

DAVID: SHEPHERD TO KING

An Animated Musical

Original Screenplay

ACT ONE: THE SHEPHERD CALLED

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SCENE 1: THE EMPTY CHAIR

FADE IN:

EXT. JUDEAN WILDERNESS - DUSK

Wind moves through dry grass. The sound of it - ancient, restless, alive.

A single olive tree, twisted by decades of wind, clings to a rocky hillside. Its shadow stretches long across the stones.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

The hills of Judah at twilight. Terraced fields carved into slopes. Sheep scattered like pale stones across the brown earth. In the distance, a small town of flat-roofed houses built from the same rock as the hills themselves.

Bethlehem. The house of bread.

Smoke rises from evening fires. The day's work ending. Families gathering.

We drift toward one house larger than the others. Prosperous. A courtyard. A well. The sounds of voices within.

INT. JESSE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Firelight. The crack and pop of burning olive wood.

A long table, scarred by years of use. Bread torn into pieces. A clay pot of lentil stew, steam rising. Olives. Cheese. Wine in rough cups.

Seven young men eat. They range from late twenties to late teens - brothers shaped by the same blood but sorted by birth order into different lives.

JESSE (60s) sits at the head. His hands are a worker's hands, thick-knuckled and calloused, but he holds his wine cup with a certain formality. A man who started with nothing and built something. Who wants his sons to remember it.

JESSE

Boaz could have looked away. That's what I need you to understand. She was gleaning at the edges of his field - a foreign widow, a Moabite, taking what the harvesters left behind. He owed her nothing.

ELIAB (28) tears bread without looking up. The eldest. Built like a soldier because he is one - serves in Saul's militia, carries himself with the particular confidence of a firstborn son who has never had to wonder about his place in the world.

JESSE

(CONT'D)

But he saw something in her. Something that had nothing to do with where she came from.

ABINADAB (25) reaches across the table for the wine. Second-born, with the perpetual restlessness of a man who will never inherit and knows it.

SHAMMAH (23) has stopped eating. Third-born. Quieter than the others. His eyes keep drifting to something across the table.

An empty place. Eighth seat. The bread there untouched. The cup overturned so no one fills it by mistake.

JESSE

(CONT'D)

And when Boaz spread his cloak over Ruth - when he told her she would be his wife - he wasn't just taking a woman. He was making a claim. He was saying that her past didn't define her future. That God could take a Moabite widow and make her the great-grandmother of-

ELIAB

(not looking up)

Of you. And then of us. We know, Father.

A beat. Jesse's mouth tightens.

JESSE

You know the story. I'm asking if you understand what it means.

NETHANEL (21) and **RADDAI** (19) exchange glances. The fourth and sixth sons - close enough in age to share silent commentary on their father's repetitions.

ELIAB

It means we came from nothing. Foreign blood. Scandal. And now we're respectable. You've told us.

JESSE

I've told you because you need to remember. Prosperity doesn't protect you from-

SHAMMAH

(quietly)

Has anyone taken food out?

The table goes still.

Jesse's hand pauses, his cup halfway to his mouth. For a moment something crosses his face - not guilt, exactly. More like a man who has just remembered an appointment he'd rather have forgotten.

ELIAB

He knows where the food is.

SHAMMAH

It's been three nights.

ELIAB

And it'll be three more. He prefers it out there.

ABINADAB

He could at least-

ELIAB

(sharp)

Could at least what?

Abinadab doesn't finish. Nobody does.

OZEM (18), the seventh and youngest at the table, looks between his brothers. Uncertain. He's only recently graduated from the children's status himself. Still learning the unspoken rules.

OZEM

Should I bring him something?

ELIAB

No.

JESSE

(at the same moment)

That's not necessary.

Father and eldest son glance at each other. An understanding there. Something decided long ago that doesn't require discussion.

JESSE
(CONT'D)
(returning to his wine)

He does his work. He prefers solitude. Some men are made that way.

He drinks. The conversation resumes - militia gossip, the wheat harvest, a dispute over grazing rights with a neighbor. Normal things. Family things.

SLOW PUSH IN on the empty place at the table. The bread hardening. The overturned cup.

Nobody mentions it again.

MATCH CUT TO:

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SCENE 2: THE FIELDS

EXT. BETHLEHEM HILLS - NIGHT

The same bread. The same cup.

But these are in David's hands - his own provisions, brought from home three days ago. The bread is nearly gone. The cup holds water from a spring.

DAVID (16) sits on a limestone outcrop, his flock scattered in the hollow below. Not what we expected - smaller than his brothers, wiry rather than strong. Reddish hair, sun-darkened skin, eyes that hold too much for his age.

Those eyes are fixed on his hands.

His hands won't stop shaking.

WIDER

His tunic is torn at the shoulder. A gash on his forearm has dried to a dark crust. Dirt and blood on his face, smeared where he wiped sweat from his eyes.

Behind him, at the edge of the firelight: a shape. Massive. Unmoving. The lion.

David doesn't look at it. Can't look at it. He stares at his hands instead, turning them over in the flickering light as if they belong to someone else.

He flexes his fingers. Watches the tendons move beneath the skin.

DAVID
(barely audible)

How?

Nothing answers.

He stands. Moves toward the carcass. Stops three feet away.

The lion is enormous - three hundred pounds of muscle and teeth. Its jaw hangs wrong, the bone shattered. Its throat is crushed, the windpipe collapsed. No weapon marks. No spear wound. Just the damage that human hands should not be capable of inflicting.

David's hands.

He looks at them again.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I'm not strong enough for this.

He says it like he's trying to convince himself. Like saying it out loud will make the evidence in front of him disappear.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

Eliab pins me in ten seconds when we wrestle. Every time. I couldn't lift the water jar until I was fourteen.

He holds up his hands. Ordinary hands. A young man's hands, callused from the harp and the sling but not unusually large, not unusually powerful.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

These hands.

He drops them. Steps back from the lion. Returns to his rock. Sits heavily.

The sheep have settled around him, unbothered. Accustomed to his presence. One lamb wobbles over and collapses against his leg with the boneless trust of the very young.

David absently rests his hand on its wool.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(to the lamb)

You saw it.

The lamb's ears twitch.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

You saw me.

He looks up at the sky. The stars are staggering - no moon tonight, so the Milky Way spills across the darkness like a river of light. Like dust. Like sand.

Like descendants too numerous to count.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(to the sky now)

Was that You?

Wind moves through the grass. Nothing else.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I need it to have been You. Because if it wasn't...

He doesn't finish. Picks up his lyre instead. The instrument is well-worn, the wood smooth from years of handling. He runs his fingers across the strings without playing.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

If it wasn't You, then I don't know what I am.

He plays a single note. Lets it fade.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

My mother used to say You spoke to Abraham. Out in fields like this. At night, when everyone else was asleep.

A chord now. Then another. Something taking shape.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

She said You showed him the stars and told him his children would be like them. Uncountable.

He plays. The melody is uncertain at first, searching.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I used to imagine that. Abraham standing out here. Looking up. Wondering if he'd lost his mind.

His voice catches. He stops playing.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

She would have believed me. About the lion.

Beat.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

She would have been the only one.

He looks toward the distant glow of Bethlehem. Pinpricks of firelight. Homes. Families.

His family.

He doesn't say what they're doing. He doesn't know. He just looks at those lights - close enough to see, too far to reach - and something in his face tells us everything.

He is sixteen years old. He has just done the impossible. And there is no one in the world he can tell.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(turning back to the stars)

I'm not asking for an answer. I know You don't... I know it doesn't work that way.

He picks up the lyre again.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I just need to know if You see me. If You're there. If any of this...

He gestures vaguely - at the lion, at the sheep, at himself.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

...means anything.

He begins to play. The melody finds itself - not triumphant, not self-pitying. Something rawer. A question set to music.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(singing, almost speaking at first)

My hands won't stop. I'm sitting here and my hands won't stop...

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■ SONG: "DO YOU SEE ME" ■

The song unfolds in the darkness. David's voice - untrained but true - carries across the hills. The sheep listen. The stars listen. Whether God listens, we cannot say.

The camera moves during the song:

- CLOSE ON David's hands, still trembling, finding steadiness on the strings
- WIDE SHOT of the hills, David a tiny figure in the vastness, his voice small against the silence
- THE LION, motionless, a monument to something David cannot explain
- THE DISTANT LIGHTS of Bethlehem, unreachable
- THE STARS, endless and silent

The song builds not to triumph but to exhaustion - the exhaustion of a boy who has been brave beyond his years and now, finally, allows himself to feel the weight of it.

By the final verse, David is no longer shaking. Not because he has answers. Because he has given the question to Someone who might.

The song ends.

Silence. The wind. A sheep shifting in its sleep.

David sets down the lyre. Lies back on the rock. Stares up at the stars.

DAVID

(whispered)

I can wait. I'm good at waiting.

He closes his eyes.

SLOW FADE as the fire burns low.

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SCENE 3: THE PROOF

EXT. BETHLEHEM HILLS - DAWN

Pink light on the eastern hills. The sheep stirring, hungry for fresh grazing.

David is already up. He stands over the lion's body, thinking.

DAVID

(to himself)

If I leave you here, the jackals will have you by nightfall. There won't be anything left.

He circles the carcass.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

But if I bring you back...

He doesn't finish. He's not sure what he's hoping for. Recognition? Belief? Just someone to see what he's done and acknowledge that it happened?

He makes a decision. Starts dragging the lion toward the donkey.

It's brutal work. The lion is three times his weight. He has to stop every few feet, gasping, arms burning. But he keeps going.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

(straining)

You're going to be worth it. Somebody's going to look at you and...

He heaves. The lion moves another foot.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

...and say something. Anything.

TIME CUT

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EXT. ROAD TO BETHLEHEM - MORNING

David leads his flock down the winding path toward home. Behind him, the donkey drags the lion's body, leaving a trail in the dust.

He looks exhausted. Determined. Young.

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EXT. JESSE'S COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The morning routine. Servants drawing water. The smell of bread baking. Normalcy.

Eliab stands at the well, washing his face. He's leaving today for a patrol - his militia gear is stacked near the gate.

He hears the sheep before he sees them. The familiar sound of the flock returning.

ELIAB

(without turning)

You're late.

DAVID
(O.S.)

I know.

Eliab straightens. Dries his face with a cloth. Turns.

Sees the lion.

For a moment his face is blank. Uncomprehending. The carcass doesn't make sense. His mind refuses to assemble the information.

Then it does.

ELIAB

What is that?

DAVID

Lion. It came for the flock.

Eliab walks toward the body. Slowly. Each step deliberate. His expression shifting through phases - confusion, realization, something darker.

He crouches by the lion's head. Examines the shattered jaw. Touches the crushed throat.

ELIAB
(quiet)

You did this.

DAVID

Yes.

ELIAB

With what?

David holds up his hands. Just his hands.

Eliab stands. His jaw works. He doesn't look at David - keeps his eyes on the lion, as if he can make it mean something different by staring hard enough.

ELIAB
(finally)

You should have let it take the lamb.

DAVID

What?

ELIAB

One lamb. We have two hundred sheep. One lamb isn't worth dying for.

DAVID

I didn't die.

ELIAB

You should have.

The words land like a slap. David steps back.

ELIAB

(CONT'D)

(still not looking at him)

A lion, David. Do you understand what you did? No weapons. No help. You're not trained for this. You're not built for this.

DAVID

I know-

ELIAB

Then how?

David doesn't answer. Because he doesn't have an answer. Because the question has been burning in his own chest all night.

ELIAB

(CONT'D)

You got lucky. That's all this is. Luck. The lion was sick, or old, or already injured, and you got lucky.

DAVID

Look at it, Eliab. Look at what I did to it.

ELIAB

(finally turning to face him)

I am looking.

Their eyes meet.

ELIAB

(CONT'D)

And I'm looking at you. Sixteen years old. Shepherd. Dreamer. Our little brother who plays his little harp and thinks he's special.

DAVID

I never said I was-

ELIAB

You didn't have to.

Eliab steps closer. His voice drops. This is the real conversation now, the one underneath.

ELIAB

(CONT'D)

Our whole lives, David. Do you know what it's been like? Father looks at you different. Always has. The youngest. The mistake. The one who came after he thought he was done having sons. And instead of treating you like an afterthought, he treats you like...

He doesn't finish.

DAVID

Like what?

ELIAB

Like a promise. Like something he's waiting on. The rest of us work. Fight. Build. You sit in fields and sing to sheep, and somehow that makes you Father's favorite.

DAVID

(stunned)

Father doesn't even know I exist.

ELIAB

(bitter laugh)

Is that what you think?

David falters. He has never considered this. Never imagined that his brothers might see his isolation as privilege.

ELIAB

(CONT'D)

Get rid of the lion. The smell will attract scavengers.

He turns toward the gate. Stops.

ELIAB

(CONT'D)

And don't tell this story. To anyone. The last thing this family needs is you showing off.

He leaves.

David stands alone in the courtyard. The lion at his feet. The proof he worked all night to bring home.

He looks at the body. At the door his brother walked through. At his own hands.

DAVID

(almost inaudible)

I wasn't showing off. I just wanted someone to...

He doesn't finish.

A SERVANT approaches, uncertain.

SERVANT

Should I... should I help you move it?

David looks at the lion for a long moment.

DAVID

Burn it.

SERVANT

Sir?

DAVID

Burn the body. Let the smoke go up.

He walks toward the fields. Toward the sheep. Away from the house.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

(to himself)

Maybe You'll smell it. Maybe You'll know.

He doesn't look back.

CUT TO:

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SCENE 4: THE HOLLOW KING

EXT. GIBEAH - NIGHT

The capital rises on its hill like a fist against the sky. Torches burn along the walls, but their light seems to stop at the edges -

pushed back by a darkness that has nothing to do with the hour.

INT. SAUL'S PALACE - THRONE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The throne sits empty. Oil lamps flicker, casting long shadows.

A SERVANT crosses the room, carrying a tray of food. He moves quietly, carefully. Afraid to make noise.

He stops at a doorway. Hesitates. Then continues.

INT. SAUL'S BEDCHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

SAUL (50s) sits on the edge of his bed, hunched forward, hands gripping his skull.

He is tall - famously tall, head and shoulders above other men. Built like a warrior. But something has hollowed him out. His eyes, when he raises his head, are the eyes of a man who has seen something terrible and cannot stop seeing it.

His wife **AHINOAM** (50s) sits beside him, not touching him. She's learned not to touch him when he's like this.

SAUL

(low, to himself)

...torn the kingdom from you. Given it to a neighbor. A neighbor who is better than you...

AHINOAM

Saul.

He doesn't respond.

AHINOAM

(CONT'D)

Saul. You're awake. You're here.

SAUL

(not looking at her)

The same words. Every night. The same voice. I close my eyes and Samuel is there, telling me I've failed. That God is done with me.

AHINOAM

It's a dream.

SAUL

(laughing, hollow)

Is it?

He stands. Moves to the window. The city sprawls below - his city, his kingdom, the thing he never asked for and couldn't refuse.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Do you know what he told me? Samuel? When he pronounced judgment?

Ahinoam doesn't answer. She knows.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

"The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you."

He turns. His face is terrible.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

A neighbor. Who is this neighbor? Is it someone I know? Someone in my own court? Someone who sits at my table and smiles and waits for me to fall?

AHINOAM

Samuel speaks in riddles. He always has.

SAUL

Samuel speaks the word of the Lord. That's the problem. That's always been the problem.

He begins to pace. There's a manic energy to him now, something building.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

I didn't want this. You know that. When Samuel came to anoint me, I was hiding. Literally hiding. In the baggage. Because I knew. I knew I wasn't enough.

AHINOAM

You've won every battle-

SAUL

And lost the only one that mattered.

He stops pacing. Stands very still.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Do you know what it feels like?

AHINOAM

What?

SAUL

To have the Spirit of God on you.

She waits.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

It's like... light. Not outside you - inside. In your chest. In your hands. Everything is clear. Everything makes sense. You act and you know - you know - it's right. The words come and they're His words. The strength comes and it's His strength.

His voice breaks.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

And then it leaves.

He sits heavily on the bed. Ahinoam reaches for him - stops herself.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

It leaves and you're just... yourself again. This weak, ordinary, terrified thing that was never meant to be king.

AHINOAM

(carefully)

The Spirit-

SAUL

Is gone. Has been gone. And something else...

He presses his hands against his temples.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Something else moves in the emptiness. Something that knows all my fears. All my failures. Something that hates me with my own voice.

AHINOAM

Saul-

SAUL

(suddenly sharp)

Don't.

She pulls back.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

(quieter)

Don't tell me it's a dream. Don't tell me I'm imagining it. I know what I've lost. I know what I'm becoming.

He looks at his hands. Opens and closes them.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

And I don't know how to stop.

Long silence.

AHINOAM

(gentle)

Come to bed.

SAUL

I can't sleep.

AHINOAM

Then don't sleep. Just lie down. I'll stay awake with you.

He looks at her. For a moment, something softens. The man he used to be, still in there, struggling.

SAUL

Why do you stay?

AHINOAM

Because you're my husband. And because I remember who you were.

SAUL

(bitter)

That man is dead.

AHINOAM

Then I grieve him. And I stay anyway.

She holds out her hand. He looks at it for a long moment.

Then takes it.

AHINOAM

(CONT'D)

One night at a time. That's all we can do.

SAUL

(*lying back*)

One night at a time.

But his eyes stay open, staring at the ceiling.

And in the darkness, something stares back.

CUT TO:

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SCENE 5: THE SON WHO STAYED

EXT. GIBEAH - TRAINING YARD - MORNING

The clash of weapons. Soldiers drilling. The ordinary sounds of a kingdom preparing for war.

JONATHAN (late 20s) stands apart from the others, loosing arrow after arrow into a target fifty yards away. Every shot hits center.

He is everything a prince should be: handsome, skilled, confident. But there's a heaviness to him. The weight of something he carries and never mentions.

His **ARMOR-BEARER** (20s) stands nearby, holding a quiver of replacement arrows. Young. Loyal. Worried.

ARMOR-BEARER

(*hesitant*)

The servants are talking again.

Jonathan doesn't respond. Looses another arrow. Dead center.

ARMOR-BEARER

(CONT'D)

About last night. The king didn't sleep. They heard him walking the halls.

JONATHAN

(*nocking another arrow*)

They should mind their own business.

ARMOR-BEARER

They're afraid of him.

The arrow pauses, half-drawn.

ARMOR-BEARER

(CONT'D)

When the darkness comes on him... the things he says...

JONATHAN

(releasing)

My father is the Lord's anointed.

The arrow buries itself in the target. Jonathan reaches for another without looking.

ARMOR-BEARER

Some say God has-

JONATHAN

(sharp)

Be very careful what you say next.

The armor-bearer falls silent.

Jonathan draws. Holds. His arms are steady. His face is not.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

My father made mistakes. Serious mistakes. He disobeyed the Lord's command - I know this. Samuel pronounced judgment - I know this too.

He releases. The arrow flies true.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

But he's still my father. And he's still the king. Whatever God is doing - whatever punishment is coming - my place is beside him.

ARMOR-BEARER

Even if-

JONATHAN

Even if.

He lowers the bow. Turns to face the younger man.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

Do you have a father?

ARMOR-BEARER

He died in the Philistine wars. When I was young.

JONATHAN

Then you don't know.

Jonathan's voice softens. Not anger - grief.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

A son doesn't abandon his father. Not when he's strong. Not when he's weak. Not when he's... whatever my father is becoming.

He hands the bow to the armor-bearer. Looks toward the palace.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

If the kingdom falls, it falls. If my father destroys himself, he destroys himself. And if he takes me with him-

He doesn't finish.

ARMOR-BEARER

(quiet)

And if he takes you with him?

Jonathan smiles. It doesn't reach his eyes.

JONATHAN

Then I'll have done my duty.

He walks toward the palace.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

(over his shoulder)

Don't repeat what the servants say. It doesn't help anyone.

He goes.

The armor-bearer watches him until he disappears. Then looks at the target, bristling with arrows.

Every shot perfect.

Every shot wasted.

CUT TO:

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SCENE 6: THE PROPHET'S GRIEF

EXT. RAMAH - DAY

A small town in the hill country. Simpler than Gibeah. No fortifications. No palace.

Just a house at the edge of town, larger than the others. The house of the prophet.

INT. SAMUEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SAMUEL (80s) sits in a corner, wrapped in a cloak despite the warmth. He has the face of a man who has wept until weeping became as natural as breathing.

A bowl of food sits before him. Untouched. Cold.

A **YOUNG PROPHET** (20s) - one of the "sons of the prophets" who serve Samuel - enters cautiously.

YOUNG PROPHET

Master. You haven't eaten.

SAMUEL

I'm not hungry.

YOUNG PROPHET

You said that yesterday. And the day before.

Samuel doesn't respond. His eyes are fixed on something that isn't there.

YOUNG PROPHET

(CONT'D)

Master, it's been months. Since you...

He stops. Doesn't know how to say it.

SAMUEL

Since I told Saul he was finished.

The young prophet winces.

SAMUEL

(CONT'D)

You can say it. Everyone's thinking it. The great prophet Samuel, destroyer of kings. I made him and then I broke him.

YOUNG PROPHET

You did what the Lord commanded.

SAMUEL
(*bitter*)

Yes. I did what the Lord commanded.

He finally moves. Pulls the cloak tighter. An old man holding himself together by force of will.

SAMUEL
(*CONT'D*)

I anointed him, you know. Saul. I was there when the oil touched his head. I watched the Spirit rush upon him. I saw his face change - saw the fear leave his eyes, saw something magnificent take its place.

YOUNG PROPHET

I've heard the stories.

SAMUEL

Stories.

Samuel laughs. It's not a pleasant sound.

SAMUEL
(*CONT'D*)

He was hiding. When the lots fell to him. Did the stories tell you that? We searched the whole assembly and couldn't find him. Finally someone said, "He's hidden himself among the baggage."

YOUNG PROPHET

I... I didn't know that.

SAMUEL

The baggage. The future king of Israel, crouched behind sacks of grain, praying no one would find him.

He shakes his head.

SAMUEL
(*CONT'D*)

And I thought: yes. This is the one. A man who doesn't want power. A man who hides from his own anointing. Surely this man will serve God rightly.

YOUNG PROPHET

What happened?

Samuel is quiet for a long moment.

SAMUEL

Something broke. Or maybe something was always broken and I couldn't see it. The humility that made him hide - it was the same thing that made him afraid. And fear...

He trails off.

SAMUEL

(CONT'D)

Fear makes men do terrible things.

The young prophet sits. This is more than Samuel has said in weeks.

YOUNG PROPHET

The Lord told you to stop grieving.

SAMUEL

The Lord told me to fill my horn with oil and go to Bethlehem. To Jesse. He says He has provided Himself a king among Jesse's sons.

YOUNG PROPHET

Then why are you still here?

Samuel looks at him. And for the first time, we see past the grief to the fear beneath.

SAMUEL

Because I got it wrong the first time.

YOUNG PROPHET

The Lord chose Saul. Not you.

SAMUEL

And the Lord chose through me. Through my hands. Through my voice. I looked at Saul and thought I saw what God saw. And I was wrong.

He stands. Slowly. Joints aching.

SAMUEL

(CONT'D)

What if I'm wrong again? What if I go to Bethlehem and look at Jesse's sons and think I know - think I can see what God sees - and I'm wrong? What if I anoint another failure? Another fear? Another king who starts well and ends...

He gestures vaguely. Toward Gibeah. Toward Saul.

YOUNG PROPHET

The Lord said He will show you.

SAMUEL

He said that last time too.

YOUNG PROPHET

(firmly)

Then trust Him.

Samuel stops. Looks at this young man. Sees the conviction there. The certainty he used to have.

SAMUEL

Trust.

YOUNG PROPHET

Yes.

SAMUEL

Trust got me here.

YOUNG PROPHET

And distrust will keep you here. In this room. With this cold food. Weeping for a king who still lives.

Samuel is silent.

YOUNG PROPHET

(CONT'D)

You can't see what God sees. You've never been able to. None of us can. That's not the job.

SAMUEL

Then what is?

YOUNG PROPHET

To go where He sends you. To anoint who He chooses. And to trust that He sees what you can't.

A long pause.

Then Samuel moves toward the door. Picks up his staff.

SAMUEL

Fill the horn.

YOUNG PROPHET

Master?

SAMUEL

(at the door)

Fill the horn with oil. We're going to Bethlehem.

He steps out into the light.

SAMUEL

(CONT'D)

(to himself)

God help me. God help whoever I'm about to anoint.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 7: THE PROPHET COMES

EXT. BETHLEHEM - DAY

The town gate. A cluster of ELDERS, old men with long beards and worried faces, stand in a tight group.

Coming up the road: SAMUEL, leaning on his staff. The young prophet follows with a heifer for sacrifice.

The elders see him coming. Their worry becomes fear.

ELDER #1

(hissing to the others)

It's him. It's Samuel.

ELDER #2

What's he doing here?

ELDER #1

Nothing good. Prophets don't travel for good news.

They arrange themselves. Trying to look official. Trying to hide their trembling.

Samuel reaches the gate. Stops. Studies them.

ELDER #1

(CONT'D)

(carefully)

Do you come in peace?

A reasonable question. Samuel's last public appearance was pronouncing divine judgment on the king.

SAMUEL

In peace. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.

Relief ripples through the elders. But not complete relief.

SAMUEL

(CONT'D)

Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.

He begins walking into town. The elders scramble to follow.

SAMUEL

(CONT'D)

(to the young prophet, quiet)

Which house is Jesse's?

YOUNG PROPHET

The large one. Near the eastern well.

SAMUEL

Take me there.

They walk through Bethlehem. People come out of their houses to watch. Children point. Women whisper.

When prophets come, things change.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jesse is in the courtyard when he sees the procession. His face cycles through confusion, honor, and terror in quick succession.

He bows low.

JESSE

My lord Samuel. This is... we are honored beyond...

SAMUEL

Consecrate yourself and your sons. You will come to the sacrifice with me.

Jesse bows again. This is not a request.

JESSE

Of course. Of course. My sons... my sons are...

He looks around. Shouts to a servant.

JESSE
(CONT'D)

Find them. All of them. Bring them here. Now.

The servant runs.

Jesse turns back to Samuel, still bowing, still terrified, still wondering what he's done to attract a prophet's attention.

JESSE
(CONT'D)

Whatever we can provide, my lord. Whatever you need.

Samuel studies him. This ordinary man. This prosperous farmer.

SAMUEL
(to himself)

A king from here?

He looks around at the dusty courtyard. The sheep pens. The smell of ordinary life.

SAMUEL
(CONT'D)

Lord, what are You doing?

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 8: THE REJECTION OF SEVEN

INT. JESSE'S HOUSE - LATER

The main room. Cleaned hastily. Lamps lit. The smell of incense.

Seven young men stand in a line. Jesse's sons, assembled in birth order.

Eliab at the front. Tall. Commanding. The warrior.

Samuel stands before him, the horn of oil in his hands.

SAMUEL'S POV

Eliab. Head and shoulders above his brothers. Strong jaw. Clear eyes. The bearing of a leader.

SAMUEL

(V.O.)

(thinking)

This must be him. Look at him. A born king.

He reaches for the oil.

GOD'S VOICE

(not audible - we see Samuel react as if
struck)

No.

Samuel freezes.

GOD'S VOICE

(CONT'D)

Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature. I have rejected him.

Samuel's hand trembles.

GOD'S VOICE

(CONT'D)

For the Lord sees not as man sees. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

Samuel withdraws his hand. His face has gone pale.

SAMUEL

(to Jesse)

The Lord has not chosen this one.

Confusion. Jesse glances at Eliab. Eliab's jaw tightens.

JESSE

Perhaps... perhaps Abinadab...

He gestures to his second son.

Abinadab steps forward. Not as tall as Eliab. Clever-looking. Quick.

Samuel studies him. Waits.

Silence.

SAMUEL

Not this one.

JESSE

Shammah, then. Shammah is thoughtful, wise-

Shammah steps forward.

SAMUEL

(after a moment)

No.

One by one. Nethanel. Raddai. Ozem. The seventh son, whose name we don't even catch.

Seven sons. Seven rejections.

The room is thick with tension. Jesse's face has gone from confusion to embarrassment to something approaching desperation.

His sons exchange glances. Confusion. Resentment. Shame. What's wrong with us?

SAMUEL

(voice strained)

Are these all the sons you have?

Jesse hesitates.

It's a small hesitation. Half a breath. But Samuel sees it.

JESSE

There remains yet the youngest.

SAMUEL

Where is he?

JESSE

He is keeping the sheep.

SAMUEL

Send for him.

JESSE

My lord, he's just... he's not...

He struggles for words. How to explain David?

JESSE

(CONT'D)

He's young. A dreamer. He plays music for the sheep. He's not like the others.

SAMUEL

Send for him. Now. We will not sit down until he comes.

Jesse signals to a servant. The servant runs.

The room waits.

Eliab catches Shammah's eye. A look passes between them. They're thinking the same thing:

David?

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 9: THE ANOINTING

EXT. BETHLEHEM HILLS - DAY

David is with his sheep. Playing his harp. Lost in the music.

A SERVANT appears, running, out of breath.

SERVANT

David! David, you have to come!

David looks up. Confused.

DAVID

What's wrong? Is someone hurt?

SERVANT

The prophet. Samuel. He's at your father's house. He's asking for you.

DAVID

For me?

SERVANT

He won't start the sacrifice until you come. Your father sent me to-
David is already moving, handing off the harp, whistling for the dog to watch the sheep.

DAVID

Samuel? The Samuel?

SERVANT

(running alongside)

Yes, and your brothers are all there, and-

But David is ahead of him, running toward home.

INT. JESSE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The door opens.

David enters.

He is exactly what he shouldn't be in this moment: dusty, confused, smelling like sheep. Grass in his hair. Dirt on his face. A boy who was not expected.

He sees Samuel first. The ancient prophet, white-bearded, eyes like wells that go down forever.

He sees his brothers. Lined up, watching him with expressions he can't read.

He sees his father. And on his father's face, something David has never seen before: fear.

GOD'S VOICE

Arise. Anoint him. This is he.

Samuel crosses the room. His staff clicking on the stone floor. Every step deliberate.

He stops before David. Looks at him for a long moment.

SAMUEL

(quietly, so only David hears)

What's your name, boy?

DAVID

David. Son of Jesse.

SAMUEL

David then.

He studies the boy's face. Searching.

SAMUEL

(CONT'D)

Do you know why I'm here?

DAVID

No, my lord.

SAMUEL

Neither do I. Not entirely.

He lifts the horn.

SAMUEL
(CONT'D)

Don't be afraid.

DAVID
(barely audible)

What's happening?

SAMUEL

I don't entirely know. But God does.

He tips the horn.

Oil spills over David's head. Golden. Fragrant. Running down his face, into his eyes, dripping from his jaw, soaking into his tunic.

And something enters the room.

Not visible. Not audible. But every person present feels it. A weight. A presence. A shift in reality itself.

Eliab takes an involuntary step back. Shammah's breath catches. Jesse grips the doorframe.

David's eyes go wide.

DAVID
(gasping)

I... I feel...

He looks at his hands. The same hands that killed the lion. But different now. Charged with something.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

It's like the lion. But more. It's...

SAMUEL

The Spirit of the Lord.

Samuel steps back. Sets down the horn.

SAMUEL
(CONT'D)

From this day forward.

He looks at David. At this dusty, oil-soaked shepherd boy who understands nothing of what has just happened.

SAMUEL
(CONT'D)
(to himself)

Let me have heard correctly this time. Please.

He turns to Jesse.

SAMUEL

(CONT'D)

The sacrifice. Let us proceed.

He walks out. The young prophet follows.

The room empties slowly. Jesse. The brothers. Each one glancing at David as they pass.

David stands alone. Oil running down his face like tears.

* * *

■ SONG: "THE LORD SEES" ■

The song begins with Samuel's voice, ancient and weary. He sings of Saul - of the man who hid in the baggage, the king he loved and lost. Of his own blindness. Of learning, finally, that he cannot see what God sees.

Then David's voice enters. Young. Confused. Feeling the Spirit move in him for the first time with understanding. The same power that killed the lion, now named. Now present. Now terrifying.

The two voices interweave - old prophet and young shepherd, fear and wonder, judgment and promise. Neither understands what God is doing. Both are choosing to trust anyway.

Visually, we see:

- Samuel's memories: young Saul, hiding, being found, being crowned
- David's confusion: looking at his brothers, his father, all of them staring
- The oil still running: golden, sacred, marking him
- The Spirit: invisible but felt, filling the room with weight and light

The song ends with Samuel's whispered prayer: "Let me have heard You right. Let this be the one."

Silence.

David stands alone in the empty room.

He reaches up. Touches his hair. His fingers come away oily.

DAVID

(to himself)

King.

He says it like he's tasting a foreign word.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

He anointed me king.

He looks around. At the ordinary walls. The ordinary floor. The ordinary life he was living an hour ago.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(to God)

I don't understand.

No answer.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I don't understand any of this.

He walks to the door. Looks out at the courtyard, where the sacrifice is being prepared.

His brothers are there. His father. The prophet.

They're all looking at him differently now. Even Eliab.

Especially Eliab.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(whispered)

What am I supposed to do now?

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 10: AFTER

EXT. BETHLEHEM HILLS - NIGHT

The same outcrop. The same stars.

David sits with his sheep. The oil has dried in his hair. He hasn't washed it out. Can't bring himself to.

DAVID
(to God)

I did what You asked. I came when they called. I stood there while the oil poured down and the room changed and everyone looked at me like I was a stranger.

He picks up his harp. Doesn't play it.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

And now I'm here again. Sheep. Stars. Silence.

He laughs. It's not bitter. Just bewildered.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

Anointed king of Israel. Sleeping in a field.

He looks toward Bethlehem. The lights are out now. Everyone asleep.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

Samuel didn't explain anything. He just... poured oil on me and left. Like he was dropping off a package. "Here's your divine calling, sorry I don't have instructions."

He plucks a single string.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

What do I do now? Walk to Gibeah? Knock on Saul's door? "Excuse me, the prophet said I'm supposed to have your job?"

A sheep bleats.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

(to the sheep)

You're right. That's probably a bad idea.

He lies back on the rock. Stares up at the stars.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

(to God)

Is this a promise or a riddle? Are You going to tell me what comes next, or do I just... wait?

Silence.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

I can wait. You know I can. I've been waiting my whole life for someone to see me.

He touches his hair. The dried oil.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

You see me. I know that now. But seeing isn't the same as explaining.

He closes his eyes.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

(almost asleep)

One day at a time. I'm good at that.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 11: THE COST OF CHOSEN

EXT. JESSE'S COURTYARD - DAY

Morning. David at the well, drawing water.

Footsteps behind him. He turns.

Eliab.

DAVID

Brother.

Eliab doesn't respond. Just stands there, arms crossed, studying David like he's never seen him before.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

If you want water, the well's right here.

ELIAB

I don't want water.

DAVID

Then what?

ELIAB

What did he tell you?

DAVID

Who?

ELIAB

Don't. Don't play stupid with me. Samuel. Before he poured the oil. He leaned in and whispered something. What did he say?

David sets down the bucket.

DAVID

He told me not to be afraid.

ELIAB

That's it?

DAVID

That's it.

ELIAB

(stepping closer)

A prophet of God comes to our house. Looks at all of us-all of us-and says no. Rejects me. Rejects Abinadab. Rejects Shammah. Rejects every son Father raised to work and fight and build something. And then he pours oil on you-

His voice cracks.

ELIAB

(CONT'D)

On you. And he whispers something. And you're telling me it was just "don't be afraid?"

DAVID

He said he didn't entirely know what was happening. He said God did.

ELIAB

(bitter laugh)

God knows. That's comforting.

DAVID

Eliab-

ELIAB

Our whole lives, David. Do you understand? I have done everything right. I trained. I fought. I serve in Saul's army. I have bled for this family. For Israel.

He's close now. His voice dropping to something dangerous.

ELIAB

(CONT'D)

And God looked at all of that and said: not good enough. Give it to the shepherd. Give it to the dreamer. Give it to the boy who plays his harp and thinks the stars are listening.

DAVID

I never asked for this.

ELIAB

That makes it worse.

David steps back. He's never seen his brother like this. There's real pain underneath the anger.

DAVID

What do you want me to say?

ELIAB

I want you to explain why God chose you.

DAVID

I can't.

ELIAB

Because there's no explanation. Because it doesn't make sense. Because you're not stronger than me, or smarter, or braver-

DAVID

(quietly)

I killed a lion.

Eliab stops.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

With my hands. I felt its bones break. I don't know how. I don't know why. But something happened that night. Something that had nothing to do with me. And then Samuel came, and the same something...

He touches his hair.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I can't explain why God chose me. I don't think God explains Himself. But I know He's doing something. And I know I didn't earn it.

A long pause.

ELIAB
(finally)

If you're the future of Israel, then Israel is in worse shape than anyone knows.

He turns. Walks away.

DAVID

Eliab.

His brother stops. Doesn't turn.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

ELIAB

Don't be sorry. Be king.

He leaves.

David stands alone at the well. The bucket half-full at his feet. His family's house behind him. His father's flocks in the distance.

Nothing has changed.

Everything has changed.

DAVID
(to God)

I think this is going to cost me more than I understand.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 12: THE SUMMONS

TITLE CARD: THREE MONTHS LATER

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Life has returned to normal. Or something like normal.

David still tends the sheep. Still plays his harp at night. Still sleeps in the fields more often than in his father's house.

But there's a distance now. A barrier between him and his family that wasn't there before. Or maybe it was always there, and now everyone can see it.

A MESSENGER approaches the gate. Travel-worn. Official.

Jesse meets him in the courtyard.

MESSENGER

I bring word from Gibeah. From the king's court.

Jesse pales.

JESSE

The king?

MESSENGER

King Saul seeks a musician. Someone skilled with the lyre. His servants have heard of your son David. The king requests his presence.

Jesse stares. Whatever he expected, it wasn't this.

JESSE

David?

MESSENGER

The king's... condition... requires soothing. Music helps. Your son's reputation has reached the palace.

JESSE

His reputation?

MESSENGER

(patient)

He's known for his skill. Will you send him, or not?

Jesse looks toward the hills. Toward the distant figure of his youngest son.

JESSE

(slowly)

I'll send him.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 13: THE BROKEN KING

INT. SAUL'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

The throne sits at one end. Massive. Imposing.

Saul sits in it like a man being swallowed.

His servants stand at a distance. Their eyes are careful. Their movements slow. They've learned what not to do when the king is like this.

The door opens.

David enters.

He's been cleaned up. New clothes. Hair combed. But he's still obviously young. Obviously out of place.

He sees Saul-this tall, wrecked figure-and his heart breaks.

This is the king of Israel. The Lord's anointed. The man Samuel chose before he chose David.

And he looks like death wearing a crown.

SAUL

(not looking up)

You're the musician.

DAVID

Yes, my lord.

SAUL

Play.

No introduction. No greeting. Just the command.

David sits. Takes out his lyre. Adjusts the tuning.

And begins to play.

It's the song from the hillside. "Do You See Me." But softer now. Gentler.

Something happens.

Saul's grip on the throne's arms loosens. His breathing slows. The tension in his face-the constant, grinding tension-begins to ease.

He listens.

For the first time in months, he simply listens.

When the song ends, there's silence. Saul's eyes are closed.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

(without opening his eyes)

Where did you learn that?

DAVID

I didn't learn it, my lord. I wrote it.

SAUL

When?

DAVID

At night. In the fields. Watching sheep.

Saul opens his eyes. Looks at David properly for the first time.

SAUL

It sounds like something I used to know.

DAVID

My lord?

SAUL

Before everything went wrong. Before Samuel. Before... all of it. There was a time when I could feel God's presence. When everything made sense.

His voice catches.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Your song sounds like that. Like a memory of something I lost.

David doesn't know how to respond.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

What's your name?

DAVID

David. Son of Jesse, from Bethlehem.

SAUL

David.

He rolls the name around. Testing it.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Stay. I want you to stay here. In the palace. Whenever the darkness comes-

He stops. Doesn't want to explain what he means.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

When I need that music. I need to know you're here.

DAVID

Yes, my lord.

Saul waves a hand. Dismissal.

David bows. Turns to go.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

David.

He turns back.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Thank you.

Two words. Simple. But Saul says them like a man who hasn't said them in years.

DAVID

My lord.

He leaves.

Saul sits alone on his throne.

For a moment-just a moment-he looks almost peaceful.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 14: THE PRINCE

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - MORNING

David wanders the palace grounds. Lost. Everything here is grander than anything he's ever seen-stone columns, tiled floors, servants everywhere.

He finds himself in a training yard. Empty except for one figure.

JONATHAN practices archery at the far end. Shot after shot, each one hitting center.

David watches. The prince's form is perfect. Mechanical, almost. Like he's not really thinking about what he's doing.

Jonathan notices him. Lowers the bow.

JONATHAN

You're the musician.

DAVID

Yes, my lord.

JONATHAN

Don't "my lord" me. I'm not my father.

He gestures for David to approach.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

I heard you play last night. Through the walls.

DAVID

I'm sorry if I disturbed-

JONATHAN

You didn't.

He sets down the bow.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

My father slept for six hours straight. Do you know how long it's been since he's done that?

David shakes his head.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

Neither do I. I've lost count.
He studies David. Taking his measure.

JONATHAN
(CONT'D)

You're younger than I expected.

DAVID

I'm old enough to keep sheep.

JONATHAN

And to kill lions, apparently.
David freezes.

JONATHAN
(CONT'D)
(smiling)

Word travels. Even to Gibeah. A shepherd from Bethlehem who killed a lion with his bare hands. The servants talk.

DAVID

I don't tell that story.

JONATHAN

Someone does. It reached us weeks ago.

(beat)

Is it true?

DAVID

Yes.

JONATHAN

How?

DAVID

I don't know.
Jonathan laughs. Not mocking. Surprised.

JONATHAN

That's not the answer I expected.

DAVID

It's the only one I have.

Jonathan picks up the bow again. Holds it out.

JONATHAN

Do you shoot?

DAVID

I use a sling. We don't have bows in the fields.

JONATHAN

Show me.

David reaches into his belt. He carries it everywhere now—the sling his mother taught him to use. He picks up a stone from the ground. Loads it.

Looks around. Spots an apple on a tree at the far end of the yard.

The sling whirs. The stone flies.

The apple explodes.

Jonathan's eyebrows rise.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

How far?

DAVID

Fifty yards is easy. A hundred if I have time to aim.

JONATHAN

And you killed a lion with this?

DAVID

No. That was...

He looks at his hands.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

Something else.

Jonathan is quiet for a moment. Then:

JONATHAN

There's more to you than music, David of Bethlehem.

DAVID

(quietly)

Most people don't think there's anything to me at all.

JONATHAN

Then most people are blind.

Their eyes meet.

Something passes between them. Recognition. The beginning of something neither can name yet.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

I'm Jonathan.

DAVID

I know who you are.

JONATHAN

(smiling)

Everyone knows who I am. That's the curse of being a prince. No one ever lets me introduce myself.

DAVID

My lord-

JONATHAN

Jonathan. Just Jonathan. At least when it's only us.

David nods slowly.

DAVID

Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Better.

(beat)

Come. I'll show you where they keep the food. You're too thin. Shepherds should eat more.

He starts walking. David follows.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

(over his shoulder)

And David?

DAVID

Yes?

JONATHAN

Thank you. For what you did for my father last night. Whatever it was. Thank you.

David doesn't know how to respond.

So he just follows.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 15: THE VALLEY

TITLE CARD: SIX MONTHS LATER

EXT. VALLEY OF ELAH - DAY

Two ridges. Two armies.

Israel on one side. The PHILISTINES on the other. A narrow valley between them, no more than a few hundred yards wide.

No one is fighting.

CLOSE ON Israelite soldiers. Their faces are drawn. Exhausted. Not from battle-from waiting. From fear.

CLOSE ON Saul's tent. The king sits inside, staring at nothing.

CLOSE ON Jonathan, standing at the ridge line, looking down into the valley.

At the figure standing there.

GOLIATH.

Nine feet tall. Maybe more. Bronze armor that gleams in the sun. A spear as thick as a weaving beam. A shield-bearer walks before him, carrying a shield the size of a door.

He is, quite simply, the largest human being anyone has ever seen.

And every morning, he does this:

GOLIATH

(voice echoing off the valley walls)

ISRAEL!

* * *

■ SONG: "THE GIANT'S TAUNT" ■

War drums. Bronze percussion. The Philistine army chanting behind their champion. Goliath's voice-deep, booming, theatrical-fills the valley. He doesn't just threaten. He mocks. He blasphemes. He names Israel's God and laughs at Him.

GOLIATH:

*Forty days I've stood in this valley
Forty nights I've called your name*

PHILISTINE ARMY:

Forty days! Forty nights!

GOLIATH:

*And not one man has had the courage
To come down and play my game*

PHILISTINE ARMY:

No one comes! No one comes!

The song builds. Goliath's contempt is theatrical, performative. He's enjoying this. Every day without an answer is another victory.

We see the Israelite soldiers-turning away, unable to watch. We see Saul-frozen, the tall king who should answer this challenge but cannot.

We see Jonathan-gripping his bow, every muscle tense, held back only by his father's direct order.

The song climaxes with Goliath's roar:

GOLIATH (CONT'D):

I DEFY the armies of Israel!

PHILISTINE ARMY:

He defies! He defies!

GOLIATH:

I DEFY your silent God!

PHILISTINE ARMY:

He defies! He defies!

GOLIATH:

*If He lives then let Him answer
If He's real then let Him send*

*One man to face me in this valley
One man to meet his end!*

Silence. The challenge hangs in the air.

No one answers.

Goliath laughs.

GOLIATH (CONT'D):
That's what I thought.

He turns. Walks back to his lines. The Philistine army chants as he goes:

PHILISTINE ARMY:
*Forty days! Forty nights!
No one comes! No one fights!
Forty days! Forty nights!
Israel's God is dead!*

The drums fade. Silence returns to the valley.

We hold on a single Israelite soldier, young, trembling. He whispers:

SOLDIER:
What do we do?

No one answers.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 16: THE SHEPHERD ARRIVES

EXT. ISRAELITE CAMP - DAY

David approaches the camp with a donkey loaded with supplies-bread, cheese, grain from his father.

He's been at the palace for months, but Jesse sent for him. Supplies for his brothers at the front. A chance to check on them.

David reaches the perimeter. A GUARD stops him.

GUARD

State your business.

DAVID

Supplies for the sons of Jesse. Eliab's regiment.

GUARD

(waving him through)

They're at the front line. Tent with the red stripe.

David enters the camp. Moves through rows of tents, cook fires, soldiers sitting idle with the particular boredom of men who are waiting for something terrible.

He reaches the front line just as the morning routine begins.

A horn sounds from the Philistine side.

SOLDIER #1

(exhausted)

Here we go again.

The soldiers around David move toward the ridge line, not with anticipation but with the shuffling reluctance of men approaching a wound they have to keep examining.

David follows. Reaches the ridgeline.

Sees Goliath for the first time.

The giant is walking into the valley. Massive. Gleaming. Impossible.

GOLIATH

(distant, echoing)

Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me! If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants! But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants!

David watches. His face cycles through shock, confusion, and then something else.

Something that looks almost like anger.

DAVID

(to the soldier beside him)

Who is that?

SOLDIER #2

Where have you been? That's Goliath. Champion of the Philistines.

DAVID

And no one's answered him?

SOLDIER #2

(bitter laugh)

With what? He's been doing this for forty days. The king's offered a reward-wealth, his daughter, tax exemption. No one will go.

GOLIATH

(from the valley)

I defy the armies of Israel this day! Give me a man, that we may fight together!

David's hands tighten into fists.

DAVID

(quiet, intense)

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

The soldier looks at him like he's lost his mind.

SOLDIER #2

Are you new?

DAVID

Answer my question. Who is he to defy God's armies?

The soldiers nearby are starting to stare. This shepherd boy, this delivery boy, asking questions like he has a right to answers.

VOICE

(O.S.)

David!

David turns.

Eliab is pushing through the crowd. His face is thunderous.

ELIAB

What are you doing here?

DAVID

Father sent me with supplies.

ELIAB

Father sent you to bring food, not to gawk at battles you know nothing about.

DAVID

I'm not gawking. I'm asking why no one has answered that-

ELIAB

(low, dangerous)

Be careful what you say next.

DAVID

He's blaspheming. Standing in front of God's armies and calling our God silent. Dead. Where's the king? Where's Jonathan? Where's anyone?

ELIAB

(grabbing his arm)

Why did you come down here? Who's watching the sheep? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart-you've come down to see the battle!

The accusation lands like a blow. David pulls his arm free.

DAVID

What have I done now? I only asked a question.

But the soldiers are talking now. Whispering. Word is spreading.

There's a boy at the front lines asking why no one will fight the giant.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 17: THE OFFER

INT. SAUL'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Saul sits in shadow. Jonathan stands nearby, watching his father's face.

A CAPTAIN enters.

CAPTAIN

My lord. There's a boy at the lines. Asking about the Philistine. Asking why no one has answered the challenge.

Jonathan's head turns.

SAUL

(flat)

A boy?

CAPTAIN

A shepherd. Here with supplies for his brothers. He's causing a stir. Seems to think someone should fight.

SAUL

(bitter laugh)

Tell him to go back to his sheep.

JONATHAN

Wait.

He moves toward the tent entrance.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

What's the boy's name?

CAPTAIN

David, my lord. Son of Jesse.

Jonathan goes still.

JONATHAN

(to Saul)

The musician. Father-it's your musician.

Something flickers in Saul's eyes.

SAUL

David?

JONATHAN

The one who plays for you. When the darkness comes.

A long pause.

SAUL

Bring him.

EXT. SAUL'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

David is brought before the king. He bows.

SAUL

You're the one asking questions.

DAVID

Yes, my lord.

SAUL

And what question, exactly, do you think hasn't been asked already? Do you imagine that in forty days of this humiliation, no one has thought to wonder why our soldiers won't fight?

DAVID

I'm not asking why they won't fight. I'm offering to fight myself. Silence.

Then Saul laughs. It's not a kind sound.

SAUL

You.

DAVID

Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight this Philistine.

SAUL

You're a boy. A shepherd. He's been a man of war since before you were born.

DAVID

Your servant has kept his father's sheep. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after it and struck it and delivered the lamb from its mouth. And if it rose against me, I caught it by the beard and struck it and killed it.

The tent is very quiet now.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

Your servant has struck down both lions and bears. And this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.

Jonathan is staring at David. Remembering their first meeting. The apple at fifty yards. The hands that killed a lion.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.

Saul is silent. He looks at this boy-this shepherd, this musician-and something stirs in him. A memory of certainty. A memory of what it felt like to have faith.

SAUL
(finally)

Go.

JONATHAN

Father-

SAUL
(louder)

Go. And the Lord be with you.

He stands. Pulls off his own armor-the king's armor, bronze and leather, a warrior's protection.

SAUL
(CONT'D)

Take this. If you're going to fight, at least-

David tries to put it on. The helmet swims around his head. The breastplate hangs to his knees. He can barely move.

DAVID
(struggling)

I can't go in these. I haven't tested them.

He takes them off. Hands them back.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I'll go as I am.

He walks out of the tent.

Picks up his staff. His sling.

Stops at the stream that runs through the valley. Kneels. Selects five smooth stones.

And walks toward Goliath.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 18: THE NAME

EXT. VALLEY OF ELAH - CONTINUOUS

The two armies watch from their ridges.

David walks toward the center of the valley. Small. Alone.

Goliath sees him coming. At first, confusion. Then recognition of what this is.

Then rage.

GOLIATH
(roaring)

Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?

David keeps walking.

GOLIATH
(CONT'D)

Come to me, boy! Come, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!

David stops. Forty yards away.

The valley is silent. Both armies holding their breath.

David's voice carries clear and strong:

DAVID

You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin.

Goliath laughs.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts.

The laughter stops.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

The God of the armies of Israel.

He loads his sling.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

Whom you have defied.

Goliath roars. Raises his spear. Begins to charge.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(not shouting-certain)

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand. And I will strike you down. And all this assembly shall know-

He begins to run. Toward the giant. Not away.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

That the Lord saves not with sword and spear.

The sling whirs.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

For the battle is the Lord's.

He releases.

The stone flies.

It catches Goliath in the forehead. The giant's head snaps back. His momentum carries him forward two more steps. Then his legs buckle.

He falls face-first into the dirt.

The earth shakes.

Silence.

David walks to the body. Draws Goliath's own sword-a blade nearly as long as David is tall. Raises it.

Brings it down.

The giant's head rolls free.

For a moment, nothing.

Then the Israelite army screams.

They pour down the hillside, weapons drawn, forty days of fear transformed in an instant into fury.

The Philistines break. Run. Route.

David stands in the center of it, blood on his face, the giant's head at his feet.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 19: THE COST OF VICTORY

EXT. ROAD TO GIBEAH - DAY

The victory march. Soldiers singing. Women dancing along the roadside.

David rides beside Jonathan, the giant's head tied to his saddle like a trophy. He looks dazed. Overwhelmed.

WOMEN

(singing, dancing)

Saul has struck down his thousands!
And David his ten thousands!
The song spreads. Repeats. Grows louder.

WOMEN

(CONT'D)

Saul has struck down his thousands!
And David his ten thousands!
David glances at Saul, riding ahead.
The king's face is stone.
But his eyes-his eyes are watching David. Calculating. Measuring.
And something cold enters them.
Jonathan sees it too. His hand finds David's arm. Squeezes once.

JONATHAN

(quiet)

Be careful.

DAVID

Of what?
Jonathan doesn't answer. He doesn't need to.
The women keep singing.

WOMEN

Saul has struck down his thousands!
And David his ten thousands!
CLOSE ON Saul's face.
The moment jealousy enters.
The moment everything breaks.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 20: THE COVENANT

EXT. PALACE ROOF - NIGHT

David stands alone, looking out over Gibeah.

Everything has changed. He's been given quarters in the palace. Command of soldiers. Access to the king.

But something is wrong. He can feel it.

Footsteps behind him.

JONATHAN

(O.S.)

You're not sleeping.

DAVID

Neither are you.

Jonathan joins him at the wall. They stand in silence, looking at the stars.

JONATHAN

I watched you, you know. In the valley.

DAVID

Everyone watched.

JONATHAN

Not like I did.

He turns to face David.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

I've been training since I was twelve. Warfare. Tactics. Combat. I've killed men. I've led charges. And when that giant walked into the valley every morning, I begged my father to let me answer him.

DAVID

He said no?

JONATHAN

He forbade it. "You're the heir. You can't be risked."

(bitter)

So I watched. Every day. While that monster mocked everything we believe. While the army I'm supposed to lead cowered on the hillside.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

JONATHAN

Don't be. That's not why I'm telling you.

He reaches for his belt. Unbuckles it. Then his sword. His bow. His quiver.

DAVID

Jonathan, what are you-

Jonathan removes his outer robe. The prince's robe. The heir's robe.

And puts it on David's shoulders.

JONATHAN

I watched you walk toward that giant. A shepherd with a sling. And I understood.

DAVID

Understood what?

JONATHAN

That God isn't doing what I thought He was doing.

He straps his sword around David's waist.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

I always assumed the throne would pass to me. That's how it works. Father to son. That's the order of things.

He hands David the bow. The quiver.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

But watching you run toward Goliath... I knew. Whatever God is doing, you're at the center of it.

DAVID

(barely audible)

Jonathan-

JONATHAN

I'm giving you everything. My robe. My weapons. My claim.

He takes David's hand.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

And I'm telling you: my soul is knit to yours. From this day forward. Whatever happens. Whatever it costs.

David is shaking.

DAVID

You can't do this. The kingdom-

JONATHAN

The kingdom isn't mine to keep. I've known that for a long time. My father... something is wrong with him, David. Something is eating him from the inside. The kingdom won't survive him.

DAVID

I don't want your throne.

JONATHAN

(smiling sadly)

I know. That's why you're going to be king.

He grips David's hand tighter.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

Promise me something.

DAVID

Anything.

JONATHAN

When you're king-and you will be king-remember this night. Remember that I chose you. That I loved you. That I gave you everything I had willingly.

DAVID

I'll remember.

JONATHAN

And show kindness to my house. When I'm gone. When my father's gone. Whatever remains of us-show them the kindness we showed you.

DAVID

I swear it. Before God.

Jonathan nods. Releases David's hand.

JONATHAN

Then we have a covenant.

They stand together in the darkness, wearing each other's futures.

* * *

■ SONG: "SOUL KNIT TO SOUL" ■

An intimate duet. Two voices interweaving in the dark.

Not romantic-deeper than that. Covenantal. The kind of bond that transcends blood, transcends politics, transcends the crown both of them know is coming between them.

Jonathan sings of letting go. Of watching his birthright pass to another and feeling not grief but relief. Of loving someone enough to give them everything.

David sings of being seen. Of receiving a gift he never asked for from a man who owes him nothing. Of friendship that costs everything and is worth more.

Visually, we see:

- The robe settling on David's shoulders*
- The sword at his hip, too large, too heavy*
- Jonathan's face, peaceful for the first time in months*
- David's face, overwhelmed, grateful, afraid*
- The stars above them, the same stars Abraham counted*

The song ends with their hands clasped. A covenant sealed.

The song fades.

They stand in silence.

JONATHAN

You should get some sleep. Tomorrow will be complicated.

DAVID

Tomorrow?

JONATHAN

My father is going to hate you now. You know that, don't you? The women's song. "Ten thousands." He'll never forgive you for that.

DAVID

I didn't ask them to sing it.

JONATHAN

It doesn't matter. You're a threat now. Even if you don't want to be. He turns to go.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

I'll protect you as long as I can. But there's a limit to what a son can do against his father.

He walks toward the stairs.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

(over his shoulder)

Sleep with one eye open, David.

He disappears into the darkness.

David stands alone, wearing a prince's robe, carrying a prince's weapons.

The crown he never wanted is already casting its shadow.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 21: THE SPEAR

INT. SAUL'S THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Torches flicker. The room is empty except for Saul, sitting on his throne.

And David, sitting at his usual place, playing his lyre.

The music that once brought peace.

Saul listens. But his face is wrong. Twisted. Something moving behind his eyes.

SAUL

(low, to himself)

Ten thousands.

DAVID

(stopping)

My lord?

SAUL

They gave him ten thousands. And me only thousands.

DAVID

It was just a song. The women didn't mean-

SAUL

What remains for him but the kingdom?

David sets down the lyre. Slowly.

DAVID

My lord, I don't want-

SAUL

(suddenly sharp)

Of course you don't. You never do. The shepherd who never asked for anything. The boy who kills giants and expects us to believe it was God's doing.

He stands. His spear is leaning against the throne.

His hand finds it.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Samuel anointed you. Didn't he?

David freezes.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Don't bother lying. I can see it in you. The same thing I used to have. Before it left.

He lifts the spear.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

You're the neighbor.

DAVID

I never asked for-

SAUL

(screaming)

YOU'RE THE NEIGHBOR!

He throws.

David dives. The spear buries itself in the wall behind him.

Saul pulls another spear from the guard nearby. Throws again.

David rolls. Scrambles. Makes it to the door.

Behind him, Saul's voice, broken and terrible:

SAUL

(CONT'D)

I'LL PIN YOU TO THE WALL!

David runs.

The chase through the palace. Servants scattering. Guards confused-is the king attacking someone? Should they help?

David makes it outside. Into the darkness. Into the night.

And keeps running.

* * *

■ SONG: "TEN THOUSANDS" ■

Saul alone in the throne room. The spears still quivering in the wall.

A villain song, but tragic. Not a man celebrating his evil-a man watching himself become a monster and unable to stop.

He sings of what he's lost: the Spirit, his certainty, his sleep. He sings of what he knows: David is righteous, his jealousy is unfounded, his rage is destroying him.

But he can't stop.

The hole where God used to live has been filled with something else. Something that feeds on fear and suspicion and hate.

Visually, we see:

- Saul pacing, tearing at his hair
- The shadows around him, darker than they should be
- Memories: young Saul, humble Saul, being anointed
- The present: this broken king, this hollow shell

The song doesn't end with triumph. It ends with Saul collapsing onto his throne, weeping.

SAUL:

(spoken, broken)

What am I becoming?

No one answers.

END OF ACT ONE

* * *

ACT TWO: THE BELOVED EXILE

* * *

SCENE 22: THE IMPOSSIBLE POSITION

INT. JONATHAN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Jonathan paces. David sits, still shaking.

JONATHAN

He threw a spear at you.

DAVID

Two spears.

JONATHAN

My father threw two spears at you.

DAVID

He knows. About Samuel. About the anointing.

Jonathan stops pacing.

JONATHAN

That's not possible. No one knows except-

DAVID

He saw it in me. He said he could see what he used to have. Before it left him.

Silence.

JONATHAN

I'll talk to him.

DAVID

Jonathan-

JONATHAN

He listens to me. Sometimes. When the darkness isn't on him.

DAVID

He tried to kill me.

JONATHAN

He's still my father.

The words hang between them.

DAVID

(quietly)

How long do you think you can serve two masters? He wants me dead.
You've sworn yourself to me. Eventually-

JONATHAN

(sharp)

Don't. Don't make me choose. Not yet.

DAVID

I'm not making you choose. He is. Every time he throws a spear, he's asking you to pick a side.

Jonathan is silent. His face is anguish.

JONATHAN

(finally)

Let me try. One more time. If I can't turn him...

DAVID

Then what?

Jonathan doesn't answer.

Because he doesn't know.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 23: THE ARROWS

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE GIBEAH - DAY

An open field. David hiding behind a large stone.

Jonathan approaches with his bow and a young SERVANT carrying arrows.

JONATHAN

(to servant)

Run and find the arrows that I shoot.

He nocks an arrow. Draws.

David watches from hiding. This is the signal they agreed on.

Jonathan releases. The arrow flies far-beyond the stone where David hides.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

(calling)

Is not the arrow beyond you? Hurry! Be quick! Do not stay!

The servant runs to retrieve the arrow.

David understands.

Flee.

When the servant returns, Jonathan sends him back to the city with the bow and quiver.

Then he waits.

David emerges from behind the stone. His face is devastated.

JONATHAN

(voice breaking)

I tried. I told him you meant no harm. That you were loyal. That the song was nothing-

DAVID

What did he say?

JONATHAN

He said... he said I was a son of a perverse, rebellious woman. That as long as you live, neither I nor my kingdom will be established. He said...

He can't continue.

DAVID

He said to bring me to him.

JONATHAN

(whispered)

Yes.

They stand in the field. The wind moves through the grass.

DAVID

I have to go.

JONATHAN

I know.

DAVID

I don't know where. Or for how long. Or if I'll ever-
He stops.

JONATHAN

(stepping forward)

Listen to me. Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, "The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever."

He embraces David. They hold each other.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

(whispered)

Don't forget me.

DAVID

(whispered back)

I couldn't if I tried.

They separate. David bows low-once, twice, three times.

Then turns and walks away.

Jonathan watches until David disappears over the hill.

Then he turns and walks back toward Gibeah.

Toward his father's house.

Toward the darkness.

Toward his duty.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 24: THE OUTCASTS

EXT. CAVE OF ADULLAM - DAY

A cave complex in the Judean wilderness. Rocky. Remote. The kind of place you go when you have nowhere else.

David sits at the cave mouth. Alone.

He has nothing. His wife Michal helped him escape but stayed behind. His position at court is gone. His family can't help him-associating with him would bring Saul's wrath on them too.

He is utterly alone.

Then:

A figure appears on the ridge. Ragged. Travel-worn.

David's hand moves to his sling.

FIGURE

(calling down)

You're David? The one who killed the giant?

DAVID

Who's asking?

FIGURE

(descending)

My name is Eleazar. I was a merchant in Hebron. I was successful. I was wealthy.

He reaches David. We see him now: a man in his thirties, once prosperous, now ruined. Sharp eyes. Bitter mouth.

ELEAZAR

(CONT'D)

Then I refused to pay bribes to a judge. He ruled against me in a dispute I should have won. Seized my property. Had me charged with debts I never owed.

He sits without being invited.

ELEAZAR

(CONT'D)

I heard you were here. I thought: if anyone understands being destroyed by the powerful, it's the man Saul wants to kill.

David doesn't respond.

ELEAZAR

(CONT'D)

I'm not asking for a handout. I can fight. I can plan. I can be useful.

DAVID

I'm not building an army.

ELEAZAR

(*looking around*)

You're living in a cave, running from a king, with no allies and no plan. You're going to need an army whether you want one or not.

More figures appear on the ridge. One. Then two. Then five.

Men. Women. Children.

The broken. The ruined. The discarded.

DAVID

Who are they?

ELEAZAR

The same as me. Everyone who was in distress. Everyone who was in debt. Everyone who was bitter in soul.

He stands.

ELEAZAR

(*CONT'D*)

You're famous, David. The giant-killer. The man Saul couldn't destroy. People like us... we've been looking for something to believe in.

The refugees begin making their way down to the cave.

David watches them come.

DAVID

(*to himself*)

I don't know how to lead an army.

ELEAZAR

Then learn. Because ready or not, you just got one.

* * *

■ SONG: "THE CAVE" ■

An ensemble number. Voices joining one by one as the outcasts arrive.

The ruined merchant. The farmer whose family was killed. The widow with nowhere to go. The soldier who deserted a corrupt commander.

*They sing of what they've lost. And slowly, tentatively, of what they might find.
This is the kingdom forming. Not in a palace-in a cave. Not from nobles-from rejects.
Blessed are the poor. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek.
By the end, four hundred voices. Ragged but unified.
David stands among them, overwhelmed. He didn't ask for this. He didn't want it.
But God is building something. And David is learning that his job isn't to
understand-just to show up.*

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 25: THE PRICE OF HELP

INT. CAVE OF ADULLAM - NIGHT

David sits apart from the others. A small fire. A clay tablet in his hands-a message.

ABIATHAR (20s), a young priest, sits across from him. His clothes are torn. His eyes are hollow.

ABIATHAR

They're dead. All of them.

DAVID

Tell me.

ABIATHAR

My father Ahimelech helped you. When you came through Nob. He gave you bread. He gave you Goliath's sword.

DAVID

I remember.

ABIATHAR

Doeg the Edomite was there. He saw. He told Saul.

David's eyes close.

ABIATHAR

(CONT'D)

The king summoned my father. Summoned all the priests. He accused them of conspiracy. Of treason. My father tried to explain-he didn't know you were fleeing from the king. He thought you were on a mission.

DAVID
(barely audible)

What happened?

ABIATHAR

Saul ordered his guards to kill them. They refused. They wouldn't lift their hands against the priests of the Lord.

He pauses.

ABIATHAR
(CONT'D)

So Doeg did it. Eighty-five priests. Then he went to Nob. He killed everyone. Men, women, children, infants. Even the livestock.

Silence.

ABIATHAR
(CONT'D)

I escaped. I don't know why. I ran and I didn't stop running until I found you.

David stands. Moves away from the fire. His shoulders are shaking.

DAVID
(voice breaking)

I knew. When I saw Doeg that day-I knew he would tell Saul. I knew it and I did nothing. I ate the bread and took the sword and walked away.

He turns to face Abiathar.

DAVID
(CONT'D)

I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father's house.

ABIATHAR

David-

DAVID

Their blood is on me. All of them. Because I was hungry. Because I needed a weapon.

ABIATHAR

You couldn't have known what Saul would do.

DAVID

Couldn't I?

He sits heavily. The weight of it crushing him.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

Stay with me. Don't be afraid. Whoever seeks your life seeks my life. You will be safe with me.

ABIATHAR

(quiet)

Safe.

DAVID

As safe as anyone can be. Which isn't very safe at all.

He looks into the fire.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

I'm starting to understand what this crown is going to cost. Not just me. Everyone who gets close to me.

ABIATHAR

Then why do you keep going?

David is silent for a long moment.

DAVID

Because God told Samuel to anoint me. Because the Spirit that filled me hasn't left. Because as much as I want to run-to disappear into the desert and never be found-I can't.

He looks at Abiathar.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

This isn't about what I want. It never was.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 26: THE CAVE AT EN-GEDI

INT. CAVE AT EN-GEDI - DAY

A massive cave. Deep. Dark. David and his men are hidden in the recesses.

Outside, the sound of an army approaching.

ELEAZAR

(whispering)

Three thousand men. Saul brought three thousand men.

DAVID

(whispering back)

Quiet. Everyone quiet.

They press deeper into the shadows.

Then: footsteps. At the cave entrance.

A single figure enters. Removes his outer robe. Squats.

It's Saul.

The king of Israel has entered the exact cave where David is hiding. Alone. Defenseless.

One of David's men grips his arm.

SOLDIER

(barely audible)

This is the day. The Lord has delivered your enemy into your hand.

Others are nodding. Hands on weapons. Eyes gleaming.

SOLDIER

(CONT'D)

Do to him as seems good to you.

David is still. His hand moves to his knife.

He creeps forward. Silent. The hunter's instincts he developed with lions and bears.

He reaches Saul. The king is oblivious. Vulnerable.

David raises the knife.

And cuts off the corner of Saul's robe.

Nothing more.

Saul finishes. Stands. Leaves. Never knowing how close he came.

David's men stare at him in disbelief.

ELEAZAR
(hissing)

What are you doing? He was right there!

DAVID
(hand shaking)

The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed.

SOLDIER

He's trying to kill you!

DAVID

I know.

SOLDIER

He murdered eighty-five priests!

DAVID

I know.

SOLDIER

Then why-

DAVID

Because I'm not him.

* * *

■ SONG: "THE LORD'S ANOINTED" ■

David's theological crisis, set to music.

God promised him the kingdom. God delivered the king into his hands. Every strategic calculation says to take this opportunity. Kill Saul. End the war. Claim what's been promised.

But David refuses.

He sings of what he believes: that there's a right way and a wrong way to receive God's gifts. That murdering the Lord's anointed—even a failed, tormented, murderous anointed—is the wrong way.

He sings of what this will cost him: more years of running. More deaths. More guilt.

But he cannot raise his hand against the man Samuel anointed. Even if that man has raised his hand against David a hundred times.

The song doesn't resolve happily. It resolves in surrender.

David doesn't understand. But he obeys.

EXT. EN-GEDI - LATER

David stands on a ridge above the Israelite camp. Saul's army stretching out below.

He cups his hands.

DAVID

(shouting)

My lord the king!

Movement below. Heads turning. Saul emerging from his tent.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

Look what is in my hand!

He holds up the corner of the robe.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

I could have killed you! I was close enough to touch you! But I said: I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed!

Below, Saul stares up at him.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

May the Lord judge between me and you! May the Lord avenge me against you! But my hand shall not be against you!

A long silence.

Then Saul's voice, broken, carrying up the hillside:

SAUL

Is this your voice, my son David?

He's weeping.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, and I have repaid you evil. You have declared what you have done to me today, how the Lord gave me into your hands, and you did not kill me.

He falls to his knees.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

I know that you shall surely be king. And that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

David watches. He wants to believe this. Wants to believe Saul has truly changed.

But he's seen these clarity moments before.

They never last.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

Swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house.

DAVID

(calling back)

I swear it.

Saul rises. Signals to his army. They begin to withdraw.

David watches them go.

ELEAZAR

(beside him)

Do you trust him?

DAVID

(quiet)

NO.

ELEAZAR

Then why swear?

DAVID

Because I meant it.

He turns away from the retreating army.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

Whatever Saul becomes, his children are not him. And I will remember that.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 27: THE LOW POINT

TITLE CARD: SIXTEEN MONTHS LATER

EXT. PHILISTINE TERRITORY - DAY

David leads his band of six hundred men into enemy territory.

ACHISH, king of Gath, waits for them at the city gate.

ACHISH

The famous David. The giant-killer. I never thought I'd see you at my gates asking for shelter.

DAVID

I never thought I'd ask.

ACHISH

What happened to your God? The one you shouted about before you killed my champion?

David doesn't flinch.

DAVID

My God is still my God. But His anointed is trying to kill me. I need somewhere to wait.

ACHISH

And why should I help you?

DAVID

Because your enemy's enemy is useful.

Achish laughs.

ACHISH

I like you, David. You're honest about being desperate. Most men try to hide it.

He gestures toward the city.

ACHISH

(CONT'D)

I'll give you Ziklag. It's a nothing town on the edge of nowhere. You can have it.

DAVID

In exchange for?

ACHISH

Your sword. When I need it.

David looks at his men. At the women and children who follow them. At the outcasts who trusted him.

DAVID

Agreed.

He walks into Philistine territory.

The anointed king of Israel, hiding among pagans.

DAVID

(V.O.)

(prayer)

God, I don't understand this. I don't understand why You anointed me for a throne I can't reach. I don't understand why the path leads through enemy territory.

INT. ZIKLAG - NIGHT

David kneels alone in a small room. His head bowed.

DAVID

But I trust You. I have to. Because if I stop trusting, I have nothing left.

He raises his head.

DAVID

(CONT'D)

Just... don't let me forget who I am. Don't let me become what I'm fighting.

FADE TO:

* * *

END OF ACT TWO

* * *

ACT THREE: THE MIGHTY FALLEN

* * *

SCENE 28: THE RETURN TO ASHES

EXT. ROAD TO ZIKLAG - DAY

David and his men returning from a campaign. Tired. Ready to be home. The sky ahead is wrong. Stained with smoke. They walk faster. Then run.

EXT. ZIKLAG - CONTINUOUS

Ashes.

The city is gone. Every building burned. Every street empty. No bodies. No survivors. Just ruins.

David stumbles through the wreckage. Behind him, his men do the same. The sounds of grief beginning-quiet at first, then building.

ELEAZAR

(staggering)

My wife. My children. Where are my-

SOLDIER

The Amalekites. It had to be. They must have seen us leave.

ANOTHER SOLDIER

They took them. They didn't kill them, they took them.

David finds the ruins of his own house. His two wives-Ahinoam, Abigail-are gone.

He falls to his knees.

CUT TO:

The men gathered in the center of the ruins. Their grief has turned to something else. Something dangerous.

SOLDIER

(low, to others)

This is his fault. He brought us here. To enemy territory. He left our families undefended.

The whispers spread.

ANOTHER SOLDIER

We should have stayed in Judah. Stayed with our own people.

ANOTHER

If we'd never followed him...

David hears them. Sees them reaching for stones.

ELEAZAR

(beside David, quiet)

They want to kill you.

DAVID

I know.

ELEAZAR

What are you going to do?

David closes his eyes.

Everything is gone. His city. His family. His men's loyalty.

This is the bottom.

DAVID

(barely audible)

Bring me the ephod.

ELEAZAR

What?

DAVID

Abiathar. Get him. Bring the ephod.

EXT. RUINS - MOMENTS LATER

David stands before the priest. The ephod in Abiathar's hands.

The men watching. Stones still ready.

DAVID

(to God)

Shall I pursue this raiding party? Shall I overtake them?

Silence. Everyone waiting.

Then:

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(voice changing - receiving)

Pursue. For you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue.

He opens his eyes.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(to his men)

We're going after them. All of them. We leave now.

SOLDIER
(stepping forward)

Why should we follow you? You led us here!

DAVID

Because God just told me we're going to win. And because your families are out there, waiting for you to come get them.

He starts walking.

DAVID
(CONT'D)
(over his shoulder)

Anyone who wants to stay here and grieve can stay. The rest of you-with me.

He doesn't look back.

One by one, the men follow.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 29: THE RESCUE

EXT. AMALEKITE CAMP - NIGHT

The Amalekites celebrating. Drunk on victory. The captured women and children huddled together under guard.

David's men surround the camp in the darkness.

DAVID
(to his captains, quiet)

From twilight until evening tomorrow. No one escapes. Get everyone back.

They attack.

MONTAGE

The battle. Twenty-four hours of fighting. David at the center of it-not a general directing from behind, but a warrior in the thick of it.

This is not the boy who faced Goliath. This is a man. Hardened by years of running. Fighting not for glory but for the people who depend on him.

Dawn. The Amalekite camp in ruins. David's men gathering the survivors.

Ahinoam. Abigail. The wives. The children.

Nothing missing. Everything recovered.

David embraces his wives. Around him, reunions. Families restored.

ABIGAIL

We knew you would come.

DAVID

(holding her)

I almost didn't. They almost killed me first.

ABIGAIL

But you came.

DAVID

I came.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 30: MOUNT GILBOA

EXT. MOUNT GILBOA - DAY

A different battle. Israel versus Philistia.

We see it from a distance at first. The clash of armies. The screams of men.

Then closer.

Jonathan in the thick of it. Fighting brilliantly. Desperately.

An arrow takes him in the side. He stumbles. Keeps fighting.

Another arrow. His leg.

He falls.

JONATHAN

(gasping)

David...

He reaches for nothing. Calls to no one who can hear.

JONATHAN

(CONT'D)

Remember...

He dies with the word unfinished.

CUT TO:

Saul, elsewhere on the battlefield. Surrounded by archers. Wounded. His armor-bearer beside him.

SAUL

(to armor-bearer)

Draw your sword. Run me through. Before they reach me. Before they make sport of me.

ARMOR-BEARER

(terrified)

I can't. I can't raise my hand against-

SAUL

(screaming)

Do it!

The armor-bearer can't.

Saul looks at his own sword. The weapon he once used to defend Israel.

He turns it around. Places the hilt against a rock. The point against his belly.

SAUL

(CONT'D)

(quiet)

Forgive me.

He falls on it.

The king of Israel. Dead by his own hand.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 31: THE MESSENGER

EXT. ZIKLAG - DAY

Three days after the battle. David doesn't know yet.

A MESSENGER arrives. Young. Exhausted. His clothes torn in mourning.

DAVID

Where do you come from?

MESSENGER

I have escaped from the camp of Israel.

DAVID

How did it go? Tell me.

MESSENGER

The people fled from the battle. Many have fallen and are dead. Also Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.

David's face empties.

DAVID

(barely audible)

How do you know that Saul and Jonathan are dead?

MESSENGER

I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul, leaning on his spear. The chariots and horsemen were closing in. He saw me and called to me. I went to him. He said, "Stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers." So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew he could not live after he had fallen.

He reaches into his bag. Produces Saul's crown. His armlet.

MESSENGER

(CONT'D)

I have brought them here to my lord.

He expects reward. This is good news, isn't it? The enemy is dead. The throne is clear.

David stares at the crown.

DAVID

(low)

Were you not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?

MESSENGER

I... my lord?

DAVID

(to his guards)

Kill him.

MESSENGER

My lord, I-

DAVID

Your blood is on your own head. For your own mouth has testified against you, saying, "I have killed the Lord's anointed."

The guards seize him. Drag him away.

David is left alone with the crown. The armlet.

The evidence of everything he's lost.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 32: THE LAMENT

EXT. ZIKLAG - NIGHT

David sits alone. The crown in his hands.

The crown he was anointed to wear. The crown he refused to take by force. The crown that now sits in his lap, cold and empty.

Jonathan is dead.

The best man David ever knew. The friend who gave up everything. The prince who chose covenant over inheritance.

Dead on a mountain. David never got to say goodbye.

Saul is dead.

The king who loved David. Who needed David. Who tried to murder David. Who wept over David and called him "more righteous."

Dead by his own hand.

David begins to sing.

* * *

■ SONG: "HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN" ■

The lament. 2 Samuel 1:19-27, set to music.

This is not a triumphant moment. Not a "finally, the throne is mine" moment.

This is grief. Pure, devastating grief.

David loved them both. The friend and the enemy. The covenant-keeper and the spear-thrower. Jonathan who gave him everything. Saul who tried to take everything.

He mourns them in the same breath.

DAVID:

(singing)

Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places!

How the mighty have fallen!

Tell it not in Gath,

publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon,

lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice...

The song continues. Achingly beautiful. The poetry of a man who has lost and lost and lost, and now has lost the last things he had left to lose.

DAVID (CONT'D):

Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!

In life and in death they were not divided;

they were swifter than eagles;

they were stronger than lions...

He remembers Jonathan. The robe. The weapons. The covenant on the rooftop.

DAVID (CONT'D):

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;

very pleasant have you been to me;

your love to me was extraordinary,

*surpassing the love of women.
How the mighty have fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!*

The song ends in silence.

David holding the crown.

Alone.

FADE TO:

* * *

SCENE 33: HEBRON

EXT. HEBRON - DAY

The elders of Judah gathered. David standing before them.

He is thirty years old. He has waited fifteen years since Samuel poured oil on his head in Jesse's house.

ELDER

We are your bone and your flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the Lord said to you, "You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel."

They anoint him.

For the second time, oil pours over David's head.

But this time it means something different. This time the promise becomes reality.

ELDER

(CONT'D)

King David. King of Judah.

The people bow.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: SEVEN YEARS LATER

* * *

SCENE 34: ALL ISRAEL

EXT. HEBRON - DAY

More elders. This time from all twelve tribes.

Seven years of civil war, consolidation, negotiation. And now:

ELDER OF ISRAEL

All the tribes of Israel have come to you. We are your bone and flesh. The Lord said to you, "You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel."

They anoint him a third time.

King of all Israel.

David stands before his people. The shepherd boy. The lion-killer. The giant-slayer. The fugitive. The outcast. The mourner.

King.

CUT TO:

* * *

SCENE 35: JERUSALEM

EXT. JERUSALEM - DAY

The conquest of Jebus. The city that said, "Even the blind and the lame could ward you off."

David takes it anyway.

It becomes his city. The City of David.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD TO JERUSALEM - DAY

The Ark of the Covenant being brought up to the city. A massive procession. Musicians. Priests. Dancing.

And at the center of it:

David.

Dancing before the Lord with all his might.

Wearing a linen ephod—the simple garment of a priest, not a king. He looks ridiculous. Undignified. Definitely not royal.

He doesn't care.

Because the promise has come true.

The boy who asked "Do You see me?" under the stars in Bethlehem has been seen.

The shepherd is king.

* * *

■ SONG: "THE SHEPHERD KING" ■

Full company. The entire cast returning for the finale.

The song begins quietly—a reprise of "Do You See Me." David's voice, older now, weathered by everything he's been through.

Then other voices join. Jonathan's, from memory. Samuel's, from beyond the grave. The four hundred outcasts. The elders. The people.

The song builds. Not triumphant in a shallow way—triumphant in the way that only things bought with suffering can be.

David dances as the music swells.

And then, at the climax, the full company sings the theology of the whole story:

COMPANY:

The Lord sees what no man can see

The Lord knows what no man can know

He looks beneath the skin and bone

To something deeper still

Not the tall, not the strong

Not the one they would choose

The Lord sees the heart

The Lord sees the heart

The Lord sees you

The music reaches its peak.

Then quiets.

David alone. Looking up at the sky. The same stars he looked at as a boy.

DAVID:

(spoken, quiet)

You saw me.

He smiles.

DAVID (CONT'D):

All along. You saw.

Final image: David dancing. The Ark before him. The city behind him. The crown he never wanted, finally resting where it belongs.

Not because he earned it. Not because he was worthy.

Because God chose him.

And that was always enough.

FADE TO BLACK.

* * *

THE END

* * *

CREDITS

Roll over images: concept art of key moments from the story

Music: instrumental medley of the show's themes

After credits:

TEXT ON SCREEN

"I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my own heart, who will do all my will."

- *Acts 13:22*

FADE OUT.

* * *

APPENDIX: COMPLETE SONG LIST

#	Title	Scene	Singer(s)	Type
1	"Do You See Me"	2	David	Opening prayer/wound
2	"The Lord Sees"	9	Samuel & David	The anointing
3	"The Giant's Taunt"	15	Goliath & Philistine Army	Villain challenge
4	"Soul Knit to Soul"	20	David & Jonathan	Covenant duet
5	"Ten Thousands"	21	Saul	Tragic villain descent
6	"The Cave"	24	David & The Outcasts	Ensemble anthem
7	"The Lord's Anointed"	26	David	Refusal to seize
8	"How the Mighty Have Fallen"	32	David	Lament
9	"The Shepherd King"	35	Full Company	Finale

Total runtime: Approximately 2 hours 15 minutes