

THE NEW KINGDOM:
OPENING CUT-SCENE

Written by

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A WOODEN MORTAR

Lies atop a stitched rug, worn hieroglyphics ribboned around its walls, a mixture of egg whites and water rippling inside.

A reverb of THROAT SINGING nearby...

As the chanting continues, a thin hand reaches in and spoons some crushed ochre into the bowl, mashing the paste together with a pestle.

Creating paint.

HEQET

You've crossed these lands once
already.

EXT. WASTES - DAWN

Sunlight refracts through a howling sandstorm.

Behind the miasma, a colorless expanse sprawls towards the horizon, dunes rippling behind currents of heat distortion.

HEQET (V.O.)

Those days are gone... are they
not? Woven in the tendrils of time.

A shape ascends the hillside.

A MAN.

He wears copper armor and a painted helm welded from the mask of a sarcophagus. Tubes flay down his shoulders and feed into an industrial energy cell on his back.

This is a FREEROAMER.

Exhausted from his trek across the frontier, the FreeRoamer pauses and takes a breath.

He marches onward, sweeping past on his way down the sloping dune. And we follow -- tracking him downhill, landing on an awe-inspiring vista:

THE VALLEY OF THE PYRAMIDS

The Sphinx and pyramids overlook a maze of haggard buildings, a futuristic city built in the heart of Giza.

Neon light crackles on the streets as security drones whizz overhead -- cloaking the sky in a static of light pollution.

The FreeRoamer heads towards town.

EXT. VALLEY COMPLEX - DAY

The FreeRoamer slogs through the slums. Citizens all stop and watch as he goes.

This is a stranger -- unwelcome in their neighborhood.

HEQET (V.O.)
The Ozymandian Kingdom... The
Ozymandian corpse...

The FreeRoamer reaches a humongous wall in the city square. He glances up the filagreed brickwork, gazing at a colossal palace in the heart of town.

More citizens gather in his shadow.

HEQET (V.O.)
The days of pharaohs are drawing to
and end...

The FreeRoamer looks down and watches grimy runoff flow from a pipe in the wall. The filthy water rolls between his boots.

A sigh.

He unbuckles the clasps around his helm and peels it off to reveal a face marred by countless scars -- a face tarnished by war.

The FreeRoamer takes a dagger from his cloak and brandishes it to the crowd...

... Before DRIVING IT into his stomach.

Everyone gasps.

HEQET (V.O.)
... for theirs is a kingdom of
everlasting things...

The FreeRoamer grits his teeth. He pulls the blade sideways -- tearing himself open -- and drops to his knees without making a sound.

The stranger then reaches his shaky arm towards the wall and wipes a blood-stained handprint over the brick.

WHUMPH.

The FreeRoamer collapses on the cobblestone walkway -- dead. A pool of crimson expands from his corpse as chaos descends upon the street.

HIS HELM

Lies nearby -- tarnished by the desert winds, tinged purple by an overhead flashing sign.

HEQET (V.O.)
... and nothing lasts forever.

BLACK SCREEN

HEQET (V.O.)
Perhaps you've seen it.

FADE IN:

EXT. NILE RIVER - NIGHT

A catfish sifts through an outcropping of reeds in an oasis riverbank. Faint ripples peel from its fins and gleam white in the moonlit outskirts.

NEARBY

A spark catches the air.

Lightning bugs disperse as an ethereal glow blooms in tall grass. Wind kicks up. More sparks.

Brighter...

Brighter... until...

CRAAACK!

A shining portal erupts beside the riverbank. A hooded figure tumbles out and lands in the weeds.

This is the PLAYER CHARACTER -- THE METONYM.

HEQET
Some may call it a curse. An empire
ignites in the void... a golden age
melts between the embers.

As the light fades, the catfish -- disturbed -- jets off into the river delta.

EXT. NILE VILLAGE - NIGHT

Robes billowing in the wind, The Metonym staggers towards an overlook to find a town of wooden huts and docks planted by the river's edge.

Gone are the futuristic flourishes of the Valley Complex, though the illuminated Sphinx is visible in the distance.

This is a secluded place, an ancient monument, lit only by the flicker of terracotta lanterns.

The Metonym starts towards a mill on the edge of town.

HEQET

Such is the way of the world -- the
whims of wind over desert sand.

EXT. MILL - NIGHT

The Metonym ascends the creaky wooden stairs to the door. A black widow spider scuttles up a cobweb as they duck inside.

HEQET

No... The past has left you.

INT. MILL - NIGHT

We're back looking at that mortar of crushed ochre. The hand dips a quill into the paint and raises it to a long sheet of papyrus, filling in a row of hieroglyphics.

The hand belongs to HEQET THE SEER, a Grand Priestess of the River Mysteries. She glances up from her writing to reveal a cybernetic eyeball lit in the shadow of her brow.

HEQET

Heed my words, Metonym. For the
night begs its eternal rest. For
the Nile shall bring you ashore,
again and again, until the awful
deed is done.

We follow Heget's gaze to --

THE METONYM

Seated cross-legged at the other end of the rug, a fireplace crackling against their back. The player's face smolders in total darkness, shrouded by the folds of their hood.

Slowly we move towards them.

HEQET

Close your eyes, now... and
remember...

We inch closer until darkness fills the frame; and from here,
we throw the player to a CHARACTER CREATION MENU.

END SEQUENCE