

DAWN

by

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DAWN -- EPISODE 1

ACT ONE

EXT. IDYLIC LANDSCAPE - DAWN

A sun rises over a vast expanse, untouched by modern man. Not a house, telephone pole, road, or building in view.

Unending FORESTS, interspersed with WIDE PLAINS of grass, lie under the embrace of SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAINS.

The panorama is breathtakingly green, pure, verdant.

There is a stillness to this world, a profound silence. The only motion is the orange glow of sunlight creeping over the immense and open grassland; the only sounds the whisper of a gentle and temperate breeze across the rolling hills.

EXT. WATERFALL - DAWN

An unchecked BLAST OF WATER thunders over the vista, roaring down onto craggy rocks, a mist kicked up by the powerful natural formation blinding us as we move to --

COILED RIBBONS of RIVERS --

DEEP LAKES, dotting the horizon --

MOUNTAINS -- craggy and misshapen, as if thrust up from the center of the earth only moments before --

TANGLED FOREST --

-- not in neat rows, but designed by primordial Nature herself. Dense, sunlight dying within the tangled canopy.

** stock footage of animals? **

EXT. ON THE ENDLESS VISTA - DAWN

THE RISEN SUN -- bathes the landscape in a fiery glow.

PULLING BACK - to take in this world as a whole.

It is a perfect place. A world that exists no longer, but once was. This Eden-like idyll is shattered by --

-- Groups of HUMAN FEET, in crude animal-hide boots, running past our vision.

EXT. ANTOHER PART OF THE LANDSCAPE - DAWN

SIX FIGURES -- blurred in motion as they swiftly move, their features hard to make out from here --

-- CHARGE through undergrowth of a large forested landscape.

WE DON'T SEE THEM FULLY YET. Bathed in shadow, only silhouettes clear to us, harsh morning glare blinding us. But we can see that --

-- EACH MAN carries a heavy, black-tipped SPEAR.

THE WEAPONS -- are taller than the men themselves, weighing twenty pounds or more. The men have used fire to blacken and strengthen the tips - sharp, effective.

Wherever these men are going, they are deadly serious, running without pause, without fatigue.

WE WATCH THEIR SILHOUETTES AGAINST the morning sun -- as they move with warrior-grace, at one with their surroundings, nearly balletic in their dance with the woods.

THE FIGURES disappear, almost soundlessly, into the TREELINE.

EXT. OUT OF THE FOREST - MORNING

MILES LATER -- the group of MEN come out of the trees and run single-file across the grasslands.

EXT. HUNTING GROUNDS - DAY

Hours have passed. The men have been hunting, on the trail of game. They are intent, focused. Their quarry is nearby.

The LEADER stops without a sound.

THE OTHER HUNTERS -- halt in formation, and LISTEN.

And as we see them clearly now, we realize they are --

-- NEANDERTHALS. Stout, broad shoulders, slightly protruding brow, wide jaw. Brawny and thickly muscled.

But as we take in their eyes, it's clear they are also human. Close to us.

Moving across their faces, we glimpse:

LAKAN - the grizzled clan leader.

ZAAD - Lakan's brother of the same mother.

KAMAK - Brutal and experienced, eldest of the next generation.

MOT - His younger brother -- compassionate, sensitive eyes.

And THREE OTHER HUNTERS: VARG, LACH, and SCARRED FACE.

[Note: We've given these characters names so the reader can follow who is who, but the Neanderthals do not name themselves. They identify each other by terms such as "hunter-brother"; "hunter-father", etc. And because they are polygamous, the children know who their mothers are, but not their fathers. The father-elders treat all children like their own and the children treat all elder men like their fathers. When they speak, the dialogue will appear in subtitles.]

Mot starts to speak when Lakan swiftly silences him.

A pregnant, eerie, silent beat before --

A NOISE -- breaks the cold morning stillness, echoing in the distance...

It is a primordial sound, something our modern ears have never heard before...

It is a ROAR.

And one these Hunters have heard many times.

The Roar of a creature we could not fathom.

The ROAR echoes again across the landscape...

EXT. FROM HIGH ABOVE - DAY

What looks like a landscape painting of nearly utopian scope and breadth becomes all too real as we come upon --

THE MEN -- using a natural rock formation and scattered trees to run across the open valley floor, on the trail of an IMMENSE, impossible creature which has not yet spotted them.

Even from our vantage point high above, we can see the size of the beast that the men now approach.

EXT. THE HUNTING GROUNDS - DAY

The earth TREMBLES beneath the creature's thundering gait. We finally see what it is --

...a MAMMOTH...

...Coming at us in all its glory.

NINE TONS of power, an enormous head with two wicked, curved ivory tusks. The ends are spear-tip sharp. Deadly.

Jaw-dropping in its majesty and might, the Mammoth is the largest land mammal in existence at this time.

EXT. HUNTING GROUNDS - DAY

THE HUNTERS -- are cautious. They close in from --

-- behind, using rock formations and trees as cover.

THE HUNTERS -- look small and insignificant compared to their prey.

THE MEN -- make hand motions to one another as --

THE BEAST thunders forward.

As we get a closer look, we see that the Mammoth is battle-scarred and past its prime. But majestic nonetheless. Somehow separated from its herd, or perhaps the last of its herd, the last of its kind.

THE ATTACK -- begins.

THREE OF THE HUNTERS -- led by Kamak, charge through the FOREST at the Mammoth.

FOUR MORE MEN -- Lakan's group -- break from the treeline, shouting.

The MAMMOTH reacts, whirling at the sound of this new and unfamiliar threat.

Zaad, brother of clan leader Lakan, is flinty-eyed, fearless. He runs alongside Lakan, spear raised, voice howling.

Lakan, Zaad and Mot drive the mammoth into a confused, chaotic state, and toward --

KAMAK'S GROUP -- spears extended as they charge --

-- the MAMMOTH.

MOVING - with Kamak, Varg, Lach and Scar-Face, racing across the grassland, muscle and sinew rippling, spears gripped in tight grasps, ready to plunge into their target, when --

The mammoth turns toward them.

KAMAK'S GROUP STOPS SHORT -- their surprise attack foiled.

THE MAMMOTH - drops its head and CHARGES toward the hunters. Comes to a stop, a false charge.

It BELLOWS at Kamak and his group.

But they are wild with hunger. Determined. How long since they ate? What happens if they don't get a kill?

Flanking the beast, SCAR FACE creeps forward slowly. Kamak GRUNTS for him to stand still, not to risk it. But Scar-Face lunges forward, heedless.

The Mammoth WHIRLS and --

-- Massive ivory tusks whistle as the mammoth shakes its gargantuan head and --

-- THROWS SCARRED FACE through the air.

THE HUNTER -- lands in a heap - limbs broken.

LAKAN seizes the moment, taking advantage of the distraction and --

-- CHARGES, plunging his spear into the side of the MAMMOTH.

It CRIES OUT, trunk raised, howling.

KAMAK -- attending to his wounded friend, LOOKS up to see --

ZAAD -- going for the rib-cage, stabbing again and again --

-- Blood spraying on his cheek.

But these wounds only infuriate the MAMMOTH, who --

-- charges toward Lakan's group and, with one mighty shrug of its head and tusks --

-- SCATTERS them, tossing them aside like rag dolls.

KAMAK yells out to his fellow warriors as --

LAKAN -- lands hard with a snap of BONE. His hand mangled.

ZAAD and MOT scramble to their feet, barely avoiding being STOMPED to death by the massive FOOTPADS of the furious beast.

Kamak runs toward the Beast, prepared to somehow save his uncle and brother when --

-- the MAMMOTH turns and lumbers away.

Kamak lands next to his father. They both watch the Beast go before --

Lakan turns, surveying his wounded and decimated group.

He realizes this battle is futile.

FROM THE TREELINE -

Alive, but demoralized, the hunters watch their quarry disappear across the HORIZON.

There will be no food.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - LATER

The Hunters walk past our vision, carrying wounded Scarred Face with them.

We are watching them now from an UNKNOWN VANTAGE POINT.

AS THEY MOVE OFF --

-- we REVERSE to find --

-- a CREATURE watching them.

A slender, lithe GIRL. No more than 16.

The Girl's eyes are wide, intelligent, cautious, and blue.

She watches the men walk past. Although she dresses not dissimilarly - animal skins and boots -- she is not like these men at all.

More advanced, she wears decorative face paint; jewelry-like adornments are on her arms and neck. Her hair is pulled back from her eyes, held in place with crude rope made from animal sinew. She is beautiful with darker skin. Angular where Lakan and his kind are brutally-formed.

She's not them at all, not Neanderthal...

...She is HUMAN.

She is us. So long ago. Part of the first wave of humankind that made their way out of Africa and spread across Europe.

In the wonder of the GIRL'S eyes, we realize that she has never seen creatures like this herself -- so like her, yet profoundly different.

THE GIRL -- recedes into the trees, unseen by the Neanderthal clan, as she silently slips away.

The human girl and the band of Neanderthal hunters leave the forest, heading in opposite directions.

The landscape --

-- is silent again.

ON THE SUN, so intense and near to us over the empty horizon that the edges seem to ripple with fire.

A WORD APPEARS over the yellow-orange sun:

DAWN

TITLE SEQUENCE -

THE HUMAN EVOLUTIONARY TREE - is shown growing first from its very roots, branches straining upward, revealing nascent species of --

-- MANKIND, appearing and then dying out, new branches forming and winnowing away.

This colorful and quickly moving history lesson is shown over primitive MAPS of AFRICA, ASIA, and EUROPE -- the evolution of the various species of man superimposed over the terrain where they lived, and died out...

We quickly go from the faces of --

Australopithecus afarensis, 2.9 million years ago --

Homo ergaster, 1.4 million years ago --

-- one species after another growing, flourishing, and inevitably becoming extinct.

FACES of our ancestors flash faster now, to Homo habilis; Homo erectus; the eons moving swiftly by, leading us to --

Homo heidelbergensis. A distant ancestor that is starting to very much like modern man. Like us. So close...

We stay on heidelbergensis, as if this branch might remain on Earth and flourish, but this limb too -- dies out...

THEN -- we follow the longest, hardest branch of the human evolutionary tree - the Neanderthals. In existence for over 100,000 years, flourishing, thriving.

THE NEANDERTHAL BRANCH -- is soon joined by another tentative limb on the tree -- Homo sapiens. Modern mankind.

As the credit sequence comes to a close, Homo sapiens and Neanderthals are the final two surviving branches left on this mighty tree, and we are now in --

A MAP OF EUROPE -- 24,000 years ago.

We CLOSE IN -- on an area near Southern Spain.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LUSH VALLEY, 24,000 YEARS AGO - DAWN

A PAIR OF EYES - brown, inquisitive, burning with curiosity and sensitivity.

We know instantly that these eyes are not like those of the other hunters we saw before. These eyes belong to a Neanderthal boy, maybe 14 or 15 years old. We will come to know him and he will come to know himself as --

-- RAM.

He steps out of the forest, carefully, his feet making as little noise as possible. His silence is more imitation of the hunters he's watched, idolized, and less innate.

Ram's quick gaze falls over --

-- A DYING CAMPFIRE, just embers now.

Evidence of his people, but where are they?

And then he sees --

-- SCARRED HUNTER, lying a few feet from the FIRE.

Ram creeps forward to see the man --

-- Scarred Hunter's vacant eyes stare back at him.

He's dead.

Ram takes him in for a long moment and then --

A CRACKLING behind him.

Ram turns but before he can react, he is --

-- ROUGHLY THROWN to the GROUND.

Ram looks up to see --

-- LAKAN hovering over him. They speak in a primitive language. (*We read subtitles.*)

LAKAN
Back to cave!

RAM
(stammering)
I saw a deer. By water. It must
come again there.

LAKAN
Where? What water?

RAM
Near tree of wolves. I show you.

LAKAN
We can find. Back to cave.

Lakan leads the others away, but Ram RISES --

RAM
Cave has no food. You need all
spears!

Lakan turns, takes in his hunter-son.

Mot, Ram's half-brother, steps forward.

MOT
Hunter-father, he is ready.

Ram's eyes gleam.

Lakan considers. Looks at --

-- Zaad, who grunts -- everyone has their time.

Lakan moves to Scarred Hunter. Takes off the dead man's FUR,
grabs his SPEAR --

-- crosses to Ram and --

-- THRUSTS them into the young boy's CHEST.

LAKAN
(to Mot)
He hunts with you.

Kamak doesn't like it. But follows Lakan and Zaad toward the
hunt, giving Mot a dirty look as he goes.

Ram looks at Mot, excited.

Mot glowers at him -- don't mess up.

As they follow their father toward the CREEK --

Ram passes SCARRED HUNTER, takes a backward glance at the dead man.

And keeps moving --

EXT. CREEK - DAY

As Lakan, Zaad and Kamak stride on a LARGE ROCK in the CANYON of the CREEK BED, looking for the deer --

-- Varg and Lach creep along the opposite RIDGE, while --

Ram and Mot walk through the SHALLOW CREEK. Up to their WAIST in water.

They emerge at the CREEK BED.

Mot looks around, frustrated.

Ram looks on the ground for track marks. Sees something. Makes a sound with his mouth.

Mot joins him. Ram shows what he's looking at:

FOOTPRINTS in the mud in the creek bed.

HUMANOID footprints.

Ram stands, puts his own foot next to the print. His foot is MUCH BIGGER, and a different shape. This print is smaller, more streamlined.

Mot bends, runs his fingertips over the footprints.

Smells his fingers.

RAM
Not animal.
(realizing)
There are others.

This idea disturbs Mot intensely. Not because it means danger but because it completely upends his understanding of his world. Because as far as he knows, as far as those in his clan believe...

MOT
No. There are no others.

Mot shakes off any doubt he has about what he believes to be the truth and walks away, disappearing into the WOODS.

But Ram is transfixed on the FOOTPRINT.

Could it be...? Could there be others...?

He looks around, wide-eyed --

-- wondering if the creature that made it is close by...

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Ram and Mot have separated now. Ram wields his club, moving silently through the WOODS.

Anxiously looking around for the deer. And for Mot.

He's starting to panic. Not supposed to be separated from his hunting partner.

EXT. WOODS NEAR STREAM - DAY - SAME

Mot creeps around -- near a running STREAM. Looking for the Deer. On guard.

He GRABS a CRICKET from a LEAF --

-- CRUNCHES it in his mouth.

Keeps moving.

Thinks he hears motion up ahead.

Creeps forward. Tense.

Glimpses...

...a MASSIVE ELK -- seven feet in height, its antlers ten feet from tip to tip -- walking through the THICKET. Unaware it's being hunted.

Mot looks back, wondering if Ram is anywhere nearby.

Should he wait? Find him?

There's no time.

Everyone is starving. He has to act quickly.

MOT -- silently heads toward the THICKET.

HIS FEET - are silent. He walks with exquisite care, making no sound.

THE THICKET -- is close.

HIS HANDS -- grip his weapon. Ready.

But when he gets there --

-- the ELK is gone.

Mot -- stares into the empty clearing where the animal was just moments ago. Confused, he listens.

Hears nothing.

ABRUPTLY - there is an EXPLOSION OF MOTION from another direction.

Mot wheels to see --

THE ELK -- racing out of the woods, hooves thundering, lowering its head and charging forward with explosive power --

MOT raises his spear, but the weapon is large, unwieldy, heavy, and --

A blur of hooves, and the massive, sharp, and deadly antlers -
- COME RIGHT AT US.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Ram hears a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM.

Terrified, but worried for his brother, he races toward the sound...

EXT. RIVER BED - DAY

LAKAN AND THE OTHERS - hear the SCREAM echoing through the VALLEY.

Lakan makes an urgent sound in the back of his throat, signaling the others.

KAMAK AND ZAAD - whirl.

THE HUNTING PARTY -- turns and follows Lakan, who leads the way toward the SOUND.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Ram CHARGES through the WOODS, to find --

-- Mot, writhing in agony -- on the earth, bleeding profusely from his chest, stomach and neck.

Ram drops his SPEAR, rushes to his brother.

Cradles his brother's head in his lap.

A few horrible gasping BREATHS from Mot.

And then --

-- FOOTSTEPS in the FOREST draw Ram's attention to --

-- Lakan, Kamak and Zaad BURSTING INTO THE CLEARING.

LAKAN -- stops, staring at the grim tableau before him. His eyes go from Mot to Ram.

RAM -- sees Lakan's withering gaze. He manages to say:

RAM
It was his weapon.

Lakan looks down at the CLUB -- snapped in two pieces.

LAKAN
Where is deer now?

RAM
I do not know.
(gesturing to another
area)
I was there.

Lakan's eyes pierce his son -- the blame apparent.

Then shoots a look at Kamak and Zaad -- gestures with his head. Go hunt.

Kamak and Zaad move away quickly, spears at the ready.

Lakan leans over Mot, inspects his wounds.

BLOOD pulses out of Mot's CHEST.

Mot tries to speak but --

-- BLOOD spills over his LIPS.

A flicker of grief passes over Lakan as he realizes it's no use. The wounds are fatal.

But there is no time for mourning.

He lets Mot's hand fall from his own.

Lakan grabs the pieces of Mot's broken SPEAR and stands.

Mot -- wheezes for each breath. Knows death approaches.

Ram realizes Lakan is walking away.

RAM (CONT'D)
We cannot leave him!

LAKAN
We hunt.

Lakan grabs Ram hard by the FUR and --

-- YANKS him up.

Ram has no choice but to follow.

He looks back at his brother, still wheezing and gasping.

He will be left to die cold and alone and without ceremony.

This is the Neanderthal way. And all that Ram knows. But he cannot shake an instinct that this is wrong.

EXT. THE NEANDERTHAL CAVE - DUSK

DUSK is turning to inky NIGHT.

The WOMEN feed the CHILDREN a paltry MEAL of BERRIES, LEAVES and SMALL INSECTS, still alive.

PETA -- an ancient woman, hair gray, face lined -- looks up to see --

SIX APPARITIONS, appearing out of the gloaming.

IT IS -- the hunters returning from the days away from the cave.

The entire Neanderthal tribe is alerted as the men come forward.

Woman, children and elders eagerly await the food that the men are bringing home, but --

-- THE WOMEN are able to see the truth immediately. They see it in their men's eyes. There is no surplus of food. No great kill. No feast. No food to store under the earth for later.

THE WOMEN - see scant rabbit carcasses on the hunter's shoulders. A grim bounty indeed.

LAKAN -- is met by one of the women, GAMLA.

She sees the look on Lakan's face. Her eyes scan the hunters, seeing --

-- KAMAK and RAM. Her mouth and eyes betray her emotion.

GAMLA

Where is other hunter-son?

Lakan's eyes say it all -- gone.

Ram looks down in shame.

Gamla reads in his expression that somehow it was his fault.

She turns from her youngest son.

Walks away to be with her own grief in the expansive Neanderthal cave. Finds a dark corner and sits on her haunches, eyes distant.

Ram looks around at the desolate, starving eyes of his brethren and knows he has failed his mother, his fathers, his brother, and the tribe.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**EXT. THE NEANDERTHAL CAVE - EVENING**

THE TRIBE -- eat the scant amount of food that comes off the rabbits.

THIRTY-FIVE hungry mouths bite and chew the blackened, fire-cooked meat. It is not nearly enough for the tribe.

THE CHILDREN - are fed after the hunters. From infants to toddlers to pre-teenaged Neanderthal boys and girls, they eat in silence.

There are a few shreds of meat remaining.

Last in line to eat -- THE WOMEN.

After they consume the tiny bits of meat, the women try to sustain themselves on plants, tubers, nuts, grasses, along with berries, but this will never be enough.

LATER - the bones, stripped of meat and drained of marrow, are strewn around the fire. The Neanderthals do not speak to one another. A heavy silence hangs over the tribe.

Peta cares for the youngest ones with a wise gaze. Then her eyes find her son, the leader, Lakan.

LAKAN sees her. They both know what must be done.

LAKAN

We must leave.

His words hit the tribe like a stone to the head.

ELDER HUNTER

We live here -- always.

LAKAN

Animals do not cross river -- for many moons.

ZAAD

They must.

LAKAN

(stronger)

They do not. And snow comes.
Even wolves are hungry.

GAMLA

Go where?

Lakan motions to the forboding mountains in the distance, illuminated by MOONLIGHT.

LAKAN

Over.

This thought hits the tribe even harder than Lakan's announcement of impending exodus. Over the mountains?

TRIBE MEMBER

No man climbs.

LAKAN

We must.

KAMAK -- Grips his spear and keeps his eyes on the mountains to the north.

NATA, her belly very swollen with a child, speaks in a soft voice:

NATA

I cannot.

Ram watches her eyes fall to the ground, resigned. It is the brutal, cold way of life, and she knows the rules.

LAKAN

No.

ZAAD looks at his mother Peta, knowing that she, too, could never make that journey.

PETA

Tribe must live, son.

RAM -- turns back to the cave.

RAM

No.

Everyone turns to Ram.

RAM (CONT'D)

Deer still lives. It is meat for many moons.

LAKAN

Deer is gone.

RAM

I can find it again.

All eyes are upon him. His bravado.

LAKAN

One deer?

RAM

We eat, we wait for more to cross
river. Wait for the great crossing
of the animals.

LAKAN

And if the great crossing does not
come?

The tribe thinks about this. The great crossing always comes.
Every year. But -- what if it doesn't? The prospect is
obviously grim. It means starvation.

RAM

We wait. To see if they come.

They consider Ram's logic. The tribe watches Lakan, waiting
for his decision. Before he can make it, Kamak speaks up:

KAMAK

Stay and hunt. I go with two
hunters. Over hills.

Lakan looks at Kamak.

Then his eyes go to his brother, Zaad, then to his mother,
Peta.

Ram waits anxiously for Lakan's answer and --

-- Lakan exhales sharply, relenting, moves away.

LAKAN

(to Kamak)
Go over hills.

Lakan growls over his shoulder, his eyes finding Ram:

LAKAN (CONT'D)

Sun comes again, we hunt deer.

As Lakan moves toward the CAVE --

Kamak eyes Ram.

A glimmer of respect from older brother to younger.

And as Kamak prepares himself for tomorrow's hunt --

-- Ram allows himself a moment of self-satisfaction.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Some of the Neanderthals sleep in tangled heaps, like animals, to share warmth. Others are COPULATING. Freely, openly, in front of one another...

Lakan fucks FARIA missionary style, right next to a sleeping Gamla.

Zaad pulls out of one Woman and mounts another.

Ram's eyes are open and he can hear the groans and moans of the sex.

Suddenly, he feels someone behind him.

It's Nata, wrapping her arms around him. Her eyes search Ram's. He realizes she wants to sleep near the fire too, and moves over to make room for her.

She lies directly against him, pushing her body against his. Hesitantly, he lets her get even closer.

She puts Ram's arms around her. Then puts one of his hands on her belly.

RAM -- stays like this, not daring to move. It's the closest he's ever been to a woman, other than his mother and grandmother.

This is a young woman, full of vitality. And of course, there is a sexual charge here.

But he knows that she is not here for that. She is here because at least for one day, he has saved her. And her unborn child.

And the weight of that responsibility -- and his responsibility for Mot's death -- plies away at him.

INT. CAVE - LATER - NIGHT

Everyone is asleep now.

All, but Ram.

Something is plaguing him. He disentangles himself from the sleeping Nata. She doesn't stir.

Ram moves quietly to Gamla, wakes her. Whispers:

RAM
Tell hunter-fathers I go to hunter-
brother.

Gamla peers out the ENTRANCE of the CAVE, warning him --

GAMLA
Dark.

RAM
Hunter-brother has breath. I must
go to him.

The realization washes over Gamla -- the Hunters left a severely wounded Mot to die alone.

Gamla knows she shouldn't, but allows Ram to leave without waking the elders.

Ram GRABS a TORCH, scurries out of the CAVE and disappears into the DARKNESS...

EXT. THE LANDSCAPE - NIGHT

Ram moves across the dark, forbidding world outside the cave, his torch offering scant light and a false sense of safety.

RAM STOPS -- hearing movement ahead of him.

He pushes the torch forward, sees --

-- THE GLIMMER OF EYES, reflected in the fire.

THE EYES -- are three feet off the ground. Whatever it is, it's not small. This thing could be deadly.

THE EYES -- blink twice. Then --

-- they're gone, the animal moving away.

RAM -- doesn't know what it was, or if the creature will return, sneaking up on him, tearing his throat out.

The night is filled with dangers.

He finds his courage and presses on.

EXT. WOODS NEAR STREAM - NIGHT

Ram approaches --

-- The place where they left Mot.

To see --

VULTURES in a cluster around Mot's BODY.

He races forward, shouting, waving the FLAMING TORCH at the horrible birds.

THE VULTURES - beat their enormous wings at Ram, their black beaks hooked, sharp.

Ram frantically swipes away at them with the stick and finally --

-- SMASHES one in the head.

The VULTURE is knocked back, rights itself, then takes wing, driven away.

Ram yells at the top of his lungs and waves the stick at the other two, which follow their leader and disappear into the light of the moon.

Ram bends to Mot --

RAM
Brother --

-- AND RECOILS, shouting out in horror, as he realizes --

-- MOT's eyeballs have been PECKED OUT.

Even worse, his stomach has been torn open, intestines and blood oozing everywhere.

RAM -- collects himself. Starts forward, looking at his brother's mangled remains.

He will never know whether this happened before or after Mot's death.

Ram sits down, hard, next to his brother's corpse. Emotions overwhelm Ram, his eyes well with tears of frustration.

EXT. ACROSS THE RIVER - NIGHT

The RAGING RIVER flows fiercely over the ragged stones that chokes its center, is dotted with fallen trees that nearly stretch across its length. But not far enough to create a crude bridge.

NEARBY --

-- a pair of BLUE EYES watch.

PULLING BACK - the blue eyes are just one striking feature of this beautiful creature.

It's the human girl from before.

For now, we'll call her LALASSU.

She peers across the RIVER and can see --

-- in the distance --

-- a BLAZING FIRE.

EXT. WOODS NEAR CREEK - NIGHT

It's the FIRE Ram has lit near Mot's body. To keep the animals away.

The heat and light playing off Ram's face, he guards it from the VULTURES, who continue to circle overhead.

Ram hears a YIP and HOWL, stands abruptly.

Sees --

YELLOW EYES, coming out of the treeline -- eyes belonging to a pack of WOLVES.

The wolf pack -- circles in the flickering shadows, wary of the flames.

Ram realizes they see an opportunity with Mot's dead body; an opportunity to feed.

RAM -- quickly puts a few more tree limbs on the fire. The flames lick higher.

Ram lights a piece of WOOD on FIRE --

-- throws it toward the WOLVES.

THE WOLVES -- quickly retreat into the treeline, flames driving them away.

THEIR YELLOW EYES -- seem to promise: they'll be back....

RAM - is vigilant for a time, then turns his gaze to the fire.

LATER --

RAM -- watches the sparks of the fire flying upward into the night sky.

RAM'S POV - the sparks rise upward into the vast darkness. They seem to blend in with the STARS.

Ram watches the stars, lost in their multiplicity, dwarfed in their unfathomable meaning. What are they to Ram? How is he connected to them?

Ram smells something burning, something other than logs. He looks over to see --

-- MOT'S LEGGINGS ARE ON FIRE. Ram howls in protest, angry at himself and the flames. Drags Mot away a few feet.

Ram slaps at the fire with his hands. Not good enough. Then throws handfuls of dirt on the flames. Puts them out.

RAM -- feels tears running down his cheek. Of frustration, of loss of his brother, of feeling his youth and inexperience. He believes he got his brother killed, and now he can't even keep his dead body safe.

Ram sits, touches the tears at his cheek.

Tears for him, for his people, are unusual.

But today he is a failure. Useless to the tribe.

EXT. VERDANT VALLEY - DAWN

An impossibly verdant and lush valley lies before the harsh and seemingly impossible to circumvent MOUNTAIN RANGE.

We finally see -- MOVEMENT.

Three small black dots slowly move across the valley floor at the base of the mountains.

It's THREE NEANDERTHAL HUNTERS.

CLOSER - we swoop down like an eagle to find KAMAK and his two hunters running across the grasslands, moving upward, toward the foot of the mountains.

EXT. AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAINS - DAWN

Kamak's eyes try to find a path through the MOUNTAINS. He finally sighs, resigned. He knew it wouldn't be easy....

The three hunters have small carcasses on their sinew lines thrown over their shoulders. They make their way up the increasingly steep hillside, passing the first sign of --

-- SNOW. Kamak pulls his scant clothing around his body tighter. The others do the same.

EXT. THE CAVE - MORNING

Lakan and Zaad prepare for the hunt. Two other hunters are awake, preparing.

Lakan grabs his spear, his club, and some dried meat, which he puts in a pouch.

He is about to leave when --

LAKAN'S EYES - find Gamla, standing next to Faria. The women are looking up toward the MOUNTAINS, as if they can track and see Kamak and his Hunters.

Of course, their sons are already too far away.

Lakan looks up to the forboding mountains, also wondering what the fate of the Hunter-Sons will be.

Gamla, as if sensing him, turns.

Their eyes lock.

The weight of the task on all of them hangs there. Their survival is at stake.

Faria turns now, also.

Lakan looks from one woman to the other as if to say, "We will return."

Then grunts at Zaad and the others -- let's go.

The Neanderthals head out for the hunt.

If they don't come back with food this time -- it may well be the end of the clan.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. NEAR THE CAVE - DAY**

Ram covers Mot's body with HEAVY STONES when he hears --
-- FOOTSTEPS approaching.

He turns to see --

Lakan and Zaad approach, two more hunters behind them.

Lakan looks at him strangely: what are you doing here?

RAM
(gestures to Mot's body)
Animals will eat him.

Lakan looks down at Mot's body. Sees how torn apart the body is.

Zaad stands next to him, sees as well.

They share a small, grim, look, then...

LAKAN
Hunter-son! Show us where deer
drinks.

Without a word, Ram starts running in the direction of the hunting valley.

The others follow, Lakan the last to go, his face showing what little hope he has that Ram can save the tribe.

NEARBY --

Those startling blue eyes watch the Neanderthals with intensity, curiosity, remaining silent until the Neanderthals have gone out of view -- and it is safe to move again.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

MOVING -- through the FOREST, Ram is in the lead, his feet silent, face serious. He now looks much like the warriors he was emulating a few days ago.

BEHIND HIM - Lakan and Zaad struggle to keep up. Ram is moving far too fast and smoothly.

Lakan TRIPS over a log. Zaad helps him to his feet.

EXT. THE HUNTING VALLEY - DAY

Ram is out in the open now, charging across an immense grassland. Lakan, Zaad and the others hurry to keep up.

The distant snow-covered mountains loom over the small forms of the Neanderthal hunters as they make their way toward a familiar streambed and dense brush.

EXT. THE STREAM - DAY

Ram crouches down in the underbrush. Peers at the STREAM...

RAM
It is here.

And now, they wait.

EXT. THE MOUNTAINS - SUNSET

Kamak and his two hunters make their way through the bitterly cold mountain pass.

If they don't find shelter soon, they'll freeze to death.

KAMAK -- spots a CREVASSE. A place where two boulders come together, like two hands opening to the skies.

He points as the wind HOWLS around them.

EXT. THE STREAM - SUNSET

Ram and the other Neanderthals crouch in the UNDERBRUSH.

But still, there has been no sign of the ELK. Or any animal.

Lakan looks at Ram grimly.

Ram looks to the skies.

The blood red sun is dipping below the horizon. The end of the hunting day has come.

Dejected, Lakan rises.

It's time to leave the stream to find a place to make camp. Lakan grunts to Ram to come with them.

And Ram, dejected, follows.

EXT. IN THE CREVASSE IN THE MOUNTAINS - EVENING

Kamak struggles to make a FIRE.

The Neanderthal men are huddled between rock formations, icy wind whipping around them, howling like a living thing. An animal thing, nipping at their cheeks, hair, clothes.

Varg has gathered moss and kindling. Lach is ready with the first twigs to burn.

It all depends on Kamak.

KAMAK -- uses two pieces of iron pyrite to make sparks. The sparks fly, but he doesn't get one of use. He tries again. CLICK-CLICK with the stones. A small spark flies. Dies.

CLICK-CLICK.

The wind ROARS.

CLICK-CLICK -- a large spark FALLS into the moss. Kamak is instantly next to it, puffing gently, carefully.

FINALLY -- the moss IGNITES. The fire slowly comes to life, like a struggling newborn creature.

Varg adds more moss. The fire increases.

THE FLAME -- struggles against the wind howling and snatching at it from the air above.

LACH -- is finally ready for his turn. He adds the first twig. The fire nearly dies.

KAMAK -- catches his breath between his teeth.

LACH -- urges the fire with some puffs of breath. It seems dead, gone for good, and then -- IT COMES BACK.

Lach adds the twigs, slowly.

The Neanderthals heave sighs of relief. The fire burns, now....

INT. THE CAVE - NIGHT

Neanderthal women and children are bedded down for the night, sleeping in their customary intertwined piles, like puppies.

THREE FIRES burn at the cave mouth.

Peta, the grandmother, stokes and feeds the fires. Holds another woman's baby in her arms, keeping the child warm.

GAMLA -- comes over to the middle fire. Peta watches her.

Gamla meets Nata's gaze. They share hope and fear without sharing words.

PETA - keeps the fires burning.

EXT. THE HUNTING VALLEY - NIGHT

Ram watches the FIRE at the Hunters camp.

His eyes see the sparks. This time he does not look up at the night sky.

His mind is on the here and now. How to kill to survive. To eat. The pressure of the needs of the tribe weigh on him.

The Hunters are lying down by the FIRE to get their rest.

Lakan comes to Ram.

LAKAN

Sleep, hunter-son. Sleep for hunt.

RAM

I guard from animals.

Lakan gestures toward Zaad, who is positioned to do just that.

LAKAN

Hunter-father guards. You sleep.

Ram is still not considered a Hunter, still not trusted. And he knows he hasn't earned it.

He nods, obeying his hunter-father.

Lakan lies down near the fire.

As a matter of course, Ram lies next to him.

Lakan wraps his arms around Ram. Pulls him close.

This is how they stay warm.

But Ram's eyes stay open. Unable to sleep.

EXT. THE HUNTING VALLEY - MORNING

THE SUN -- moves across the sky. The valley is devoid of large game.

EXT. NEAR THE HUNTING VALLEY - MORNING

Lakan, Zaad, Ram and the others wait for the deer to come.

So far, nothing.

In the THICK WOODS NEARBY --

-- Lalassu watches them, can see their patience. And their desperation.

EXT. IN THE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Kamak and his Hunters trudge toward the top of the Mountain.

He stops, looks at the SUN beginning to disappear over the RIDGE.

VARG
Stop? Make fire?

Kamak gestures "no", wants to make it to the top before the sun goes down.

EXT. NEAR THE HUNTING VALLEY - SUNSET

Ram and the Neanderthals watch the CREEK.

They're bathed in sweat. Hot.

A MOSQUITO swirls around Ram's face and neck. He tries to shake it away from him, when --

-- Zaad grunts.

They can see...

RAM'S POV: the ELK hulking toward the CREEK.

Ram grips his hunting spear.

Lakan gestures to the others.

Without a word, they know what to do, each man taking his place in the hunt. They spread out in the cover of the WOODED AREA.

NEARBY, in THICK BUSHES, Lalassu watches them. Sees...

...the Elk meandering toward the CREEK.

Lakan looks at Ram, holds his arm, as if to say "Wait. And follow my lead."

Ram blinks an affirmation, grips his spear tightly. This is his chance to avenge Mot and to redeem himself to the clan.

Lalassu creeps forward slightly, intrigued by the Neanderthals. Wanting to see their skill levels.

The Elk pauses at the Water, looks around instinctively, on guard for predators.

Lakan looks at Ram -- wait.

And finally, as the Elk bends its head into the water to drink...

...Lakan BURSTS out of the BRUSH.

In perfect coordination, Zaad and the others come out of their BRUSH AREAS at the same time. This is how Neanderthals kill -- in surprise, ambush attacks.

They're all charging the Elk from different angles.

They should have it trapped, surrounded.

Ram runs hard, on Lakan's heels, wanting to be part of the kill as --

-- the Elk senses the onslaught.

It turns, feels the Men coming toward it and --

-- dashes to its right.

Toward Zaad and another Hunter.

As Zaad charges, the Elk turns swiftly, banking back toward --

-- Lakan and Ram.

Zaad and the Hunter try to catch it -- to trap it -- but this Elk can move. Fast.

And hard.

It charges at Lakan, who pokes at it with his SPEAR, driving it toward --

-- two more NEANDERTHAL HUNTERS.

Once again, the Elk pivots, driven --

-- thrusting its ANTLERS toward the Hunters and then --

-- reversing again --

-- this time toward Ram.

Ram holds his ground --

-- jabs at the Elk with his spear as --

-- Lakan joins from the other side --

-- STABBING the Elk above its hind legs.

The Elk HOWLS, angrily SWIPES its ANTLERS at Lakan and then --

-- at Ram.

The ANTLERS side-swipe Ram and knock him to the GROUND as --

-- Lakan, Zaad and the Hunters try to converge on the wild animal.

But they can't get there in time and --

-- the Elk GALLOPS through a GAP in their FORMATION...

...WOUNDED, but still fast enough to ESCAPE into the DENSE WOODS.

Lakan BARKS at the others and they CHASE the Elk into the BRUSH as...

...Ram picks himself up.

Woozy from the Deer's blow to his head.

He tries to right himself and sees...

...Lakan and the others far up ahead, disappearing into the WOODS.

Ram grabs his Spear and follows the elders, determined once again to somehow be part of saving his tribe.

IN THE NEARBY BUSHES -- Lalassu has seen it all. The Neanderthals determination and courage. And the limitations of their weaponry. She hones in on Ram. Something in her eyes says she feels compassion for him.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - SUNSET

Kamak and his team have made it to the other side of the "snow hills." They can't see much in this GLOOM. It's time to set up camp again.

EXT. WOODS - SUNSET

As DARKNESS descends on the WOODS --

Lakan examines the DEER'S FOOTPRINTS in the DIRT.

The path goes deep into a THICK HILL of WOODS.

Lakan looks at Zaad -- clearly the density of these woods, and the coming of night, make it impossible for them to hunt any longer today.

RAM

It comes again to drink. At the
next sun.

Lakan looks at Zaad -- the young one doesn't understand.

LAKAN

It not come again. It finds another
place to drink.

It's clear to all of the elder hunters -- they missed their chance.

Zaad nods -- acknowledging that it's over. He walks away, back toward the Neanderthal cave. The others follow.

LAKAN (CONT'D)

The next sun, we go to cave.

EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE MOUNTAINS - DAWN

The mountain range awakens, snow glistening in the first rays of morning light.

ON THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAINS -- three small forms, so insignificant, can be seen making their way down the other side of the range. They are lost in the mist...

EXT. ON THE MOUNTAIN PASS - DAWN

Kamak, Varg and Lach have nearly made it down the narrow mountain pass.

The morning clouds choke the horizon, until --

-- THE BLOOD RED SUN breaks through.

Kamak sees clouds burn off. Then his mouth opens in wonder. Lach and Varg see Kamak, staring. They look. And see --

-- AN ENDLESS PLAIN, dotted with valleys and rivers, stretching out before them.

ANIMALS -- in clusters, make their way across the landscape.

Horses; two species of giant deer; and a herd of mammoth. All are watched by the packs of wolves and yipping bands of spotted hyena, near the edges of ravines.

KAMAK'S EYES -- are like that of the wolf. Intent, focused. The hunting ground that lies below them is immense, and life-sustaining.

Kamak turns and SMILES at Lach and Varg. This is the first smile we've ever seen from him. We understand the meaning of it -- they will return to the cave as heroes, with a new land to move the tribe to. A land of never ending riches.

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

Ram wakes with a start to find --

-- Lakan, Zaad and the other Neanderthals all sleeping.

Even the Hunter-father who was supposed to be standing guard against the animals has fallen asleep at his post.

Suddenly, Ram's eyes are drawn to an OBJECT --

-- tall and thin, sticking out of the ground near the edge of their burnt-out CAMPFIRE.

He moves toward it to discover --

-- a thin, sharp-tipped SPEAR stabbed into the ground, point down.

Ram looks around. Where did it come from? Who put it there? Did it fall from the skies themselves?

He touches it experimentally, carefully. Fascinated by it. Curious, he pulls the spear from the earth and inspects it.

The tip is POINTED -- a sharpened ANTLER BONE has been expertly tied onto the end of the thin, flexible, sturdy shaft by some nimble hand. He marvels at the tool, the craftsmanship beyond him. So delicate.

Is this some test of his father's? Did Lakan put this here?

He inspects the spear again. No, this is unlike any thing he has ever seen, unlike any tool a Neanderthal would make.

FROM A DISTANCE, IN THE TREES --

A pair of EYES watch Ram try to make sense of the spear.

We know these eyes.

They belong to Lalassu. She watches Ram, and waits, wondering what he'll do next. Will he understand? Will he know what's to be done?

THE SPEAR - glints with morning sunlight.

RAM --

-- HEFTS the spear. Smiles at its exquisite balance, at its almost imperceptible weight.

But how did it get here?

LAKAN (O.S.)
You make this?

Ram turns to see Lakan, awakened now.

Beyond Lakan, Zaad and the others are rousing.

Ram looks up toward the CLOUDS --

RAM
It fell from sky.

No one laughs. For all they know, spears with antler tips could very well fall from the sky.

Lakan looks it over carefully.

LAKAN
This cannot kill.

He HURLS it away, doesn't see that --

-- THE SPEAR FLIES for a short time before sticking POINT FIRST into the ground.

RAM - watches the spear with fascination. It flew! It flew through the air and stabbed the earth.

Ram goes to the spear with wonder. Plucks it from the earth. Holds the tip to his eyes. It's still there, still sharp.

Lakan moves to Ram.

LAKAN (CONT'D)
We go to cave. At the next sun, we go over mountain.

RAM
Hunter-father, I will stay. Kill deer.

LAKAN

Deer is gone.

RAM

I find it.

Lakan looks at Ram -- he is stubborn and foolish.

LAKAN

One more sun -- over mountain.

Ram understands. Doesn't move. Understands that he will be left behind if he is not there.

Maddened by Ram's stubbornness, Lakan sizes him up and reminds him again --

Ram watches Lakan and the others move off.

Then takes in the sight of this mysterious new weapon.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Moving slowly toward the VALLEY --

Kamak, VARG and LACH warily approach an OVERHANG in the hillside. It offers protection, and could be occupied by a bear or some other deadly beast.

Instead, they find --

-- A RING OF STONES, with burned wood in the center, piles of ashes underneath.

It is a setup not dissimilar from a fire pit that the Neanderthals have back at the cave.

Kamak, amazed, steps slowly forward. Kicks a foot gently at the debris in the fire. It has long since cooled. He sees other things --

-- SHREDS of animal hide, strips that have been cut off and scraped of flesh. Are they pieces of clothing, like the ones the Neanderthal hunters wear?

Kamak looks at Lach -- wide-eyed, amazed.

LACH

Fathers say no man here.

As Kamak finds another long strip of animal hide, there is no doubt in his mind.

THE HIDE -- has holes punched through it, where animal sinew can be threaded through to draw the clothing tighter.

This is an innovation he has NOT seen. He marvels at it.

Varg makes a sharp bird-whistle noise at Kamak.

Kamak's head snaps up. Varg is deeper into the overhang. He looks at Kamak with confusion, insistence.

VARG -- holds up long poles, obviously hand-crafted.

They have sharp points.

But they are much narrower than the ones the Neanderthals possess.

Kamak tries a tip with his thumb. It draws blood.

He hefts the spear, testing its weight. They almost laugh at the thing -- like a child's toy.

Kamak snaps the spear over one leg. A useless thing.

Lach has found a half dozen more spears. And animal bones. Others have eaten here, have made clothing here, and have left behind these strange, almost comically thin weapons.

Others.

Here.

Other human beings.

Kamak gazes around the site in wonder. Until this moment, Kamak and his kind were sure their clan were the only tool-making creature in this entire world.

Now, that world has been turned inside out.

What do the people mean? Are they near? Are they long since dead? Are they alive and returning soon? Most important --

-- are they dangerous?

EXT. HUNTING VALLEY - DAY

Ram holds the new spear in his hands.

He tries to HURL it the way Lakan did.

THE SPEAR -- falls almost immediately to the ground.

Ram goes to pick it up. Tries again. Another failure.

Tries again. The spear tumbles end over end, a laughably ineffective attempt.

RAM -- keeps trying, again and again.... Trying until the sun rises... Without success.

Dejected, he retrieves the spear and HURLS it away in anger.

THE SPEAR FLIES. Only for a few seconds, but it flies.

Ram is awake again in the middle of the night, practicing with the spear. He's clumsy, unsure.

EYES -- watch him.

RAM -- tries again and again. Can't quite get his body to move right to launch the spear. But he knows it can work. He believes in the weapon.

FINALLY -- he throws a halfway acceptable toss.

Encouraged, Ram keeps trying. He's obsessed, now. He will master this new skill.

EXT. THE OVERHANG NEAR THE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Kamak and his two hunters are each outfitted with flaming torches, using tree sap as a steadily burning source.

They have found --

-- A CAVERN ENTRANCE, deep in the overhang of the mountain.

Kamak -- walks quietly. Takes a look back at Varg and Lach, who urge him forward, their spears ready if need be.

KAMAK -- enters the darkness of the cavern.

INT. THE CAVERN - DARKNESS

The daylight barely penetrates into the cavern.

Kamak moves forward, torch outstretched before him, footsteps careful.

His torch moves over --

-- ANIMAL SKULLS.

Bones are strewn everywhere. The entire floor is covered in skeletal remains. They could be months old, years, or hundreds of years, there's no way to know.

Kamak grunts.

Stops, dead in his tracks at what he sees on the wall.

BEHIND HIM - Lach and Varg stop as well, ready for anything.

LACH

Animal?

Kamak doesn't answer, just holds his torch to the cavern walls, letting the light flicker over the rock. Then his wide eyes turn to Lach and Varg.

ON THE WALLS --

-- painted IMAGES.

Multi-hued representations of animals: red deer, horse, aurochs, mammoth. All chased by HUMAN FIGURES.

KAMAK -- and the others approach, in awe.

THEIR EYES -- take in the impossible sight of --

-- cave PAINTINGS, representing animals they are familiar with. Who put these reflections of nature on the walls of this cave?

KAMAK'S FINGERS -- come to the stone to explore, his rough fingertips touching the images of -

-- SPEARS.

Thin, shorter than his hunting spear. And these spears are *flying* through the air. Not like the barbaric instruments that he and his Neanderthal hunters have to use, dangerously close, to kill a beast.

Not only are the paintings beyond comprehension, what they represent themselves is mind-blowing -- entire walls showing other people, hunting, using tools that are beyond Kamak's imagining.

Kamak moves through a SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT, knifing through an crack in the cavern ceiling far above.

THE SHAFT OF LIGHT -- illuminates the most dramatic painting of all -- the killing of a mammoth by dozens of human figures, the warriors releasing spears through the air, sticking into the great beast.

KAMAK -- stands, mouth open in awe and wonder. This is too much to comprehend all at once.

His hands go out to touch the images, then he pulls them back, as if they might infect him somehow.

KAMAK'S EYES - take in the flying spears in the cave painting.

EXT. HUNTING VALLEY - DAY

A figure MOVES toward us, emerging out of the SUNLIGHT...

IT'S RAM -- running right TOWARD US, body covered in sweat, spear in one hand. Running like a modern-day Olympic javelin competitor, he RELEASES the weapon with a mighty HEAVE, torquing his body as he does, GRUNTING with the effort.

THE SPEAR -- flies fifty feet through the air, rays of blood-red dawn catching its shaft before it --

-- SHHH-THWUNK! -- sticks RIGHT INTO the trunk of a tree. The spear vibrates there with the force of the impact.

Ram -- comes to a stop, seeing what he's done, seeing that he's come to understand the awesome power of this thin, insignificant-looking weapon.

No more killing from up close. No more risking life and limb.

Killing can be done from afar....

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Kamak, Lach and Varg move ever closer to the VALLEY below. They are two days journey from their Cave now. And here, on this other side of the mountain, it may as well be a world away.

They pause, taking in the sight of the ANIMALS in the VALLEY below.

This will be a bounty.

But they must be VIGILANT now.

The others could be close -- and could be hostile.

They move in hunting formation, spears ready in case of attack. Twenty yards apart.

And then, suddenly, the stillness is broken by a sound, unlike anything Kamak has ever heard --

-- it's a HORN.

We would recognize it as a RAM'S HORN, being blown by a human being. But to Kamak and his Hunters, it is completely foreign.

They wheel around, trying to find the source of the sound when --

Phhhh-WHOOSH!

Something EXPLODES through Lach's chest.

As he cries out --

KAMAK - turns to see --

A long, thin, pointed branch -- pierced through Lach's back and out his chest.

Kamak looks at Varg and then --

-- More WHISTLING through the air.

Kamak DUCKS as --

-- MORE SPEARS fly at the men. Varg is HIT in the LEG, the spear PLUNGING through his thigh. He HOWLS in agony.

Kamak just misses being skewered, his shrewd eyes finding --

-- TWO-LEGGED, UPRIGHT SHAPES in the treeline, launching MORE SPEARS at them. The projectiles whistle through the air as --

-- KAMAK pulls VARG to the safety of a rock.

VARG -- YANKS the spear out from his own thigh, blood burbling out of the wound. His eyes are wide, furious and terrified, but more than that. Confused.

Kamak makes a hand gesture -- be still. Varg tries, in agony. Kamak peeks out from behind the rock.

And again, the sound of that HORN.

And Kamak realizes -- for the first time -- this is the sound of a human hunting call.

THE SHAPES -- on the ledges above -- are no longer there. Where are they? Are they coming now to kill them?

KAMAK takes a chance and RUNS out to find Lach.

LACH'S EYES -- are already distant.

Kamak stares into Lach's eyes. Tries to pick him up, but Lach SCREAMS.

Kamak sets him back down.

Lach looks up at Kamak, understanding that this is it, this is his death. Right here on the other side of this cold mountain pass. Lach makes a hand motion -- go. Leave me.

-- THE WHISTLING SOUND AGAIN.

SPEARS! Kamak ROLLS out of the way as -- THUNK! THUNK! THUNK! Three spears hit the ground where he was a moment before. One more -- SCHTHWUNK! -- hits Lach in the breastbone.

Lach is instantly dead....

Kamak races back to Varg.

Both of them are confused, terrified -- with no idea who is trying to kill them. They've never even met another human being outside their tribe, Neanderthal or other, and now the ones they finally encounter -- are trying to kill them. Like animals. Like hunted beasts.

It's beyond Kamak's comprehension. Murder doesn't even have a word in the Neanderthal language.

Are these violent, bloodthirsty killers the same artists who made such beauty in the caves? Are they capable of this savagery?

KAMAK'S EYES -- focus on the moment, on survival. He's a hunter, and he's hunted enough animals and failed enough times to know how animals escape the hunt, to survive.

Kamak motions to the dense treeline to the left. Varg grunts in agreement.

It's going to be risky. There's hundreds of feet of wide open mountainside before the treeline. But spears won't be able to hurt them once their in that dense forest.

They are ready. Kamak and Varg are going to run for it.

Kamak nods to Varg and --

THEY RUN, hearing spears whistling and landing all around him. The whisper of the deadly projectiles fill the air.

VARG limps, moving as fast as he can. Spears just miss his heels, his head. These killers are deadly accurate.

As they run, Kamak hears the "WOO-ACH!" and SHOUTS of his pursuers. Strange sounds. The creatures are communicating with one another.

More SHOUTS fill the air. But these shouts come from -- THE LEFT OF THEM.

They're being hunted.

Closed in on. Means of escape gone.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY**

The group of spear-throwing killers are glimpsed only in silhouette, the light behind them as they search for their prey...

NEARBY, hiding in the THICKET --

-- Kamak holds Varg's shivering, bloodied body close to his own.

They hear -- SOUNDS in the trees nearby.

Footsteps. Many of them.

ON THE WOODS - we glimpse, but do not fully see the figures who killed Lach, using their spears to comb through the reeds and trees near the riverbank, looking for Kamak and Varg.

KAMAK - is silent. Eyes, wide. Varg tries not to wheeze, in extreme pain.

THE FIGURES - close in. Getting nearer. Their spears SLAP and CRACK into the dense shrubs, looking for their prey.

VARG
(very weak)
Go.

Kamak looks up, hearing --

-- THE TWO LEGGED CREATURES - whatever they are, getting nearer. Zeroing in on this spot.

Kamak knows Varg is right. There's no escape. Furious at his own inability to save his friend, Kamak looks into Varg's eyes, but doesn't know what to say. Has no words.

VARG (CONT'D)
Go.

Kamak slinks deeper into the THICKET, hoping to get away...

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Ram covers himself with MUD, moves toward the CREEK.

The deer must come again here to drink.

And when it does, he will be waiting. Will become a hunter. Prove his father wrong. Save the tribe.

Ram pulls MUSSELS off the side of a CORAL BED, cracks them open and eats the paltry portion of sustenance -- his eyes wild with hunger.

And as he looks at the horizon, sees the SUN nearly setting, he knows his time is nearly up.

EXT. THE CAVE - DUSK

Lakan, Zaad and the others are seen in the distance by --

-- PETA. She sees the men are empty handed. No kills. A few small rabbits and pathetic voles and mice. Nothing of substance.

She knows what this means. The tribe will have to move on.

GAMLA - joins Peta. She sees the men returning but -- her youngest son is not with them.

GAMLA
Where is young-son?

LAKAN
He hunts for deer. We go at next sun.

GAMLA
With young-son?

Lakan makes a noncommittal sound. Ram is a lost cause at this point.

Behind them -- the pregnant Nata moves to the fire pit.

She rubs her belly with worry. She won't make it to a new camp. She can barely move as it is.

EXT. CREEK - DUSK

Ram cups his hands and drinks WATER out of the CREEK.

Looks once again at the horizon. The sun is nearly down. It will be dark soon. And it will be too late.

And then --

-- he sees --

-- The IMMENSE ELK coming right toward the CREEK.

Wounded in its hind legs where Lakan stabbed it, but powerful nonetheless.

And perhaps as stubborn as Ram.

It needs to drink and is returning to the place where that can happen.

The Elk stops at the CREEK --

-- and drinks, just as the young Hunter did.

Perhaps the Elk does not regard this lone Neanderthal, this young Neanderthal as much of a threat.

Ram reaches down, grabs for his big Neanderthal spear. His hand grabs it and then --

-- LETS IT GO.

He reaches instead for the strange, thin spear, the one that fell from the skies.

Hefts it.

Stands.

Slowly creeps forward.

HIS FEET - are silent.

THE ELK - drinks from the stream. A perfect target.

Apparently not hearing Ram.

RAM'S HAND - raises the spear.

THE ELK -- abruptly looks up. Sees Ram.

For a single moment, they are at a stand-off. Regarding each other.

A measure of mutual respect may even pass between them.

And then --

-- instead of turning and running, the ELK --

-- CHARGES.

Ram has one chance at this. It's accuracy, or death.

He runs AT THE ELK, moving just like he practiced and --

-- HURLS THE SPEAR.

Ram is now empty-handed as --

-- THE ELK CONTINUES TO CHARGE, lowering its deadly rack of sharp-tipped antlers, coming right at Ram.

Ram is going to end up like Mot. Ram's father was right, he isn't ready for this -- and now he's going to die --

THE ELK -- is coming right at him --

-- teen feet, then five and then --

-- it falls violently into the edge of the CREEK, less than three feet from Ram's face.

THE SPEAR -- is sticking deep in the fluffy white crest of hide under its chin; a perfect shot.

The Elk takes a few ragged breaths, blood turning the stream red. The breaths get fewer and further between...

Ram comes closer, in awe of the animal. Somehow feeling a kinship with it. This is not the triumphant moment he'd hoped for. This majestic creature is dying.

For a moment, they regard one another. Man and beast.

Then the Elk --

-- dies.

EXT. AT THE CAVE - DAWN

The tribe is packing up their meager belongings...

Hand axes, crude boots, spears, animal skins, flints, clubs.

Peta and Nata watch with resignation. They will be left behind.

Lakan crosses past the women.

LAKAN

We cannot wait.

GAMLA

Another hunter-son gone.

LAKAN

We make more.

He starts to move off as --

Nata stands, belly protruding, and points --

NATA

See!

Everyone turns to look --

IN THE DISTANCE - a figure moving toward the cave. A Neanderthal. Something over the figure's shoulder.

THEY ALL SEE - Ram, hurrying toward them.

He's got a massive deer shank over his shoulder. It must weigh ninety pounds.

Ram makes it to the cave entrance, his eyes on his disbelieving father. He looks at the entire tribe and --

-- TOSSES THE DEER MEAT on the ground.

RAM

More. Enough for many moonrises.

He plunges the SPEAR triumphantly into the GROUND.

RAM (CONT'D)

It can kill.

Lakan, dumbfounded, takes a long moment to process what Ram is saying. That he killed this enormous beast on its own.

With this thin, mysterious spear.

GAMLA - comes up to face her son. She puts a hand out gently to his face.

NATA - meets Ram's gaze from across the cave. Relief and gratitude.

INT. NEANDERTHAL CAVE - DAY

Faria approaches Ram, who looks very nervous.

She lowers his torso garment, then --

-- turns around and lowers hers.

Offering herself to him.

Ram looks around the Cave and we reveal --

-- all of the WOMEN of child-birthing age, watching, waiting.

Faria presses her hand against Ram to get him aroused.

We realize this is Ram's first time. That this is his reward for his first real kill. His rite of passage into manhood.

He fumbles with what to do.

Faria shows him how.

He tries, having a hard time getting his manhood inside Faria, so --

-- Gamla comes over, reaches down and helps guide her son into his loss of virginity.

As Gamla steps back proudly, Ram thrusts into Faria and --

-- it is all over quickly as he spastically orgasms.

He slumps forward, gasping for breath, eyes wide.

The women LAUGH.

As Faria rises and pulls up her GARMENT --

-- the next WOMAN steps forward and lowers herself.

Ram realizes -- he is expected to do it AGAIN.

EXT. CREEK - DUSK

Ram, now more confident, his stride containing more purpose -- leads the hunting party back to the felled deer, hidden in a dense reed bed.

The men pull it out into the open.

LAKAN SEES -- that Ram has partially quartered the carcass. He purses his lips in approval. The work his son did was efficient. Nearly expert.

THE HUNTERS -- begin cutting the rest of the carcass up, taking everything. It will feed the tribe for a long time.

EXT. OVER THE MOUNTAINS - DAWN

As the SUN RISES on yet another harrowing day, we find --

KAMAK hobbling along, on the brink of exhaustion and starvation.

He finally collapses into a dry bed of reeds.

Stares up at the sky. He is about to pass out when he hears --

-- SOUNDS in the distance. Rhythmic. Unusual.

Not animal. Something else. Something like - POUNDING.

The metronomic echoing fills the air around him.

Kamak finds the strength to get up. Stands on unsteady legs. Moves with stealthy steps, curious, towards the sounds.

KAMAK - moves closer to the sounds now.

They are loud, alien. Sounds he's never heard before. He crawls up the rise of a HILL, knowing whatever is making those noises is just over the rise.

His eyes finally see --

and we finally see --

-- A BAND OF HUMAN BEINGS.

An entire tribe, at least sixty, maybe more, chanting, moving around a ring of fire, many of them clacking together hollow sticks: the rhythmic sounds he was hearing.

Their musical coordination is awesome to take in, unimaginable to a Neanderthal who has never even dreamt of such a thing. It would be wonderful to watch if the human clan making the sounds weren't so fearsome and terrifying.

Kamak stares at them.

THEIR FACES -- are adorned with lines of paint, colorful and frightening all at once.

The MEN and TEENAGE BOYS -- all have SHAVED, BALD HEADS.

The Humans CHANT and WHOOP as they circle a FIRE, others seated, clacking sticks on hollow logs. It's some kind of ritual. A brutal DANCE.

A war dance...

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

Ram has found that the stones he laid over Mot's body has been disturbed by animals.

Ram takes the rocks away. Horrified by the desecration of his brother's decaying body.

Ram sits there for a time, silent. Doesn't know what to do, but knows he must do something. Ram rests on his haunches in the day's final red glow, feeling useless until he hears --

-- the sounds of the RUSHING RIVER, close by.

EXT. AT THE RIVERBANK - DAWN

Ram pulls his brother's corpse to the flowing, turbulent RIVER.

Watches the white water splash and fight over the stones for a time, mesmerized.

Finally SHOVES his brother's corpse into the stream. Mot's body is almost immediately grabbed by the strong current.

RAM WATCHES --

-- Mot's body move quickly downstream, just missing a sweeper log whose branches reach out over the river, and then --

-- IT GETS CAUGHT by another set of branches.

Stuck.

Ram can't cross the river. He can do nothing. Can only watch in horror as a CROW swoops in and begins picking away at the body.

THEN -- Ram sees something across the river...

A lithe, graceful figure emerges from the WOODS. Moves to the log. Disentangles the body and gently pushes it back into the current, where it disappears downstream.

It's the human girl, Lalassu.

Ram watches, awestruck. He has never seen anyone outside his tribe before.

This creature looks something like him, yet is so different. Taller, leaner, more graceful. Her face and nose more delicate, refined, than his own.

Lalassu stares back at Ram, each regarding the other as if they were some kind of alien creature.

And yet, there is some kind of connection that passes between them. She has understood what he was meaning to do with Mot's body. And has helped him.

Lalassu turns and as she heads back up the hill toward her own shores, Ram sees something strapped to her back.

THIN SPEARS, just like the one that "fell from the sky" at Ram's feet.

Slack-jawed, Ram watches her disappear. Realizing that it was Lalassu who had given him the spear, it was she who had somehow crossed that river.

And that wherever she is going, there must be more like her. And Ram now knows...

...The Neanderthals are not alone.

EXT. RIDGE - DAWN

MOVEMENT - in the bushes. Almost imperceptible. But we see -- a figure, crawling through the dirt, staying low.

CLOSER - an EYE, watching from the cover of the bushes. We move in closer to see --

-- KAMAK, trying to be silent, as best he can, his intense and frightened gaze on the VALLEY BELOW.

KAMAK'S POV -- DOWN IN THE VALLEY:

This Homo Sapiens tribe --

-- a tribe we will learn later who call themselves the AKKENAKKI --

-- surround a writhing form.

Chanting and singing in some ritualized cadence, their slick bald heads make them seem even more alien -- and scary.

And then, he realizes these frightening creatures have surrounded --

VARG -- Kamak's Neanderthal friend.

Varg SCREAMS in agony as the humans tie him with ropes made of animal sinew to --

-- a knotted, gnarled TREE. His hands are tied above his head, his legs winched to the trunk. He's strapped to the tree, off the ground, his midsection exposed.

The Neanderthal captive bleeds from several wounds on his limbs, his head, his midsection. His head lolls to one side -- he's nearly dead with exhaustion and fear.

DRUMBEATS begin. To Kamak the rhythmic pounding seems beyond comprehension. Frightening.

The drumbeats combine with HIGH PITCHED KEENING. Human voices, crying out in brief, prolonged screams. It's the Akkanakki WOMEN, their voices haunting, filling the air.

The DRUMBEATS crescendo --

-- the Screams rise --

-- as Kamak realizes they are going to do something terrible to his friend.

PUSHING in on Kamak's TERRIFIED EYES as he begins to understand --

-- this new, alien creature will now pose the greatest threat to his tribe that they have ever known --

Man.

SMASH TO BLACK.