FIGHTER
(listens intently)
They are a group of maroons. Forty
of them. They want to meet with us.

YANGA
Matosa. It has to be Matosa. Tell
him to come, now.

The Maroon fighter takes a talking drum from a nearby man and pounds out a series of short rhythms. Then he repeats the rhythms.

They listen for the distant drum to answer back.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY - LATER

The villagers watch, as forty tired, rag-tag maroons emerge out of the jungle foliage and into the village. They are heavily-laden with weaponry and supplies.

The group includes thirty African men, nine Aztec men and one African woman. The villagers greet them warmly, yet cautiously.

Yanga approaches their leader, FRANCISCO MATOSA (40), a large, rugged-looking man with a hard expression.

YANGA
You're Francisco Matosa, the
Angolan.

MATOSA
(nods)
We've been trying to find you.

YANGA
You made it past our sentries.

Matosa smiles.

MATOSA
We want to join you. We are forty,
all with guns and bows.

Yanga regards Matosa's group. He nods, then addresses the villagers.

YANGA

Our numbers have increased. Please
welcome our new friends!

(to Matosa)

Have something to eat. We'll talk
later.

Matosa's men mingle into the crowd. Matosa approaches Yanga.

MATOSA

I must speak with you now about
something. We need your help.

Yanga is all ears. Matosa beckons the African woman to come
closer. She is one of the women who was chained up with
Nzinga in Veracruz.

MATOSA (CONT'D)

Nzinga is here, in Veracruz.

YANGA

(astonished)

Nzinga? Here?

MATOSA

Yes. She's here.

YANGA

How? What happened?

MATOSA

(to African woman)

Tell him.

(to Yanga)

She was on the ship with her.

AFRICAN WOMAN

She said her brother sold her to
the Spanish.

YANGA

Her brother?!

AFRICAN WARRIOR

Yes, that's what she said.

Yanga is dumbfounded.

MATOSA

We're going to rescue her. We need
help.

YANGA

Yes of course.

(to the woman)

Is her father alright, King
Kilonji?

AFRICAN WOMAN

She said her father is dead.

YANGA

Dead?! How? How did he die?

AFRICAN WOMAN

She doesn't know.

YANGA

Where is she? Do you know?

MATOSA

I sent one of my Aztecs into
Veracruz. She's at a cane
plantation, owned by the Viceroy.

YANGA

(nods)

Yes. We know where it is. We'll get
her out. Now, have some food, both
of you. And then sleep. I'll show
you around tomorrow.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAINSIDE - VISTA POINT - DAY

From their prominent vantage point, Yanga and Matosa survey
the 270-degree vista, the Camino Real below, and Veracruz and
the Gulf of Mexico off in the distance.

YANGA

Troop movements can be seen from
here. Also caravans.

MATOSA

How many fighters, in all?

YANGA

We have about two hundred men in
our villages. Half are assigned to
the army. But every man is trained.
They can all fight. There is also a
native force of Aztecs not far from
here. About fifty men. Well-armed.
We train together.

MATOSA

Your stockade is well-built.

YANGA

We have two more, higher up. Half our people live up there. If this one is breached, we retreat up there.

MATOSA

Planning?

The two men walk as they talk, as they begin their trek back to village.

YANGA

We have four battlefields.

MATOSA

Lure and trap.

YANGA

Yes. We use height advantage. Never make trails through the jungle. When we travel long distances, we use ridgelines.

MATOSA

Weapons?

YANGA

A hundred and ten guns. With yours, a hundred fifty. We need musket balls. And of course, powder. Every man is trained in everything.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - TARGET RANGE - DAY

Yanga and Matosa have gathered a group of their fighters for target practice. They have various targets set up, including Spanish armor strapped to hay bales.

Yanga and Matosa watch as Babaji demonstrates the atlatl. He whips a spear at the bale and it penetrates through the armor.

Yanga hands an atlatl to Matosa.

YANGA

The Aztecs use these. They also have superior arrowheads.

Babaji pulls back a bow and fires the arrow at the armor. It penetrates through and nests in the hay.

Yanga and Matosa drift away from the maroons. As they converse, two of Matosa's men, standing off to the side, observe Yanga cautiously. Yanga occasionally glances over at them.

YANGA (CONT'D)

I sent Koofoo to scout the plantation. He'll be back tomorrow. We'll go on the full moon. We've already been there, on a raid, a year ago.

Yanga takes another good look at the two men who have been cautiously watching him. He walks toward them. The men begin to walk off.

Yanga runs at them and grabs them both by their necks.

YANGA (CONT'D)

Fulani! You're Fulani, both of you!

The men struggle with Yanga. He wrestles both to the ground and pins their necks. Matosa hurries over. Maroons scurry over to witness the spectacle.

YANGA (CONT'D)

These two are Fulani. They leave or they die!

MATOSA

Yanga, they are good fighters.

YANGA

They are my enemy.

Matosa drops to one knee. Babaji and the other maroons wonder what's going on. Yanga pushes the two Fulani away from him and they stand off to the side.

MATOSA

Africa is gone. We have new battles to fight. Here, there are three tribes. Black, brown, and white.

Still fuming, Yanga takes a moment to process.

YANGA

Keep them away! I don't want to look at them.

Matosa sits on the ground next to Yanga.

MATOSA

There's a lot of them here now, in
the cane fields. Fulani.

Matosa has Yanga's attention.

MATOSA (CONT'D)

Your father put them there.

Yanga considers the implications.

YANGA

He should have killed them all.
They can stay in the cane fields.

MATOSA

The Spanish are the enemy.
Everyone's enemy.

MAROON FIGHTER

(to Yanga)

There is another here. One of ours
is Fulani.

Yanga considers the situation.

YANGA

(to the two Fulani)

You know who I am.

They nod.

YANGA (CONT'D)

All right, they can stay. Fulani
will be assigned to the upper
stockade.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

Yanga is meeting with Koofoo to discuss his reconnaissance.
Matosa, Babaji and a group of maroons look and listen.

Yanga has stones on the floor that represent landmarks on the
property. Koofoo points with a stick as he speaks.

YANGA

Where is Nzinga?

KOOFOO

Here, in a small building next to
the house. She's in leg irons. The
house has two guards posted, day
and night.

YANGA

The guards are all soldiers?

KOOFOO

Yes. Six guards outside the slave compound.

YANGA

Like the mine.

KOOFOO

(nods)

And at night, the rest are around their cabins, either sleeping or just outside.

YANGA

How many soldiers?

KOOFOO

Twenty-five to thirty.

YANGA

(pointing)

And the dried cane stacks are here?

KOOFOO

Yes.

YANGA

Alright, we'll create a diversion. We'll light the cane on fire. That will draw some of them away from the compound and split their forces. Matosa's men will be hiding in the cane. Babaji and Koofoo, you're assigned to Nzinga. The rest of the men will attack the compound and the cabins. I'll direct the attack on horseback.

EXT. VICEROY'S SUGAR PLANTATION - DAY

At the crack of dawn, the plantation is quiet. The six guards at the slave compound are sitting on the ground chatting near a campfire of glowing coals. They are without armor and their weapons are no where to be seen.

At the cabins, two soldiers are milling around outside in their underwear, without boots.

Outside the plantation house, the two guards are seated in chairs, half asleep.

Close by, in the dense foliage at the perimeter of the plantation, Yanga, Babaji and Koofoo are atop horses holding swords. They are surrounded by a hundred maroon fighters with guns, swords, spears and axes.

At the crack of dawn, Matosa's men are hiding in the cane field. Matosa signals one of his men who is holding a torch. He runs to the stack of dried cane and lights it on fire.

The fire quickly turns into a blaze. The two soldiers outside the cabin begin yelling into the cabins and pound on the door. Fifteen soldiers, without weapons, run across the open field toward the fire.

Yanga signals one of his maroons who fires a musket into the air. All of Yanga's men rush onto the plantation grounds, some headed toward the slave compound and some headed toward the house.

Matosa's men charge out of the cane and quickly surround the unarmed soldiers at the fire.

Yanga, Babaji and Koofoo charge the house on horseback, with fifty maroons behind them. The two on-duty guards draw their swords and quickly find themselves in a sword fight with Babaji and Koofoo. A moment later, the two guards are swarmed by the horde of maroons and subdued.

Koofoo and Babaji dismount, grab axes attached to the sides of their horses and rush over to the little outbuilding next to the house. They quickly break through the wooden door and Nzinga emerges, screaming with joy. She embraces them both.

NZINGA

Koofoo, Babaji! Where's Yanga?

They point toward Yanga.

They lead her toward the front of the house. Her leg irons limit the length of each stride. She sees Yanga atop his horse and hurries toward him.

NZINGA (CONT'D)

Yanga! Yanga!

She grabs his leg and hugs it. Tears stream down her face.

YANGA

(huge smile)

Welcome to New Spain.

They share a warm gaze. Yanga begins to direct his men for the next phase.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 (to Koofoo and Babaji)
 Round up all the soldiers and place
 them in the compound. Put them in
 irons or bind their hands and
 ankles.

As he continues, a young Spanish woman (25) steps out of the second floor and onto the large porch holding a matchlock rifle. She steps to the edge and points it at Yanga.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 Then collect all the tools and
 weapons. Also the animals...

Nzinga sees the woman. She grabs a spear out of the hand of one of Yanga's men and throws it at the woman. It lodges in the center of her chest. She slumps over the front of the porch and falls to the ground.

Everyone around Yanga becomes silent as they process what has just happened. Yanga dismounts and embraces Nzinga. Two maroons pick up the dead woman and move the body to the lower porch.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 Let's get you out of those irons.

Just then, Matosa joins the group.

MATOSA
 (to Yanga)
 All of the soldiers have been
 captured.

YANGA
 Good.

He approaches the two guards, whose wrists are bound in front of them. Nzinga stands nearby. He points to the leg irons and makes a motion with his hand like he's turning a key.

YANGA (CONT'D)
 Key.

He points to the restraints again. The guards give him a clueless look.

MATOSA
 I got this.

He focuses on one guard and makes the same motion Yanga did.

MATOSA (CONT'D)

Key.

The guard shrugs his shoulders. Matosa pulls out a large knife and thrusts it into the guard's throat. Blood spews in all directions and his head droops. Now Matosa focuses on the second guard. He makes the same motion.

MATOSA (CONT'D)

Key.

The second guard nervously points to the pocket of the dead guard.

MATOSA (CONT'D)

(to the guard)

See how easy that was?

One of the maroons finds the key in the dead guard's pocket and quickly unlocks Nzinga's leg irons.

EXT. CAMINO REAL - DAY - LATER

Yanga and Nzinga are walking together at the front of the long procession. Babaji, Koofoo and Matosa walk directly behind. She holds onto Yanga's arm tightly as they walk.

YANGA

The woman said your brother sold you. Tell me what happened? What happened to your father?

NZINGA

One morning someone came running to my hut screaming that the King was dead. I didn't believe it but I ran to his hut and he was just lying there. He was dead. And I didn't understand. He was healthy. Why did he suddenly die? So I asked the guards. He always had two guards outside his hut. And they said they didn't know anything. So I started asking other people, if they saw anything that night. And they all said no, but I could tell that one of them was hiding something. And then the next night, four soldiers came into my hut. They carried me out of the village. And my brother was there, just watching everything.

YANGA

And the next thing you know, you're on a Spanish ship.

NZINGA

Yes.

The couple walks along silently for six paces.

YANGA

He couldn't wait for your father to die naturally.

They walk along another six paces.

NZINGA

There is nothing I can do, from over here. But I'm with you now. We'll live our lives together, here.

She smiles and presses herself up against Yanga as they walk another six paces.

YANGA

Nzinga...I have a woman, we have a son.

Nzinga loosens her grasp on Yanga's arm and stares into the space in front of her as she walks. Yanga turns to Matosa.

YANGA (CONT'D)

These Spanish ships. What do you know about them? When they leave here.

Matosa quickens his pace and is now walking beside Yanga.

MATOSA

You mean, where they go?

Yanga nods.

MATOSA (CONT'D)

Most of them get loaded with sugar and coffee, here and in the islands, then sail to Spain.

YANGA

Do any of them return to Africa?

MATOSA

Yes, a few, I think. There is a huge demand for slave labor.

They walk along silently for several paces.

YANGA

(to Nzinga)

You should return to Africa. Go to Gabon, tell my father what happened. He'll help you. Your brother needs to pay for what he did.

NZINGA

But how?

YANGA

(contemplates)

I don't know.

EXT. GRAVESITE - DAY

Thirty Spaniards surround a gravesite with a headstone made of white stone in the shape of a Catholic Cross. Standing next to the Viceroy are his wife (50), son-in-law (25), and two young grandsons (5,7). The attendees include two FRANCISCAN PRIESTS, two nuns, General Lopez, Captain Rodriguez, and two Spanish Aristocrats.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

O merciful God, who has chosen to call our dear sister back, from this life to life eternal, bless her soul that she may rejoice with you and your saints, forever. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

GATHERED THROG

Amen.

EXT. VICEROY'S SUGAR PLANTATION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

General Lopez is walking along somberly with the Viceroy and the two Spanish ARISTOCRATS (50). The Viceroy appears dazed and deeply depressed.

GENERAL LOPEZ

You have my sincerest sympathies, you excellency. If there is anything I can do...

ARISTOCRAT #1

Yes, Luis, we are all here to support you. To lose a daughter, I can't even imagine.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
Thank you. Now I worry about the
boys...no mother.

There is a moment of silence as the Viceroy stares off into
space.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO (CONT'D)
It was the African woman, they
said.

GENERAL LOPEZ
Yes, the black devil. The raid was
apparently conducted to free her.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
So, she holds some importance...to
them.

The general nods.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO (CONT'D)
(to all four)
We will meet tomorrow, in my
office.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

The Viceroy and the two aristocrats sit in comfortable
chairs. General Lopez is standing.

GENERAL LOPEZ
Their raid was well planned and
executed.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
How many men?

GENERAL LOPEZ
About a hundred and fifty.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
This should have been dealt with a
year ago.

GENERAL LOPEZ
We've been up there several times
but found no trace of them.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
(stands)
We come here, conquer an
established empire in months.

(MORE)

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO (CONT'D)
 Our armies occupy half of Europe.
 We have colonies in Africa and
 Asia. And yet we can't round up a
 pack of runaway slaves? How many
 men do you need for this?

GENERAL LOPEZ
 (contemplates)
 Three hundred, I believe.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 And how many can we spare from
 Veracruz?

GENERAL LOPEZ
 (calculates)
 A hundred.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 (to Aristocrat #1)
 We need two hundred men.

ARISTOCRAT #1
 I can get a hundred regulars from
 Mexico City.

The viceroy looks to Aristocrat #2.

ARISTOCRAT #2
 I can get a hundred mercenaries
 from Hispaniola. It will take a few
 weeks.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 (to General Lopez)
 In the meantime, send a platoon up
 there to determine their location.
 Find two native guides who have
 lived on the mountain.
 (furious)
 We'll put an end to this, once and
 for all. I will see this woman
 hang!

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY

Nzinga is teaching Babaji and Koofoo some hand-to-hand combat techniques. They have a bale wrapped in burlap set up that they're taking turns kicking.

Nzinga demonstrates a spin kick and then Koofoo tries it, but he falls on his backside. Nzinga demonstrates again and then Babaji does a little better.

Yanga sees them from across the field and walks over to get a better look.

YANGA

How are your students doing?

NZINGA

Better. I want to show them something. Stand there.

She points to a spot. Then she comes at Yanga, leaps into the air and kicks him in the chest with both feet. He lands on his back.

Yanga gets up and dusts himself off. He points to the practice bale.

YANGA

Use that next time. When you're done, come over.

NZINGA

We're done.

She walks with Yanga back toward his hut.

EXT. YANGA'S HUT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga and Nzinga are seated outside his hut eating fruit.

INT. YANGA'S HUT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Tayanna is lounging in bed with Gasper asleep beside her.

EXT. YANGA'S HUT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga and Nzinga share conversation.

YANGA

That was the Viceroy's daughter you killed.

She processes the information.

YANGA (CONT'D)

We need to find a way to get you back on one of those ships. Maybe we can bribe a captain. We have gold.

NZINGA

I think I can be happy here, with you and your community. We were meant to be together, and now, we are together...again.

Nzinga stands up, positions herself behind Yanga and removes his shirt. She begins rubbing his shoulders. Yanga enjoys.

NZINGA (CONT'D)

Here on Mount Orizaba, you are king. And a king has special needs. He may need more than one woman. A concubine. I could be that woman.

Tayanna bolts out of the hut with fury in her eyes. She pushes Nzinga's hands away from Yanga's shoulders. She holds up her hands.

TAYANNA

See these? These are hands, my hands. Yanga doesn't need your hands on him!

YANGA

Tayanna.

NZINGA

Yanga was promised to me, before he ever met you!

Gasper begins crying from inside the hut.

TAYANNA

You hear that? You know what that is?

NZINGA

That's your problem!

TAYANNA

(in her face)

My problem?! I can make you disappear! Is that what you want?

Yanga stands between them, grasps Nzinga's arm firmly and pulls her away.

YANGA

No no no no. Wait. Come on.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

He walks her back across the field toward Babaji and Koofoo.

YANGA
(beckons with his hand)
Babaji!

Babaji and Koofoo meet him halfway.

YANGA (CONT'D)
Nzinga is the Queen of Angola. Her brother is an illegitimate ruler. And queens have certain privileges. Like having as many husbands as they want. We have a shortage of women in the community. I want the two of you to be Nzinga's husbands. Do you have any problem with that?

BABAJI AND KOOFOO
(emphatically)
No!

YANGA
Good. I now declare Nzinga to be your wife. Get her out of here.

Babaji and Koofoo grin widely. Babaji picks her up and throws her over his shoulder in a fireman's carry and hauls her away. She screams, kicks and pounds his thighs and rearend playfully. Koofoo swats her rump playfully. She screams again and continues kicking.

EXT. YANGA'S HUT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga joins Tayanna who has her hands on her hips and a scowl on her face.

YANGA
Don't worry. They'll keep her busy.

Tayanna crosses her arms and lets out a triumphant grunt.

TAYANNA
Hmph!

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - JUNGLE - DAY

Two native guides lead twenty Spanish soldiers alongside a creek bed. The Spanish Lieutenant leads the platoon on horseback with Captain Rodriguez on horseback in the rear.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

Yanga, Babaji, Koofoo and Matosa are seated in front of the council house. They hear a distant talking drum. Yanga stands and motions for everyone to be quiet. Then he grabs a nearby drum, beats out a return rhythm and rings the alarm bell. Men come running.

YANGA
(to his men)
Twenty of them. They're too close.
Number four, above the ravine.

The men scurry to grab weapons. Yanga sees Zola and Anika and waves them over.

YANGA (CONT'D)
Zola, Anika!

The women hurry to his side.

YANGA (CONT'D)
We have a mission for you.

The women look excited.

YANGA (CONT'D)
It's very dangerous.

They nod apprehensively but willingly.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - JUNGLE - DAY

The guides lead the Spanish platoon into a level area, with patches of dense foliage. They hear a distant drumbeat and stop. The lieutenant raises his hand for quiet. Captain Rodriguez joins him from the rear.

SPANISH CAPTAIN
(pointing)
That way. A few hundred yards.

LIEUTENANT
Maybe they've seen us.

SPANISH CAPTAIN
They can't see us, in all this. We
have the advantage of surprise.
Proceed, quietly.

They continue through the patches of foliage.

They hear the drum again and the lieutenant signals to alter course, slightly.

A short distance ahead, Zola and Anika stroll leisurely down a hillside, right in the path of the soldiers. They appear shocked and frightened and take off running. The entire platoon pursues them.

Up ahead, Zola and Anika disappear behind shrubs, where Babaji and Koofoo shelter them as the soldiers continue on past.

The soldiers quickly find themselves boxed in with boulders and debris. The maroons spring their trap.

Twenty maroons, armed with short and long muskets, dart out from behind jungle foliage and fire point blank into the heads and faces of the two guides and twelve soldiers at the front of the column.

After firing, more maroons finish the soldiers off with swords and knives.

Simultaneously, ten maroons drop from the overhead trees and secure nooses around the necks of the eight remaining soldiers. A group of maroons off to the side pull on the ropes until the Spanish soldiers are swinging and kicking above the ground. Maroons relieve them of their weapons.

All of the excitement has spooked the Captain's horse and he bucks, throwing the Captain back onto the ground. He takes off running.

After a few paces, Nzinga suddenly appears and whacks the Captain upside the head with her stick. Dazed, the captain pulls his sword and swings twice at Nzinga. On his third swing, she whacks the sword from his grip.

Nzinga takes the butt of the stick and thrusts it into the Captain's face twice. He recovers and charges her. She drops onto her back and as the Captain dives onto her, she picks him up with her feet and throws him into the air behind her.

When the Captain opens his eyes, Babaji and Koofoo have the tips of their swords pressed against his neck.

Yanga and Matosa appear, pick the Captain up and throw him against a tree.

YANGA

(in his face)

This is our mountain. This is where
white men go to disappear.

(MORE)

YANGA (CONT'D)
I will let you live, this time. If
you return, I will kill you.

Matosa throws a black hood over his head and Babaji binds his hands behind him. Koofoo appears holding the reins of both horses.

YANGA (CONT'D)
(to Koofoo)
Take him down to the Camino Real.
If he gives you any trouble, kill
him. And bring back both horses. He
can walk.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

The Viceroy has been joined by General Lopez and the two Spanish aristocrats. Captain Rodriguez, who has two black eyes and a swollen face, debriefs them on the ambush.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
How long did this skirmish last?

SPANISH CAPTAIN
Your excellency, I wouldn't call it
a skirmish.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
Well, how long? A few minutes?

SPANISH CAPTAIN
Perhaps a minute.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
One minute. All dead, except you?
And he let you go, this Yanga. Did
he say anything?

SPANISH CAPTAIN
He said Orizaba is where white men
disappear.

There is an uncomfortable silence in the room.

ARISTOCRAT #1
So, he sends a messenger, and the
message is, we can destroy a
platoon of men in a matter of
seconds.

GENERAL LOPEZ

My lord, we're dealing with a military strategist. Who has a jungle to hide behind.

The Viceroy slumps over his desk, then straightens up and pounds his fist on the desk.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

(angry)

We control the high seas and half of Europe. And yet we've allowed these heathens to ransack caravans, raid plantations, shelter slaves and terrorize half of New Spain!

(to Aristocrat #2)

When will the mercenaries arrive?

ARISTOCRAT #2

Their ship is expected next week.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

(to Captain)

Do you remember how to get up there?

SPANISH CAPTAIN

I think so.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

Strategist. Ha! We'll see.

(to General Lopez)

As soon as your men are assembled and ready, march up there and put an end to this Yanga problem, once and for all! These heathens will taste the wrath of the empire! I want the black devil captured alive. I want to watch her hang!

INT. MAROON VILLAGE - YANGA'S HUT - DAY

Yanga and Tayanna are asleep in bed. In the distance, a faint musket round is heard. His eyes open. He hears another faint shot. He bolts out of bed.

TAYANNA

What is it?

YANGA

Trouble.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAINSIDE - VISTA POINT - DAY - LATER

Yanga, Matosa, Babaji and Koofoo peer into the distance, where they see a sizable army assembled.

 YANGA (CONT)
 Hundreds. Must have marched all night.

 MATOSA
 This is it.

 YANGA
 (to Matosa)
 Assemble everyone.
 (to Babaji)
 Get the interpreter and go tell Chicahua to prepare his men for battle.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - DAY - LATER

Matosa's men have captured two Spanish mercenaries.

 MATOSA
 Yanga!

Yanga exits the council house.

 MATOSA (CONT'D)
 They were scouting. The main army is still down at the Camino Real.

 YANGA
 Alright, keep one for questioning. We'll send the other one back.

LATER:

The villagers are assembled.

 YANGA (CONT'D)
 (to the throng)
 As soon as the women and children are ready, you will be led up to the secure stockade. If necessary, we will fall back and defend the village.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - HILLSIDE - DAY

Yanga, Koofoo, and Babaji lead one of the Spaniards down the mountainside to a creek bed. Maroons are hiding off to the side behind rocks and shrubs. They untie him.

 YANGA
 (to Spaniard)
 This creek leads down. Now you know
 where we are.

Yanga points and the Spaniard hustles away alongside the creek. Some more maroons join Yanga from nearby.

 BABAJI
 You made it too easy for them.

 YANGA
 Maybe. This way, we control the
 battlefield. Get some sleep.
 They'll be here early. The Spanish
 don't fight at night.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - JUNGLE - DAY

Hundreds of Spanish fighters plow their way through the thick jungle near the creek. The uniformed army regulars are armed with matchlock rifles and swords. The others are in plain clothes, some with guns, some with swords, bows, and axes.

Above them, positioned on the mountainside, are the maroons, lying in wait behind boulders, trees, and foliage. The maroons are similarly armed, except for their atlatsl.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - HILLSIDE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A long line of soldiers marches up the overgrown terrain. Suddenly, they are met with arrows, spears, rocks, and gunfire. The Captain Rodriguez commands his men.

 SPANISH CAPTAIN
 Charge! Charge!

As the soldiers charge through the hail of projectiles, many fall. The maroons continue the barrage until the Spanish close in on them.

From above, maroons roll huge boulders down the slope toward the soldiers. Some are able to dodge the stones, while others are unable.

Talking drums are heard and the Maroons retreat.

The maroons reach a ridgeline precipice and disappear.

As the soldiers struggle to reach the top, dozens of Aztecs fly over the top of the precipice and attack the soldiers in hand-to-hand combat.

Maroons swing down from the trees onto soldiers and cut their throats with garottes and knives. Other maroons, from strategic positions, fire on the armor-less mercenaries with muskets.

From atop a large boulder, Nzinga fires arrows in rapid succession.

Other maroons fire arrows and hail spears. Men fight with swords and axes. Some struggle to reload their guns and are cut down.

At first, the maroons have a clear advantage. But soon into the fray, the two sides' losses appear comparable.

Captain Rodriguez orders his men.

SPANISH CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Retreat! Retreat!

As the soldiers turn and retreat down the hillside, Aztecs and maroons attack from their flank. The Spanish fight their way past them and continue their retreat.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

Yanga, Matosa, Babaji, Koofoo, and Chicahua are assessing the day's battle by a campfire. Talking drums are heard in the background.

KOOFOO
Maybe they've had enough.

YANGA
They didn't come for one battle.
They came to kill us or enslave us.

MATOSA
They won't come up the same way.

YANGA
(nods)
Spread everyone out. Try to lure them to our locations. When we know their position, we'll move everyone there.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

The soldiers march up the mountainside. Talking drums are heard in the distance.

Suddenly, they are met with a hail of arrows, spears, rocks, and gunfire. The soldiers answer with rifles and arrows, but can't see the maroons clearly.

In spite of early losses, the soldiers continue up the mountainside. They fight their way up to an open, grassy field, and the maroons scatter into the jungle vegetation.

A SERGEANT looks around. No maroons are in sight.

SPANISH SERGEANT
(to Captain)
Where are they? Which way?

Captain Rodriguez has no immediate answer. His men take a break and let down their guard.

SPANISH CAPTAIN
Send out three teams. Find them.

As the Sergeant organizes reconnaissance teams, their question is answered. Yanga screams a battle cry and leads one hundred maroon fighters across the field toward the Spanish and the battle is on. More maroons and Aztecs join the fight from the sides.

The two opposing armies go at it in open combat. The Spanish become nearly surrounded. Yanga slays one Spaniard after another with his sword.

The Captain realizes the maroons' tactical advantage.

SPANISH CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Retreat! Retreat! Retreat!

The Spanish all turn and disappear into the jungle.

The maroons congregate around Yanga.

BABAJI
Do we go after them?

YANGA
No. Everyone! Back to the stockade!

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - STOCKADE - NIGHT

Armed Maroon sentries walk along the catwalk near the top of the stockade walls, peering into the dark jungle.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - STOCKADE - DAY

Yanga makes his way up a ladder to the catwalk.

The catwalk is lined with armed maroons and Aztecs, including Yanga, Matosa and Chicahua.

MATOSA

What are they waiting for?

YANGA

(pointing)

Look.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - OPEN MEADOW - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Three Spanish soldiers walk out into the open with a white flag. One of them approaches the wall.

WHITE FLAG SOLDIER

We accept your surrender!

He moves back to stand aside his two comrades.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - STOCKADE - DAY

Yanga and Matosa appear confused.

MATOSA

They accept our surrender. Is that what he said? Did we surrender?

YANGA

(mildly amused)

I don't think so. They don't want to fight. I'll answer.

Yanga takes a longbow and arrow from a maroon. He lights the tip on a nearby lamp and fires at the white flag. The arrow rips the flag from its pole and embeds itself into the ground, where the flag continues to burn.

MATOSA

Good shot.

(to his men)

Get ready!

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - OPEN MEADOW - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Soldiers charge the stockade walls, firing musket rounds at the maroons on the catwalk and arrows over the stockade walls. They are met with a hail of musket balls, arrows, spears, and rocks. The Spanish incur heavy initial losses.

A dozen soldiers charge the stockade walls carrying tall ladders for scaling the wall. As they reach the rampart, they fall through trap doors and into a deep pit with vertical, spikey wooden spears, where they are impaled.

A few stragglers try to position the ladders from the edge of the pit, but the ladders are not tall enough at this angle. Nzinga fires arrows at them in rapid succession and they are forced to retreat.

Soldiers try to use a battering ram to break open the main entrance to the stockade, but are killed with rocks, arrows and spears.

Ultimately, the soldiers give up and retreat behind the jungle vegetation.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - STOCKADE WALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga and Matosa wait patiently for a second wave attack.

MATOSA

Why don't they charge?

YANGA

They don't want to die. Order the men to fire at will.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - COUNCIL HOUSE - NIGHT

Yanga is meeting with his main commanders, including Chicahua and the interpreter.

YANGA

Now they'll try to wait us out.

BABAJI

We have good provisions.

KOOFUO

We've lost many men.

MATOSA

They have lost more.

YANGA
Every time they charge the walls,
we will kill more.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

Yanga and his top commanders rest outside of the council house. Babaji approaches them.

BABAJI
The stream. It stopped running.
It's drying up.

YANGA
They dammed it. How much storage?

BABAJI
Four barrels, I think.

Yanga nods.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - STOCKADE WALL - NIGHT

Yanga and Matosa gaze into the night.

MATOSA
Now what?

YANGA
We'll know soon. They can't sustain
a siege, not without food and
weapons.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - STOCKADE WALL - DAY

Babaji and other maroons keep vigil along the catwalk. Suddenly, twenty Spanish soldiers rush the stockade walls, carrying armfuls of dry brush. Other soldiers enter the field and fire arrows at the top of the stockade walls.

BABAJI
Attack! Attack!

The maroons fire guns and arrows at the soldiers. Some are hit, but they are able to position piles of dry brush at the base of the stockade wall. The soldiers retreat back behind the jungle foliage.

Yanga and Matosa climb up to the catwalk to survey the situation.

Flaming arrows steam out of the jungle and into the dry brush. The maroons watch as the walls ignite and begin to burn.

MATOSA

We should go out there and finish this.

Yanga thinks for a moment.

YANGA

No. Fall back to the upper stockade.

MATOSA

We can end this right now.

YANGA

No! Fall back.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAINSIDE - UPPER STOCKADE - DAY

Standing on the catwalk of the upper stockade wall, Yanga and his commanders peer out, looking for Spanish soldiers. Nzinga spots some of them.

NZINGA

(pointing)

There.

YANGA

If they try to come up here, it will be like target practice.

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Captain Rodriguez confers with a SCOUT and a SERGEANT.

SCOUT

There appears to be only one way up to that ledge. Only wide enough in some places for two or three men. Solid rock behind them.

SPANISH CAPTAIN

Bottleneck.

SERGEANT

If we can get them out in the open, we can defeat them easily.

SPANISH CAPTAIN

Easily? How many men have we lost?

SERGEANT

Over half, I think. Perhaps more.

SPANISH CAPTAIN

We didn't come prepared for them,
and we're not prepared for this.
We're going back to the Camino
Real. We'll send for reinforcements
and supplies.

SERGEANT

But sir.

SPANISH CAPTAIN

That's an order!

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAINSIDE - UPPER STOCKADE - DAY

Yanga, Matosa, Babaji, Koofoo, Nzinga and Chicahua are seated on stumps, eating and drinking. They hear a drum from a distance and listen.

YANGA

They're retreating. They're
leaving.

(to Babaji)

Go down there. Find out what's
going on.

EXT. UPPER STOCKADE - CATWALK - DAY - LATER

The sun is beginning to set, as Yanga and his commanders anxiously await more news. They hear a drum and listen carefully.

YANGA

They're camped, at the river. Many
wounded.

Yanga thinks for a moment.

YANGA (CONT'D)

(to Matosa)

Get everyone ready. We're going
down there.

Matosa signals his men and they scramble to spread the news.

YANGA (CONT'D)

Get torches. March everyone down there. We'll rest the men for a short time. Then attack. We're going to end this now. Right now.

EXT. CAMINO REAL - NIGHT

The remaining Spanish soldiers are bivouacked in an open field near the river. Campfires and moonlight provide the only light. Most are asleep. Some of those who are awake, appear seriously wounded.

EXT. CAMINO REAL - JUNGLE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Behind jungle foliage, the maroons and Aztecs await Yanga's signal, poised to strike. He nods to Matosa.

MATOSA

Alright, go. Go! Go! Now!

Maroons charge across the field to the Spanish encampment.

The soldiers are taken completely by surprise, and at first, are cut down quickly and easily. Soldiers in their underwear, without boots, grab their weapons and try their best to ward off the attack, but are overwhelmed.

Some of the soldiers begin to run. Then more run. Then more. Ultimately, the battle turns into a rout, with maroons chasing soldiers down the Camino Real in the moonlight.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

De Velasco is in his office pacing, a madness seething from his being. The two Aristocrats patiently and calmly observe him. General Lopez stands at attention.

GENERAL LOPEZ

They're heavily fortified, your excellency.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

(exasperated)

We'll call in more regulars from the West! We'll lay on a siege.

GENERAL LOPEZ

That would commit hundreds of men, perhaps for months.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
How many are left?

GENERAL LOPEZ
Only about twenty mercenaries.
They're leaving. The regulars from
Mexico City are also leaving. We're
left with only fifty men, and we
need them to guard the port.

ARISTOCRAT #1
This has gotten back to Madrid. The
crown wants this settled. Here's
what troubles us. We still have
tribes of naturals in the area,
many actually, who are considered
rogue. Who would love nothing more
than to see us all dead and buried.
Now, if these tribes were to rally
around a fighting force like these
maroons, they could seize Veracruz.

ARISTOCRAT #2
Let's send someone up there. Find
out what they want, apart from
their freedom.

GENERAL LOPEZ
Some Franciscans have been up
there.

ARISTOCRAT #2
Good, send them.

EXT. MAROON VILLAGE - YANGA'S HUT - DAY

The village is back to normal, with women and children moving
about. A large work crew labors to restore the stockade wall.

Yanga is seated with Matosa. They hear a drum and carefully
listen.

YANGA
Visitors. Priests.

INT. MAROON VILLAGE - COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY - LATER

The maroon commanders, along with Nzinga and Tayanna, have
convened to query the Franciscan priests.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
 You have stated in the past that
 you would like to live in peace,
 have your own community.

YANGA
 We have a community. What we don't
 have is peace.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
 What do you want for your people?

YANGA
 Better land. There is good farmland
 between the Rio Blanco and the
 Ribadeneira grant. No one uses it.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2
 But the Camino Real passes through
 that land. That would make it easy
 for you to raid caravans. The Crown
 may not agree to that.

YANGA
 We raid caravans because we need
 things. Now, we have no way to
 trade. Down there, we could trade.
 We would not need to attack
 caravans.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
 Alright, what else?

YANGA
 All maroons will be granted
 amnesty. Slavery will be forbidden
 on our land. And we don't want the
 Spanish coming into our community.
 Only people who we agree to allow
 in once a week, and only to trade.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
 What else?

YANGA
 My family will be designated as
 governors. After me, my son
 Gaspar will inherit my authority.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

The two Aristocrats are seated around a large table with the
 Viceroy and two Franciscan priests who take notes.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 Alright, draw up an agreement of
 armistice. Include these terms.
 They will present themselves with
 their arms every time His Majesty
 has need of them to defend the
 land. They will pay an annual
 tribute to the crown. After
 signing, all runaways that reach
 them will be returned to their
 owners.

ARISTOCRAT #1
 And for each returned slave, the
 maroons will be paid twelve pesos.

ARISTOCRAT #2
 If they are not returned, the
 maroons must compensate their
 owners with fair market value.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 (to the priests)
 Now, we need to meet privately.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1
 Of course your excellency.

The priests gather their things and leave.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
 (to the Aristocrats)
 We'll let them have their town. Out
 in the open. Close by. No jungle to
 hide behind.

He pulls out a letter and places it on the table. There is a
 devious tone to his voice and body language.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO (CONT'D)
 I've prepared a letter to the
 crown. It states that we urgently
 need three hundred regular troops
 to ensure the security of Veracruz.
 I need both of you to sign along
 with General Lopez and myself.

They nod affirmatively and Aristocrat #1 reaches for the
 quill pen.

INT. MAROON VILLAGE - COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The maroon leadership, along with Nzinga, Chicahua and Tayanna, has convened to discuss terms with the priests. Tayanna interprets quietly for Chicahua.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

The process will take time. Years.
It has to be approved by the crown.
And then a formal charter will be
written.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2

But once we receive approval from
His Majesty, you could move, in a
few months. The rest is just
administrative.

YANGA

(to Koofoo)
Take them outside.

Koofoo escorts the priests out of the council house.

MATOSA

We can't agree to this. It's a
trap. You're not going to return
slaves.

YANGA

No. Consider this from their point
of view. Down there, it will be
easy for slaves to find us.

NZINGA

It will encourage them to run.

YANGA

(nods)
We can't have them in the new
village. When they appear, they
will have to live up here. If the
Spanish ask, we don't know.

MATOSA

I say we stay here, at least for
now.

YANGA

We've outgrown the mountain. Even
if we wait to act, the Spanish will
never agree without this provision.

(to Tayanna)

(MORE)

YANGA (CONT'D)

Ask Chicahua about his people. Do they want to move?

Tayanna and Chicahua speak briefly in their native tongue.

TAYANNA

His people will stay on the mountain. Orizaba is their ancestral home. And they don't trust the Spanish.

MATOSA

That will reduce the army to a hundred men. And we will have no way to build it back up.

They regard each other as they ponder their decision.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. ORIZABA MOUNTAIN - JUNGLE TRAIL - DAY

As Nzinga narrates, a series of shots shows Yanga's maroon community moving their belongings from the mountain onto their new land next to the Rio Blanco.

SUPER: SIX MONTHS LATER

- A long line of people and animals, all laden with goods, plods its way through the jungle terrain.

NZINGA (V.O.)

Yanga let everyone voice their opinions. The maroons were tired of living on the mountain, constantly worried about the Spanish. And Yanga was looking to the future. He wanted Gasper to live the life of a free man. So, he signed the armistice and the whole community moved. Hundreds of people, and I don't know how many animals.

EXT. NEW MAROON VILLAGE - DAY

As Nzinga narrates, a series of shots shows everyday life in the new village.

SUPER: YANGA, NEW SPAIN

- Maroons plant banana trees.
- Women carry water.
- Maroons build new buildings.
- Women sew garments and turn clay on a wheel.
- Maroon field workers prepare the ground for crops.
- Women feed a group of tired workers.

NZINGA (V.O.)

We couldn't move the banana trees but they got new ones in the ground right away. Everyone went to work, building everything and getting crops in the ground. The army was suspended for a year. Some of the women began producing clothing and pottery to trade. When the caravans came through, we waved at them and they waved back. The maroons were finally accepted as free people. The Spanish wanted to keep an eye on us, so they set up their own town a few miles away. Cordoba. At first, everything went well.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

The Viceroy is meeting with Captain Rodriguez and General Lopez. The two Aristocrats sit off to the side and observe.

GENERAL LOPEZ

We have good reconnaissance. I believe we can capture her without a major battle. Their men are busy in the fields. But we'll be prepared.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

How many men?

GENERAL LOPEZ

One hundred. Thirty cavalry and seventy infantry.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

Good.

(to Aristocrats)

We'll give her a trial, just to have it in the official record.

EXT. RIO BLANCO - RIVERBANK - DAY

Nzinga is with a small group of women, including Tayanna, washing out clothing. Koofoo is nearby, lounging on a rock. He has a rifle and sword nearby.

NZINGA
(to Koofoo)
You're lazy.

KOOFoo
I'm not lazy. I'm working.

NZINGA
Working? You call that work?

KOOFoo
Yes, I'm working.

NZINGA
And just what work are you doing?

KOOFoo
I'm looking at you.

NZINGA
And that's work. Looking at me? You should beat this cloth and I'll look at you.

KOOFoo
I don't know. This is very difficult work.

NZINGA
(indignant)
Looking at me...is difficult?

Koofoo sports a wide grin.

Suddenly, out of the foliage near the riverbank, a dozen spanish soldiers charge Nzinga. She is taken by surprise with no chance to defend herself. Tayanna picks up a rock and throws it, hitting a soldier in the head. Two soldiers grab her.

The other women scream and run.

Koofoo grabs the rifle, aims and fires, killing one of the soldiers. He grabs his sword and charges but takes an arrow to the chest.

The soldiers haul Nzinga and Tayanna off.

EXT. NEW MAROON VILLAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Matosa and Babaji run up to Yanga's hut. Yanga is holding a rifle. He hands a sword to Matosa and Babaji grabs a nearby spear.

YANGA

It came from the river.

The three men run toward the river.

On the way to the riverbank, they pass other MAROON WOMEN running away.

MAROON WOMAN

They took them!

The three men continue running.

EXT. RIO BLANCO - RIVERBANK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga and Babaji kneel over Koofoo's body.

YANGA

(to Matosa)

He's dead.

MATOSA

Come on.

The three men run back toward the village.

EXT. NEW MAROON VILLAGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga, Matosa, and Babaji mount horses. Other maroons hand them weapons. They gallop off.

EXT. CAMINO REAL - DAY

The line of Spanish soldiers is moving along the roadway with the cavalry in the rear.

Yanga, Matosa and Babaji catch up to the soldiers. The soldiers see them approaching. Thirty cavalymen turn their horses and point their rifles in the direction of Yanga.

Yanga gallops to within a hundred yards and pulls his horse up. The three men calculate their odds.

YANGA

There's no point. Nothing the three
of us can do.

MATOSA

Chicahua was right.

EXT. VERACRUZ - MILITARY COMPOUND - DAY

A young soldier carries a bowl of fruit in his hands as he walks toward a small stone building with barred windows and a partially barred door, situated in the midst of the Spanish Military Headquarters with soldiers milling about.

He shoves the bowl underneath the door, peers inside and walks off.

INT. STONE HOLDING CELL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Tayanna is curled up in a fetal position against the wall. Nzinga, who is lying on a stone slab, sees the bowl. She stands and goes to pick it up. Her ankle is in a leg iron attached to a chain that is secured against the wall.

EXT. NEW MAROON VILLAGE - DAY

Yanga, Matosa and Babaji are seated in front of Yanga's hut speaking to the interpreter, who is dressed like a Spaniard. Yewande tends three-year-old Gasper off to the side.

YANGA

Find out exactly where they are.
And how many soldiers are guarding
them. Draw a map of the area.

EXT. VERACRUZ VILLAGE - DAY

The interpreter loiters in a busy area of open-air shopkeepers and shoppers. He approaches an Aztec merchant and speaks to him privately. He points in one direction and then in another direction. The interpreter pulls out a pen and piece of parchment and begins writing.

EXT. VERACRUZ VILLAGE - HILLTOP - DAY - LATER

The Aztec merchant is standing with the interpreter. He points to the military compound a short distance away. The interpreter writes down more notes.

EXT. CATHOLIC MISSION - DAY - LATER

The interpreter and the Aztec merchant enter the church.

INT. CATHOLIC MISSION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The interpreter and Aztec merchant are meeting with the two priests who brokered the armistice.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

She has been charged with killing the Viceroy's daughter. There is a trial scheduled, but there is little hope. They will surely hang both of them.

INTERPRETER

I was there. It was self-defense. The Spanish woman had a musket. And the other woman is completely innocent.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2

(shaking his head)

The trial is only a formality.

INT. OFFICE OF THE VICEROY - DAY

The Viceroy is seated at his desk. General Lopez enters and gives a deferential head nod.

GENERAL LOPEZ

Your excellency.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

Yes General. They said you had an idea.

GENERAL LOPEZ

Yes. You see, these women, they are both important to these maroons, they are important to Yanga.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO

And...

GENERAL LOPEZ

Well, I was thinking, they pose no real threat to the crown, from a security or military standpoint.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
She murdered my daughter!

GENERAL LOPEZ
Yes, your excellency, and everyone sympathizes deeply with your loss. Yanga, on the other hand, does pose a threat. He could organize another army.

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
Which is against the terms of the armistice.

GENERAL LOPEZ
Yes, but given the current circumstances...

VICEROY LUIS DE VELASCO
So what is your idea?

EXT. AZTEC VILLAGE - NIGHT

Yanga, Matosa, Babaji and the interpreter are seated around a campfire with Chicahua and six of his warriors.

YANGA
(to the interpreter)
Tell him the only way to free them is to take Veracruz. We want to organize all of the tribes in the area into one large army.

The interpreter explains this to Chicahua and Chicahua gives him a lengthy reply.

INTERPRETER
(to Yanga)
They only have forty men and the Spanish have reinforced their army in Veracruz. If we try to assemble a larger army of Aztecs, it will take too long and the women will both be dead. He doesn't think they would fight anyway, just to free the women. If you take Veracruz, the Spanish will just take it back. It's too important to them.

Yanga makes eye contact with Matosa and Babaji. They know he's right.

EXT. NEW MAROON VILLAGE - DAY

Yanga, Babaji and Matosa trot back into the village and see a horse and wagon, with a young Catholic novice standing next to it.

They walk to Yanga's hut to find the Franciscan Priests seated, eating bread and drinking tea provided by Yewande.

YANGA

Welcome.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

Thank you. Your people have been most hospitable.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2

We have spoken with the Viceroy. He summoned us.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

Can we speak somewhere, privately?

INT. NEW MAROON VILLAGE - LARGE HUT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Yanga meets privately with the two priests.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

The women have been condemned to death. Next week, there will be a trial. And they will be hung the following day.

YANGA

They are both innocent. The Spanish woman had a rifle pointed at me. And Tayanna is completely innocent!

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

Apparently, the second woman, Tayanna, struck a soldier with a rock.

YANGA

(astonished)

What?!

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2

The Viceroy has proposed an alternative solution to this dilemma.

The two priests stall, hoping the other one will speak first.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

The Viceroy's proposal would result in both women being set free. Their lives would be spared.

Yanga is skeptical.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #2

However, someone must pay for these crimes.

FRANCISCAN PRIEST #1

You must take their place on the gallows.

There is a long silence while Yanga processes the proposal.

YANGA

We will make accommodations for you for the night. I will speak to you again in the morning.

EXT. RIO BLANCO - RIVERBANK - DAY - LATER

Yanga is sitting at the spot where the two women were taken, deep in thought. He tosses pebbles into the river, then hangs his head.

EXT. NEW MAROON VILLAGE - NIGHT

Yanga is seated near a campfire with Matosa and Babaji.

YANGA

The Viceroy has made an offer. He will release Tayanna and Nzinga if I surrender myself in their place.

He pauses for a moment to allow both men to process the idea.

YANGA (CONT'D)

I'm going to agree.

MATOSA

Yanga, you can't. You're the leader of this community, the leader of the army. There are hundreds of people here to need you, who depend on you. You can't do this.

YANGA

(to Matosa)

You are the leader of the army.

(MORE)

YANGA (CONT'D)

And you will lead this community when I'm gone. Until Gasper is old enough to take responsibility. I want you to prepare him for his role.

BABAJI

Yanga, are you sure? He's right. They are two lives, two important, precious lives, but there are hundreds here who rely on you.

MATOSA

Yanga, don't do this.

YANGA

I've made my decision.

There is a prolonged silence while they process.

YANGA (CONT'D)

There will be conditions. Nzinga will be returned to Africa, to Gabon.

(to Babaji)

And you will be returned with her. I want the two of you to remove her brother from power. My father and my brother will help. I will not surrender until I see that both of you have been placed on that ship.

EXT. VERACRUZ PORT - DAY

Yanga, surrounded by one hundred heavily-armed maroons, march through the port and up to the dock, near where the Spanish ship is moored. The maroons look to the stern of the ship and see Nzinga and Babaji.

A gallows has been constructed on the dock.

Sailors on the dock unwrap the heavy lines and throw them up to sailors on deck. The ship drifts away from the dock.

The maroons create a space for Yanga to walk through them and into the custody of awaiting soldiers. They escort him up to the gallows.

Yanga narrates.

YANGA (V.O.)

We are all prisoners of the same fate. No one escapes death.

(MORE)

YANGA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I chose the time of my death.
Gasper will have a mother to raise
him. He will become a great leader.
Nzinga will reclaim her rightful
place as queen. I am at peace.

SOUND: DRUMMING BEGINS QUIETLY AND BUILDS TO MEZZO FORTE.

EXT. SPANISH SHIP - DAY

From the stern of the ship, Babaji and Nzinga watch as Yanga is positioned at the noose. Then the hangman places the noose around his neck and secures it.

Nzinga and Babaji break out in tears. Nzinga collapses in Babaji's arms. She can't look. Babaji gazes out toward the dock. They hear the terrified screams and gasps from the maroon onlookers. Babaji embraces Nzinga tightly.

As Nzinga narrates, the drumming slowly fades.

NZINGA (V.O.)
Yanga lives. He lives everywhere. I
saw him in my mind and my heart
every day for the rest of my life.
Yanga lives in the heart of every
African. He lives in the beat of
every drum. Never for a moment will
I ever forget him.

Drumming and scene fade to darkened silence.

FADE OUT.