

# **HANNIBAL BARCA**

Pilot Episode

by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

On a title over black.

"OF ALL THAT BEFELL BOTH THE ROMANS AND THE CARTHAGINIANS  
THE CAUSE WAS ONE MAN, ONE MIND-- HANNIBAL"

POLYBIUS 143 B.C.

The words fade bringing an INKY SEA into focus. Lazy waves roll to shore, raising and lowering the prow of a Roman galley moored at the base of a cliff.

SUPER TITLE:

THE BLACK SEA, 1000 MILES FROM ROME

ABOARD THE GALLEY

A ROMAN COMMANDER hurries his men ashore. The heavily armed LEGIONARIES clamor down a gangplank, every fifth man carrying a torch.

They leap onto rocks. Climb steps cut into the cliff.

EXT. HANNIBAL'S BLACK SEA VILLA - NIGHT

A white-stone villa high atop the cliff.

INT. BEDROOM - HANNIBAL'S BLACK SEA VILLA - NIGHT

Two shadowy figures lie in bed. A powerfully built old man and a handsome, raven-haired woman by his side. A dog barks outside the home.

And the old man, seen in profile, opens his right eye and listens. The barking intensifies. Ends with a yelp.

The old man sits up and turns revealing a socket of skin where his left eye should be.

This is sixty-five year old HANNIBAL BARCA, the legendary Carthaginian general, and his lifelong mistress SHARMILA (40). Hannibal listens, wary.

He looks at Sharmila with quick concern, then eases his long frame out of bed and goes to the window.

HANNIBAL'S POV: OUTSIDE THE VILLA

A string of torches winds its way up the cliff. The rhythmic thumping of the soldiers' feet carries on the wind.

IN THE BEDROOM

Sharmila rolls over in bed, drowsy.

SHARMILA

What is it, love? Come back to bed.

Hannibal, eyes glued to the torches, voice level.

HANNIBAL

It's time, Sharmila. Time to leave me.

It takes a moment to register, but when it does Sharmila tosses the sheet aside and hurries to the window.

SHARMILA

Why? What's wrong?

HANNIBAL

Do as I say. Get dressed.

Sharmila looks out at the...

TORCHES

and the shadowy figures of men carrying them.

RESUME: HANNIBAL AND SHARMILA

Peering out the window.

SHARMILA

Who are they?

HANNIBAL

Romans.

SHARMILA

Here in Bithynia?

HANNIBAL

I told you to get dressed.

(softer, nudging her)

Go on now, hurry.

Sharmila moves off and starts to dress.

OUTSIDE

The torches form an arc encircling the villa.

SHARMILA

dressed, turns to Hannibal.

SHARMILA

How could they find us here, at the end of the earth of all places? Move away from the window. Come now, love. Get dressed. Let's go.

Hannibal turns calmly to Sharmila.

HANNIBAL

No... Not this time.

He turns back to the Romans with a faraway look in his eye.

HANNIBAL (CONT'D)

Now it seems it's time to end the anxiety of the Romans. Clearly they can no longer wait for the death of an old man who has caused them so much concern.

END TEASER

ACT I

INT. PALACE OF CARTHAGE - NIGHT

NINE-YEAR OLD HANNIBAL walks with his father, GENERAL HAMILCAR BARCA (37), through an opulent palace.

They climb STAIRS, coming out onto the PALACE ROOF where a marble walkway between pillars leads to a giant gold statue of Baal, the bull-headed god of the Carthaginians.

A HIGH PRIEST steps from the shadows and without a word escorts them to the altar.

Nine-year-old Hannibal walks at his father's side, staring around at the sleeping city by the sea, the star-filled sky, the terrible face of Baal.

At the altar steps the priest stops and nods to Hamilcar who takes his boy by the hand and guides him to a sacrificial lamb pinned to a slab.

HAMILCAR

Tonight, Hannibal, we leave Carthage, perhaps never to see it again. Look around you. Commit to memory this city, this sea, this sky. Store our home in your heart, my son.

Young Hannibal takes an earnest look around.

NINE-YEAR-OLD HANNIBAL  
Where're we going?

HAMILCAR

To Spain, to build a new Carthage, another home far from the grasp of Rome.

He kneels and looks his boy in the face, holds his thin shoulders.

HAMILCAR (CONT'D)

Someday we may return, but so long as Rome stands Carthage will never be safe. The Romans will try to destroy her. But we won't let them. Will we?

NINE-YEAR-OLD HANNIBAL  
No, father. Never!

Pleased, Hamilcar stands and moves his son closer to the lamb. The frightened creature bleats at their approach.

## HAMILCAR

I'll teach you all I know and together  
we will defend Carthage. But to  
come with me you must swear a sacred  
oath, to never submit to Rome.

Hamilcar draws a dagger and slits the lamb's throat. Places  
his boy's hand in the crimson pool.

## HAMILCAR (CONT'D)

Baal watches you, my son, and Carthage  
is listening.

Resolute beyond his years, young Hannibal takes his oath.

## NINE-YEAR-OLD HANNIBAL

I swear, father, I will never submit  
to Rome.

## EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Blue sky over an arid plain, just dirt, dust and esparto  
grass as far as the eye can see.

## SUPER TITLE:

## SPAIN

## ANGLE ON - A STRAW MAN

astride a wooden horse. In the distance, a HELMETED RIDER,  
galloping madly, crouched over the mane. He closes on the  
target and at thirty feet withdraws a javelin and hurls it.

The weapon sails harmlessly over the straw man into the dirt.

## INT. TENT - DAY

TEENAGE HANNIBAL sits at a table within a stuffy tent. Before  
him are parchments, maps, quill pens, books. He is a  
handsome, jovial youth, stocky and manly for a teenager,  
already sporting the traces of a beard.

ADMETUS, his tutor, a reedy erudite Greek in his thirties,  
paces behind him, grilling his student.

## ADMETUS

How many gallons of water does a war-  
elephant need a day?

## TEENAGE HANNIBAL

Eighty.

## ADMETUS

And on a forced march?

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
One hundred and twenty-five.

ADMETUS  
(in Greek - subtitled)  
How long does it take to feed a  
garrison?

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
Daytime, one hour. At night, one  
and a half.

Admetus stops pacing.

ADMETUS  
In Greek!

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
Ten emera, mia ora. Ti nyctha, miamicse ora.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Teenage Hannibal marches at the REAR of a TROOP COLUMN,  
struggling to keep pace.

EXT. TRAINING AREA - DAY

He trains with a sword.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Grooms a mare by torchlight.

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

A rolling grass plain where a company of SOLDIERS stand at  
attention, their youthful commander before them.

Off to the side, Hamilcar watches from atop a horse. Riding  
beside him is MAHARBAL (30) a towering, wild-eyed Numidian.

Teenage Hannibal cracks out commands and the smart troops  
respond - shields overhead, swords left, right, forward -  
the soldiers yell and charge.

Maharbal nods in approval. Hamilcar is impassive.

INT. TENT - DAY

Admetus instructs his student.

ADMETUS  
What is the normal cavalry contingent  
for a Roman legion?

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
A thousand.

ADMETUS  
And in Arabic?

Teenage Hannibal can't recall. He blurts out.

TEENAGED HANNIBAL  
The same number!

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

The helmeted rider takes another run at the target. He wears a different helmet, on another mount, suggesting a leap in time. But he gallops just as fast as before, perhaps even faster, more skillfully.

Forty feet from the target he hurls a spear. It sails straight and true, slamming against the breastplate where the heart would be, rebounding off the armor, falling shamefully in the dirt.

Hamilcar observes from his horse, unimpressed.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Teenage Hannibal sharpens a sword and inspects his handiwork.

EXT. SEASIDE TRAIL - DAY

In the rain, he marches in the MIDDLE of a TROOP COLUMN. Keeping pace, his mood light, the march routine.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

He helps build a raft.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

Sandy soil reflects a mid-day sun where Teenage Hannibal trains. He fights with a wood sword against a HUGE MAN while Hamilcar and Mahabal watch from the side.

Teenage Hannibal attacks. Huge Man parries the blows, counter-strikes, knocks the boy's sword from his hand and bashes him to the ground through his shield.

Hannibal lies in the dirt, whipped. He looks at his father.

Hamilcar stares blankly at his son.

Mahabal goes and retrieves the wood sword and kneels beside Hannibal.

MAHARBAL

It's a rough go for a boy against a man.

HANNIBAL

That's no man. It's an elephant.

Maharbal grins.

MAHARBAL

And how does one fell an elephant?

He taps the boy's knee with the sword.

Hannibal's eyes light up. He takes the sword, springs to his feet and engages the brute, striking at the man's face then suddenly changing levels and swiping hard through his knees. Huge Man bellows and falls in a cloud of dust.

HUGE MAN'S POV

as the dust clears revealing Teenage Hannibal standing over him with the wooden blade at his throat.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Teenage Hannibal works an elephant hauling timber.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Shirtless, the young warrior bathes the elephant. A group of attractive YOUNG WOMEN pass by, admiring him, giggling.

Hannibal tosses a bucket of water in their direction and the girls screech and scamper away.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

An exhausted Hannibal lies half in and out of his hammock. Admetus pacing behind him, still at it.

ADMETUS

How do we pay Gauls?

TEENAGE HANNIBAL

No more, Admetus. I'm tired.

ADMETUS

Paying soldiers, Hannibal, is more important than feeding them. Now, Gauls. How are they paid?

Hannibal thinks.

TEENAGE HANNIBAL

In gold?

ADMETUS  
And Spaniards?

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
Silver and gold.

ADMETUS  
And the Numidians?

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
Our famous cavalry? In women or not  
at all!

He laughs. Admetus playfully shoves him with his foot and he rolls out of the hammock onto the floor.

INT. HANNIBAL'S TENT - NIGHT

Teenage Hannibal translates a scroll by candlelight. Mahabal enters with DAYA (18) an IBERIAN beauty, and young Hannibal sets down his stylus.

MAHARBAL  
This is Daya, a gift from your father.

Teenage Hannibal is taken aback.

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
A wife?

Daya titters. Comes around and stands next to him.

DAYA  
No, my prince. Just for tonight.

She looks at Mahabal, who nods in approval.

MAHARBAL  
(as he goes)  
Make it last.

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
I will.

Mahabal stops and turns.

MAHARBAL  
I was talking to her.

He exits.

Daya looks down at Teenage Hannibal and strokes his face. Slips off her gown and reveals her breathtaking body.

INT. ARENA - DAY

Teenage Hannibal sword fights with three SOLDIERS. The years of training have paid off, he knocks one soldier's sword from his hand, kicks another aside, then battles the third back in retreat.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

His apprenticeship complete, Teenage Hannibal now marches at the HEAD of a TROOP COLUMN beside his father.

INT. MESS TENT - NIGHT

He dines with SOLDIERS. An OFFICER comes up and speaks into his ear. Teenage Hannibal rises and follows the man out.

INT. HAMILCAR'S TENT - NIGHT

Hamilcar sits alone at a table drinking wine. Half-drunk, he opens his fist and stares at a gold ring in his palm. Hannibal enters.

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
You sent for me, father?

HAMILCAR  
Sit down.

Hannibal comes and sits.

HAMILCAR (CONT'D)  
Today is the day of your birth.

Hannibal nods, uncertain of his father's mood. Hamilcar offers him the ring.

HAMILCAR (CONT'D)  
Here, I want you to have this. It was your mother's. It's all I've left that was hers.

Hannibal takes the ring. A thanks forms on his lips, dies there. His father seems in no mood for words. He gets up to leave, pauses and stares at his father.

After a moment.

HAMILCAR (CONT'D)  
What?

TEENAGE HANNIBAL  
In all these years not a word from you. Isn't it time I knew?

Hamilcar looks squarely at his son, his dark eyes assessing him, judging him man enough to know.

HAMILCAR

I was in Sicily battling the Romans.  
Your mother, to comfort me on the campaign, left you with a wet-nurse and came to my camp. On her way home she was captured. The Romans sent that ring as proof.

Hamilcar drains his cup.

HAMILCAR (CONT'D)

I paid the ransom. The next morning they sent me your mother's hands. Just her hands. A day later she rode into camp, naked and tied to a horse. She'd bled to death.

Hamilcar tears up. Eyes Hannibal, who is speechless.

HAMILCAR (CONT'D)

Now you know the Romans as I do.

Father and son share a look, an understanding.

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

The helmeted rider races toward the straw man again. At thirty feet he hurls a javelin, then a second left-handed.

WHAM!... WHAM!...

Both javelins slam into the dummy's exposed throat.

The helmeted rider whips his mount skillfully around the target, stops and removes his helmet.

An adult HANNIBAL looks at Maharbal and his father.

Finally, Hamilcar smiles.

END ACT I

Here ends the website excerpt of Hannibal Barca. If you'd like to read the full script contact R.C. Davidson at Tahoe Film Group: [rcdavidson@tahoefilmgroup.com](mailto:rcdavidson@tahoefilmgroup.com).