

The Lions of Judah
an original animated motion picture screenplay by
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FADE IN:

1 EXT. FOREST OF JUDAH - NIGHT

1

View from sky as the FOREST is panned from above. Forest is DEAD. Absolutely, completely, totally dead. Dead trees reach to the sky in vain hopes of finding life. No birds, no insects, no animals of any kind. Twigs and branches litter the ground.

Camera PANS over the area, finds a SMALL CLEARING and DIVES into it. Camera follows a TRAIL through the forest until it comes to a VILLAGE deep in the forest.

Here is a CAMPFIRE and several LION CUBS sleeping around it. Also there is TOMA, an older lion. He is wrinkled with age, has grey hair and the look of wisdom about him.

Wisdom that came at a very high PRICE.

2 EXT. VILLAGE CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

2

A small female cub opens her eyes, yawns and stretches. This is VITA. She slowly SAUNTERS off to the left off the screen. Suddenly the peaceful scene is SHATTERED when she is heard to cry-

VITA (O.S.)
(frantic)
Toma! Toma! Come quick!

All lions OPEN their eyes and LOOK around curiously. The call is repeated.

VITA (CONT'D)
(even more frantic)
Toma! Toma!

ANGLE ON TOMA

Toma leaps up and runs toward Vita, followed by the rest of the cubs.

3 EXT. FOREST OF JUDAH - NIGHT

3

Toma arrives followed by cubs. We see the dead forest all around.

ANGLE ON TOMA

TOMA
What's going on here, Vita?

ANGLE ON VITA

VITA

Look!

Vita points down with her paw and all lions follow her gaze.

ANGLE ON TOMA

TOMA

Well, I'll be a lion's uncle!

ANGLE ON GROUND

There, down on the ground, the cubs see something they have never seen before. There is now life in the forest. There is a small patch of live grass.

VITA

What is it, Toma?

ANGLE ON TOMA

Toma reaches down with his paw, picks up a blade and looks at it curiously.

TOMA

It's... it's... grass!

ANGLE ON VITA

VITA

Grass? But that's just a myth. A legend. it's not real!

ANGLE ON TOMA

TOMA

No. You're right. It's not real—

Toma gets a profoundly sad look on his face, still holding the blade of grass.

TOMA (CONT'D)

—but it used to be.

Toma ponders the grass for a moment. While still pondering, he says...

TOMA (CONT'D)

Vita. Sound the alarm. Assemble all lions in the Great Hall immediately.

ANGLE ON VITA

VITA
(surprised)
But Toma! No cub has ever sounded
the alarm before!

ANGLE ON TOMA

Toma turns slowly to Vita and places a paw gently on her
cheek.

TOMA
Believe me, Vita. You have earned
the right to be the first.

Vita slowly nods.

DISSOLVE TO:

4 INT. GREAT HALL OF THE LIONS — LATER

4

ANGLE FROM STAGE

Establishing shot. Wide view from stage as lions of all
ages and differences are GATHERED about the GREAT HALL.
Some are sitting and waiting patiently, others are talking
to themselves.

ANGLE ON STAGE

Toma is APPROACHING center stage and looks out over lions.
All lions QUIET down and wait for him to speak.

TOMA
Lions of Judah. I sounded the alarm
because the older among us long ago
made a sacred pact. Though few of
us are alive to carry it out, I feel
it must be honored.

ANGLE ON GATHERED LIONS

Lions murmur among themselves, wondering what this "pact"
is.

ANGLE ON TOMA

Toma is holding up the blade of grass, now sealed in a clear
VIAL.

TOMA (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Behold. A simple blade of grass.

From out of the crowd immediately comes a female voice.
This belongs to SHAHRI. An older and very "proper" looking lion.

ANGLE ON SHAHRI

SHAHRI
All praise to the Great Leo!

ANGLE ON GATHERED LIONS

Again the murmurs occur. Most assembled in the Great Hall have never seen an actual blade of grass.

Toma clears his throat as a way to regain the attention of the lions. They wait for him to speak again. He does.

ANGLE ON TOMA

TOMA
Many years ago, before most of you were born, the Forest of Judah was a much different place. It had abundant life. Birds sang, plants grew, animals danced in harmony with nature itself. We lions ruled the forest.

ANGLE ON GATHERED LIONS

Lions have complete attention on Toma.

ANGLE ON TOMA

TOMA (CONT'D)
Those in authority are also usually under authority. And so it was that we lions were under the authority of the Great Leo. We lived and prospered for many years. Then we began making mistakes. We had a paradise, and we lost it. But we made a pact that should we ever see life in the forest again, we would immediately tell the story to prevent the cubs from repeating our mistakes.

ANGLE ON SHAHRI

Again, Shahri CRIES from the Hall.

SHAHRI
No! Toma, you can't! The cubs are too young! They won't understa—

ANGLE ON TOMA

Interruption by Toma.

TOMA

(angry)

—Silence! Need I remind you that
your mate was an elder?

ANGLE ON SHAHRI

SHAHRI

I am well aware of my mate's
transgressions. And need I remind
you that he was the first, and for a
time the only one to admit his
responsibility and ask forgiveness?

ANGLE ON TOMA

who appears to be reconsidering.

TOMA

(gently)

This is true...

ANGLE ON SHAHRI AND VICTORY

Next to Shahri is VICTORY. She is one of the older lions
like Shahri and Toma. Though she has no official title, she
is considered by many to be the matriarch of the tribe.
Despite her age (or perhaps because of it), she has an
incredible beauty about her. But even the beauty we can see
is nothing compared to the beauty within her heart.

ANGLE ON VICTORY

VICTORY

Shahri, do you not remember? The
hurt? The pain? This event took
our land, our family, and even our
very tribe warred within itself. It
set brother against brother and mother
against cub. Would you have that
happen to our young, who bear no
responsibility for the mistakes of
their elders?

ANGLE ON SHAHRI

Shahri looks at Victory, considers for a moment.

SHAHRI

Of course not. You're right, Victory.

Shahri turns to Toma.

SHAHRI (CONT'D)

Proceed, Toma. I ask forgiveness in
the name of the Great Leo.

ANGLE ON TOMA

TOMA

Granted, Shahri. It is forgotten
and we shall speak no further of it.
You did only have the cubs welfare
at heart.