

THE SLAVE'S KING

The Fifth King, Part Two of three.

A FEATURE FILM · FROM MOUNT LI TO THE GREAT SWAMP

ALL KINGS DIE · II OF III · ALL KINGS DIE

A slave woman drags the king she hates across the whole world to the one door that can stop the monsters, and nobody can understand why she refuses every chance to let him die.

She could walk away at any moment. So why won't she?

ABWOOLI has to get WAMARA, the wreck of a king, home to the door only his blood can open. With her walk a beggar who was Solomon, his old captain BENAIAH, the Qin clerk JING and AALIS, who has eaten people. She has four thumbs of butter left to tell who is real, and she counts them.

At Mount Li they are marked as labour, and the god-king is handed a basket. Jing looks into the Emperor's carriage and finds a dead man and salted fish: faces rot, so the Many must keep eating. In the clay army he finds his brother's face. He writes his own name on a grave tile so the state will leave his family alone, and forges them out. On the way out, a dying creature tells them where she waits: the great swamp, and at flood it is hers.

At home in Kitara, the thing wearing the king's son ARAALI takes the kingdom with perfect manners. NYANGOMA, Abwooli's daughter, is flogged for saying so. She learns to work by the milk pots, saves KAGORO's son and gets the first of them killed, and steals the regalia one piece at a time, while it watches her kindly and wants to learn.

At Antioch, Aalis hands the band to the cannibal KING TAFUR for an easy absolution, and then eats at his table so they can leave. Tafur tells Abwooli she is starting to hope, and that one of the Many behind her smells of love. So she leaves the drum out for nine nights, and catches the thing wearing her dead friend KISEGU with butter running down its wrist. She lets it walk behind them.

At Jerusalem, Benaiah traps the demon ASHMEDAI on the silent Temple site and dies of it. In the chain the demon tells them everything. THE MOTHER of the Many will eat the king afraid at the door and lock it with his blood, and while there is one man to find, why would she look for anything else? He looks at Abwooli and weeps. Solomon, back on his throne, offers her freedom. She refuses, and nobody can say why.

At Cairo, Wamara walks off to buy bread and is sold as a slave. All he has to do is say "I", and he can't. She buys him before he breaks, with MANSA MUSA's borrowed gold and will not free him. He carries her water. At Aksum the monks take him up a cliff where he is safe forever. He climbs down on his own, and that night his hand softens the butter.

A trader says they are hunting a girl in Kitara. Abwooli does the sum: wait ten months and the girl dies; go now and they beat the flood, if nobody falls sick. She falls sick. In the swamp Aalis poisons herself and lets them eat her, and they die in hundreds. For one page it is a win. Then the Mother rises, passes Abwooli by, and takes the king.

It's over. The door will be locked. Abwooli walks through the water to DEATH with her last question. He said one man alive had the blood.

"I said one man."

Nyangoma is Wamara's daughter, and the whole court has laughed at that joke for sixteen years. Every drop of water, for two years, kept a king to hunt, so nobody would think about it. Now they will. She turns south.

FORMAT	Feature · 125 pages · Part Two of a planned trilogy
GENRE	Epic dark fantasy, a road cut against a siege
TERRITORY	Mount Li, Antioch, Jerusalem, Cairo, Aksum, the great swamp, Kitara
LANGUAGE	English
COMPARABLES	The Two Towers · Dune: Part Two · The Woman King

WHY NOW

Every king in this film existed in somebody's record or somebody's legend, and they have never been put in one story. It gives the world's oldest empires to a slave's point of view. The secret that drives the whole film lands on its last page, and it changes everything the audience has watched.

WRITTEN BY KEITH LUKWAGO · PRODUCED BY KENNETH SSENTAMU testamentkj@gmail.com · Kampala, Uganda