

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-four year old HANNIBAL BARCA, the legendary
Carthaginian general, and his lifelong mistress SHARMILA
(55). 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? Come now,
get away from the window. We have to 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