**SHEENA, THE JUNGLE QUEEN**

**Series bible**

**For**

**Directors and Writers**

***BACKSTORY***

Sheena’s parents were archeologists.  In 1979, they took their five-year-old daughter, then named Cheryl, with them to Africa to an area called the LaMistas, deep and dark, hardly touched by Europeans.  Her parents were looking for a lost civilization called the Kaya.  While searching an old cavern, a collapse of the roof killed the parents but, miraculously, allowed little Cheryl to escape.  For days, she stayed in the outer cavern, expecting her parents to return.  They didn’t.  Eventually hunger took over and Cheryl wandered out into the sunlight, into the savage veldt of Africa.  Her cries were soon answered by other cries, from another hungry child.  In this case, it was a lion cub that had separated from her mother.  Cheryl and the cub found each other and bonded.  But they were both being stalked by a large male lion, a rogue.  He was looking for a mate and, realizing that lionesses do not mate while they have a litter, he was intent on killing all the cubs of this particular lioness.  The cub with Cheryl was the last.  Just as he pounced, the mother lioness intervenes and drives off the male lion.  Turning to her cub, she discovers Cheryl holding onto her.  Having lost all her cubs except this one, the lioness quickly takes Cheryl as her own.  Heavy with milk, she feeds them both.

Cheryl spends several days with the lioness and her cub, again bonding with them.  But the lioness keeps them moving, heading toward something or somewhere.  Cheryl doesn’t understand or care.  She has a family.  Eventually, this trip takes them outside the LaMistas to a nearby village.  The lioness is careful to avoid the villagers as it approaches a particular hut.  Pawing at the outside of the hut, she takes them inside where we find Kali.  Kali is a shamaness, a revered person of her tribe.  Kali sees the lioness and doesn’t look frightened or even alarmed.  She greets her warmly and starts when Cheryl enters the hut.  Kali has tears in her eyes as she sees the young girl.  Kali looks at the lioness and says, “Yes.  She is Kaya.  She is one of ours.  I will teach her the ways of our people.”

And so begins our legend.

***THE LEGEND OF THE GOLDEN ONE***

Throughout Africa, there is the Legend of the Golden One.  The powerful, ferocious, half-human, half-animal that protects the LaMistas with deadly force.  The last of her kind, it is rumored that this creature is seven feet tall, has jagged teeth and the strength of an elephant.  In fact, the rotting carcasses of powerful lions have been found, killed, obviously, by this strange beast.  Who could have guessed that this creature called the Golden One is a lean, beautiful, blonde American woman?  But, as with any legend, there is some grain of truth.

Kali is the last of the people known as the Kaya.  The very people that Sheena’s parents were looking for.  The Kaya were considered the Protectors of the Land.  They were one with the animals and lived in harmony and peace.   But when tragedy struck and all the Kaya were “destroyed”, save Kali and her husband, it seemed the time of the Kaya had come to an end.  Kali’s husband soon met a similar fate and Kali was left alone.  When Cheryl/Sheena appears, Kali immediately sees her relationship with the animals.  Kali senses a power from this child and realizes that being Kaya is not a matter of a genetic relationship.  It is something that is given by the Provider.  Kali took her in and named her Sh’ay’na, which in Kali’s ancient tongue means “Eyes of the Future”.  Being five years old, the best the child could say was “Sheena”.  The name stayed with her in that form.

**THE AFRICA OF OUR SERIES**

As Sheena is in a contemporary setting, the Africa of our stories is the modern Africa.  Without going into a history lesson, Africa represents every conflict that has plagued mankind in recorded history.   Africa has seen it all, from petty tribal wars to the rise of some of the greatest civilizations known to exist.  Even with the coming and going of Carthage and the Egyptian Empire, Africa had few conflicts in its central and southern regions.  All that changed with the coming of the Europeans and colonization.  With the drawing of National Boundaries and the prohibition of tribal loyalties, Africa has become a hodgepodge of wars, conflicts and exploitation.

**MALTAKA**

The country that Sheena is located in is called **MALTAKA**, a tribute to a pacifist leader named Taka who, Ghandi style, tried to throw off the British yoke.  He was assassinated and mercifully wasn’t there to see his beloved country thrown into a vicious and bloody civil war.  Eventually, the leader of the rebels, a man named N’Gama, managed a victory and control of the new nation. Unfortunately, his style of leadership has lead to instability in the nation, exploitation by fortune seekers, political battles with the adjoining countries, and the slow diminishment of those lands that are still at peace.  This, of course, brings our heroine into direct conflict with those who would take advantage of her land, animals and people.  Whether she is battling the effects of corporate progress or the revolutionaries using her land as training ground for their special forces, Sheena has many adventures awaiting her.

**THE CHARACTERS OF “SHEENA”**

***SHEENA***

Sheena is best described as exotic, sexy, fantastic, ferocious, passionate, a quiet warrior from three distinct worlds.  The world of Kali and her African heritage; the world of the animals and their domain; and the world of her parents, America.  When Sheena reached the age of twelve, she began to ask questions of Kali.  Questions about her background and origins.  Kali didn’t lie to her and told her what she knew about her parents, which was very little.  Kali had seen both of them when they had passed through her village on their way to the LaMistas.  Intrigued, Sheena finally went to the cave where her parents had died.  It took her five days to dig through the years old rubble, but with the help of some of her animal friends, she finally broke through.  On the other side she found precious little remaining of her parents.  Among the items she found were an old military style watch belonging to her father and a partially destroyed passport with half the photo of a beautiful woman, her mother.  Taking these and two crates of assorted camping items, she resealed the cave and made her own memorial.  These mementos she took to her cavern home behind the waterfall lagoon.  They are her only link to her past.  Sheena desperately wishes she knew more about her parents.  In Kali, she has her surrogate mother.  But in her natural search for a father, she has created one in her mind.  A man who is strong, charismatic, gentle when need be, and with just a bit of an edge to handle anything.  Whether or not her father really was like that, it’s what she would hope he was.

Growing up in a jungle paradise made Sheena a very unique person.  Kali didn’t require Sheena to stay in the village and, in fact, encouraged her curiosity about the jungle and her surroundings.  Her closest friend in these explorations was Shabetha, the lion cub she had met in her wanderings.  Shabetha, growing as Sheena did, accompanied her almost everywhere.  Certainly not as a pet, Shabetha was the only other family that Sheena knew besides Kali.  As Sheena grew, she became accustomed to the law of the jungle.  It was fair and the lines between right and wrong were clearly defined.

Eventually, though, her explorations brought her up against the changing landscape of her land.  She encountered a group of mercenaries hired by the government to “relocate” a village.  Being fourteen at the time, there was little she could do to directly oppose them.  But she saw the cruelty and disregard these outsiders had for her land and the people here.  For the first time, Sheena felt a darkness stir inside herself toward these men.  Returning to Kali, she wouldn’t let go of the feeling inside her.  Kali told her about anger.  She told her about the type of men they were and the things they wanted.  Almost reluctantly, Kali told Sheena about the world and what it had become.  Sheena was appalled.  The Law of the Jungle was so simple and fair.  But, as Kali explained, her world was slowly being pressed in by the world of Men.  Sheena ran off into the woods and didn’t return for two months.  In that time, she considered all she had seen, she set out to see more, she studied these people and their ways.

She traveled to the edges of the jungle to peer into their world.  And when she returned, she was no longer the inquisitive little girl.  She was now a Warrior with a purpose, determined to fight this new “enemy” whenever it came, wherever it appeared, and no matter what disguise it used.

Sadly, Kali allowed her to follow her path, secretly proud of her conviction, but worried about her safety.  Consequently, Kali encouraged Sheena to learn all she could about the world.  When Kali could, she would provide books and newspapers.  She taught Sheena to read in her native tongue, English.  Sheena’s prize possession was a HAM radio.  Sheena was a good student.  She not only learned of the world outside, she allowed herself to become part of it.  Much like the Cro-Magnon Man of prehistory, if you put her in modern clothes at a banquet, you would never know the difference.  The fact that she would carry in the bloody carcass of the main course over her shoulder might be a giveaway that she was a bit different, though.

We pick up our story and our series several years later, when Sheena is in her early twenties.  She has created and embellished this Legend of the Golden One, allowing the fears of the outsiders to build a more effective barrier than force could ever do.  When people venture too close to her land, she reacts.  The stories of these interactions have filtered out and add to the lore of the LaMistas.  It is a strange and dangerous land protected by a mysterious creature that allows few to escape.

In contrast to the fierce warrior that she has become, Sheena’s relationship with Kali is still very much like a daughter to her mother.   Any question Sheena has, Kali has an answer for.  Or, rather, Kali has a way of asking her another question in response.  This is maddening sometimes for Sheena, but she understands why Kali does it.  A bit of her own pride keeps her from asking Kali too many questions, intent on finding answers on her own.

Sheena’s relationship with the animals in the jungle is very important.  She is not their master, nor does she consider herself superior to them.  They are her equals and she treats them that way.  If she “communicates” with an elephant, asking it to move a log for example, the elephant may or may not do what she asks.  Most of the time it will.  But if it doesn’t want to, that’s just the way it is and Sheena has to find another way to accomplish her goal.  More about this later when we talk about her **Special Abilities.**

Sheena is very upfront with her emotions.  The Law of the Jungle makes no allowances for emotional politics.  The things that are hardest to lose are those parts of her humanity that civilization has imprinted in our genes, such as anger.   Animals don’t feel anger; only humans and **Rogues** feel that emotion (more on Rogues later).  As rogues are her only natural enemies, she would hate to think of herself as one.  It’s a part of her she wants to fight; it’s an area that Kali has already defeated in herself.  The Law of the Jungle also doesn’t allow for anger.  It’s a dangerous path to tread.  Sheena’s fight with the outside world is also a test of herself.

***KALI***

Kali is a shamaness, a teacher, and a holy one.  Her goal is not so much to teach Sheena as it is to guide her.  Much like Mr. Miyagi (of Karate Kid), she shows her the signposts, but allows her to choose her own path.  Kali has taught Sheena how to refine her communication with animals.  She has also taught her how to shape-shift into animals under certain conditions.  It is assumed that Kali also has this power, but doesn’t use it.  The truth is, she is above it.  And she also knows the danger involved with doing it.  In fact, the tragedy that destroyed her tribe was a direct result of this ability.  However, just as handing the car keys to your son or daughter for the first time is dangerous, the necessity of doing it is mandatory.  So it is with the shape shifting.  Sheena has to learn how to do it to reach her next level, whatever that might be.  But it has dangers.

Kali has a very dry sense of humor.  She knows how to turn a phrase to give it a double meaning.  This drives Cutter crazy.  He thinks she is playing mind games with him.  And, in a sense, she is.  Kali has the ability to see beyond and beneath people.  Cutter, as we will see, is a very private person as far as his inner feelings are concerned.  But Kali knows that Cutter wants desperately to care for something and she tries to bring that out.  He fights it every step of the way.  Their relationship is almost parent child, even more so than Sheena’s relationship with Kali.  Kali will be involved in several of our stories, but not necessarily all of them.  It should never be forgotten that she is a realist as well as a spiritualist.  Even within the encroaching civilization, she adapts and survives, something her people were not able to do.

***MATT CUTTER***

Closing in on thirty, Matt Cutter is an expatriate American with a shady past.  Roguishly handsome (and he knows it), he is a cross between Michael Douglas (Romancing the Stone) and Han Solo, with a touch of Maverick thrown in.  Cutter grew up in a military family, where his father stressed accomplishment over substance.  In and out of trouble as a young man, his father got him interested in athletics.  This was an area that Cutter excelled in and was soon focused and on the straight and narrow path to success.  Eventually, he was offered a football scholarship to Florida State University as a top quarterback.  His father was proud of him and their relationship flowered.  But his first year on the squad resulted in a twisted knee and the end of his career.  The disappointment from his father was too much to take, football being the only glue that bonded them.  He was offered a chance to continue his scholarship in another field, but couldn’t make anything work.  He rejected school and his family and dropped out to join the US Army.  Soon, he was involved in Special Forces, gaining several medals and awards for his abilities.  He eventually received a Discharge Without Comment after a failed night operation in Central America.  He doesn’t talk about what happened, but he did realize one important thing about himself; He didn’t care.  He’d been involved in all sorts of covert activities in all parts of the world, trying to believe in something.  But it all turned out the same.  So he “retired” to Africa three years ago and began Cutter Enterprises.

What is Cutter Enterprises?  Well, what do you want it to be?  More importantly, how much money do you have to employ Cutter?  Cutter’s main industry is Cutter.  He transports people across national lines, no questions asked.  Cargo delivery is a favorite of his, though he never bothers to ask what it is he is delivering.  Cutter has made a good living at this.  Never rich, it’s still good enough to have a small place of business near Uhura, the capital of Maltaka.  Cutter spends most of his time at this outback office, where he maintains a pontoon plane, US Military riverboat, and a garage of sorts.  He drives an old Land Rover 110 Defender and has one employee, MENDEHLSON.  Mendehlson comes and goes as he pleases, but is usually around when Cutter needs him to repair equipment.

Cutter is a cynic in denial.  He considers himself someone who goes with the flow and adapts to the changing situations.  In fact, he has a list of things to change “if’n I was god…”  But he’s not and the best he can do is endure.  But there are so many things that Cutter denies, what’s with a little delusion as well?   As far as Cutter is concerned, he only has two real vices.  One is his hatred for crocodiles.  “Suitcases with teeth” as far as he’s concerned.  He goes out of his way to make life as miserable for the reptiles as he feels they have made life for him.  The other vice is even more intense.  College football.  Whether he admits it or not, his entire life hinged on the moment that his knee buckled on that scrimmage line.  The die was cast with the snap of a cartilage.  College football is his only link to a life that could have been and, more importantly, to a relationship with his father that he almost had.  He follows it religiously.  Of course, the fact that he doesn’t get the games on tape for weeks after they happen doesn’t diminish his enthusiasm for it.  Obviously this isn’t something that is to be a major story line with Cutter; it’s subtext.  After all, it isn’t about football.  It’s about who he is.

When Cutter meets Sheena, his life makes a drastic change.  Cutter, the man who cares for nothing, has met a woman who cares intensely.  This jars something inside of him that he hasn’t felt for years.  Cutter still has that part deep inside that wants to care for something.  He’s just managed to bury it for so long that it barely exists.  Sheena reactivates that feeling in himself.  And it’s not just a caring for people or the environment.  It’s also for this strange, powerful woman.  Simply put, she affects him and he can’t explain it.  He, of course, rationalizes it as lust and his conquering spirit, and, to a certain extent, that’s true.  He tells himself that his attraction to her is a response to the challenge that she poses to him.  His smooth lines and rustic charm doesn’t seem to work.  No matter.  He’ll just wear her down.  And, then, he’ll be done with her.  That’s what he tells himself.

***MENDEHLSON***

Mendehlson is Cutter’s sometime mechanic.  An older, craggy, bent weasel of a man, he speaks with a slight Slavic accent.  Mendehlson is not his real name, but it works for Cutter.  It’s a little unclear how Cutter made his acquaintance, but it’s implied that they met during one of Cutter’s shady missions.  Mendehlson can work wonders with anything mechanical, but his relationships are more than enigmatic.  He tends to speak in half sentences that Cutter seems to understand.  Sometimes, he goes off on strange rants that seem to have little to do with the crisis at hand.  He has been married four times or five; he loses count from time to time.  But he is the first one to give his strange slant of romantic advice for Cutter.  Mendehlson is a built in source of humor for our series without being slapstick.  Unlike sidekicks in other shows, though, Mendehlson truly has no love for Cutter.  Mendehlson would not run into a burning plane to pull Cutter to safety.  In fact, Mendehlson won’t even butt into a hot conversation on Cutter’s behalf.  The underlying subtext is that Mendehlson is a bit autistic where the rest of the world is concerned.  To Sheena, though, he represents what Cutter could become.  Someone who can’t care about anything.

***RASHID***

A former Ukayho warrior, Rashid is now a National Ranger.  Strikingly handsome, he now works for the government to protect the animals and resources of his country.  A bit of an outcast from his tribe because he took on a government job, he is still devoted to his people.  Rashid is an example of all that is right in Africa.  He gets no special treatment and is free of corruption.  He knows Cutter and would never admit to liking him, even though he does.   He is our connection with the part of the legal system that still works in this land.  His green land rover is a welcome sight to almost everyone, including Sheena. In the midst of civilization, Sheena respects this man.  Again, a character we will see now and then, but not in every episode.

***N’GAMA***

His full name is Honorable President For Life For All Lands and Territories, N’Gama Al Nep Thiem.  And he wears all the ribbons and medals to prove it.  N’Gama is the leader of this country.  He came to power during the civil war, which followed independence from Britain.  Despised and respected, no one can argue his commitment to drag his country into the Twenty First century.  He has made huge reforms and has no problem reminding his people of it.  Statues of N’Gama line the streets.  More than just self-centered, he truly believes what he is doing is good.  His administration is corrupt from top to bottom, but as long as it’s his corruption, it’s okay.  N’Gama will be an infrequent visitor to our series, but his presence will be felt at all times.  It’s his country, after all.  His name is on everything and is a constant reminder of the outside world.  His personal agendas and corruption has left this land open to exploitation.

***HAMMAN***

The other leader in the country.  Hamman is the Chieftain of the Ukayho tribe.  This tribe was a mighty nation at one time, so mighty that Britain chose to negotiate rather than conquer it.  However, those days of glory are long since past.  The members of the tribe who are still loyal to the old ways are loyal to Hamman.  He is a political force as well as a military force.  Technically under the rule of N’Gama, Hamman knows he has the power to create another civil war.  N’Gama knows it as well and, like the British, chooses to negotiate with Hamman.  Hamman would only be considered good because he opposes N’Gama.  But Hamman has his own interests at heart as well.  Again, disguised as the betterment of his people.  He has no time for outsiders (Cutter) or betrayers (Rashid).  When he finally meets Sheena, he doesn’t quite know what to make of her.  But she is not Ukayho and that makes her an enemy. Only his respect for Kali prevents him from doing something foolish to challenge Sheena.

***SHABETHA***

If we had anything close to a semi-regular animal in the series, it would be Shabetha, the lion cub Sheena found when she was a child.  Sheena considers her her sister.  Shabetha comes and goes as she pleases.  However, she is old and, within the course of our first season, will probably pass on.  This will be a major change for our character and one that will elaborate the relationship between Sheena and Cutter.

***THE SHEENA/CUTTER RELATIONSHIP***

This is the crux of our series on a character level.  Sheena and Cutter are inseparable, but the question will be asked “why”?  We’ve already answered the question as to why Cutter might want to hang around Sheena, but what is it that makes Sheena want Cutter around?  Much like Kali, Sheena has an ability to see inside people to their core.  She isn’t aware of this ability yet, but it makes itself known to her as a feeling or intuition about someone.  And, in Cutter, she has seen someone who is strong, charismatic, gentle when need be, and with just a bit of an edge to handle anything.  If it sounds familiar, it is.  It’s her image of her father.  But more importantly than this, it’s what she admires in a man.  And, more than this, she sees Cutter’s need to care.  Though the shell is a little misleading, the inner part of Cutter warms her and makes her feel at home.  She has a hard time explaining it.  But Kali knows.  It was the way she felt when with her husband.  She felt complete.  Sheena, of course, rejects this assessment and decides it’s because she knows Cutter can be useful in her struggle, not thinking that being with Cutter, as he is, might be a struggle in itself.

Sexual tension?  There has to be.  But the question is will they ever sleep together.  Perhaps.  Perhaps not.  Cutter’s early attempts are foiled by Sheena’s demeanor.  Then, perhaps, later attempts are tempered by the knowledge that this is someone you might go to sleep with, but not be the same creature when you wake up.  That’s more than enough of an incentive for abstinence in his book. Still, even with that barrier, he wants to be around her.   Mockingly, he says they make a great team, though he’s not sure which side he’s playing for.  Besides, she’s the closest thing he’s had to a family in a long time.  And there’s The Legend.  Keeping that secret is yet another cross for him to bear.  But he does it for her.  He doesn’t know why, but he does.

**ON WRITING SHEENA**

We will start each story with a pitch, then a written three-paragraph form explaining the set up, middle and resolution of the story.  Following that will be an outline, no more than ten pages, with bulleted scenes and brief explanations of the story.  Each Sheena script will be approximately 40-45 pages.  The structure of each script will comprise of a separate TEASE, ACT ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR and TAG.

The writing for each episode has to move.  That doesn’t just mean action; it means the characterizations have to be upbeat and forward.  The plots need to be engaging.  We don’t have a lot of time to tell our stories, so the quicker we get to the meat of an episode and exploit it, the better.  Sheena is and can only be a Character series.  We have a limited amount of action that we can do per episode, so we have to lean the balance more toward the characters.  It’s one thing to see explosions outside a cavern while our heroes are stuck inside.  But it can be much more interesting (and cost effective) to stay with the characters on the inside listening to the explosions against rock.  We can’t deny the eye-candy appeal of action for our series, but the creative use of our action is what will gain us points with the audience and save us money in the long run.  In general, each episode will have two set piece action sequences.  One near the end of Act One or beginning of Act Two, the other comprising Act Four.  Obviously this can vary, but for the most part it is a rule we will keep to.

Sheena can shape shift into animals, but we have to do this sparingly as it means more CGI effects and more time working with animals, both costly options.  In addition, we want to make sure that the audience isn’t waiting the entire hour just to see her change.  She might change in the Teaser, then not change again.  She might change twice.  It will never be according to formula and we don’t want the stories to be dependent on it.

Ideally, a strong “A” story with a “B” story that intertwines and resolves with the “A” story is desired.  The stories themselves can be borrowed from any area as long as we can believe that the story could be something Sheena would get involved with.  These stories have to touch our characters directly, even if the episode is a light one.  The stories, for the most part, will be centered in Africa, near the LaMistas.   There may be an occasionally trip into Uhura or another urban area, but these will be rare.

Sheena is not a serialized drama, even though there will be basic arcs followed each season.  With most studies showing that loyal viewers watch no more than six episodes a season, we have to guarantee that the audience will be able to understand the stories without having to review what happened the last three episodes.  For that reasons, the stories are to be simple and quickly explained.

Because of our limited budget, we are always looking for cost effective shows.  “Clip” shows and “bottle” shows.  The difference is that we want to be as creative as possible when coming up with these.  We want to start thinking of doing these shows right from the beginning so that we can plan them instead of rushing to do them later because we have to.  We’d like to produce at least two cost effective shows per season, shooting on a five-day schedule.

When writing the Sheena character, keep the model of the Spaghetti Western hero in mind.  Quick, to the point dialogue that sums up situations without debate.  Which is not to say that people can’t debate what Sheena says.  She just says what she has to say without wasting a lot of words.  Sheena has an ability to put things in a different light, to turn someone’s words around in order to reveal hypocrisy, even the small ones.  In classical terms, she would be considered a jungle Sophist.

Kali is calm and gentle with her words.  Instead of Sheena’s technique, she always has a slight smile when she hears the hypocrisies.  It can drive people crazy.  And it does, most notably in Matt Cutter.

If Sheena has an economy of words, Cutter more than makes up for it.  He goes out of his way to express one concept in as many ways possible.  Cutter feels that the moment you stop talking in a discussion is the moment you have to start fighting.  Although he never says, “you know?” or “see?” you can hear them in between each sentence, almost as if he’s waiting for the other person to pick up the slack.  With Sheena, it doesn’t happen.  So he finds himself talking more than his seductive style tells him he should.

**ON DIRECTING SHEENA**

Sheena should have its own distinctive visual style.  One that is not distracting but definitely one that becomes a signature to the series.  We don’t want to do the “unsteady” cam, but do want the camera to have a freedom.   Perhaps on sticks for a few beats, then moving fluidly throughout a scene.  If there are three obvious ways to shoot a scene, we prefer that the Director go with the fourth choice.  Since we will be matching this up with authentic African footage, we want to look to have the grand scope of a movie shot in Africa.  Just as with the writing, though, we want to episodes to move quickly in pace.  And the direction should reflect this.

Because we will be using morphing techniques, the use of green screen and shooting plates is unavoidable.  The key to this, again, is to make it as creative as possible.  Just locking off a camera, shooting three plates, then doing a point-to-point morph is simple; most shows do it.  But we want to push the boundaries and see things that aren’t expected.  The audience has become pretty savvy where special effects are concerned, so we want to challenge them.  Of course, we want to do it without exceeding our budget.  Again, creative thinking is required.  Any way to create this style by manipulating the three perceived dimensions is our preference.

Aside from Special Effects, we will also have a certain amount of action.  Again, creative thinking. A few notes, though, about the Sheena Character and fights.  Sheena is a child of the jungle.  She fights like an animal at all times.  She never does martial arts.  She doesn’t need to.  Example; when she attacks, she might clench her fist on an opponent’s throat and choke them the way a lion brings down its prey.  She moves like an animal.  Example; when she darts through the underbrush, she barely touches the foliage.  Her footsteps are light.  When she swings on a vine, she doesn’t do it Tarzan style.  She wraps her arm around the vine for a better grip, leaving her other hand free.  And, by the way, swinging on vines is not her normal mode of transportation.  She can run through the trees, limb to limb, almost as well as she runs on the ground.  As a result of this, we will be using wire rigs from time to time.

**PERMANENT SETS (all pending final location and budgetary decisions)**

***EXTERIORS:***

***CUTTER’S OFFICE***

Located in the backcountry outside of the capital city of Uhura, Cutter’s office looks like a roadside bar that has been converted into a garage.  Off the beaten track and located next to a river, Cutter has made the best of this run down business location.  A sign next to the road entrance declare this is “Field Office, Cutter East, a division of Cutter Enterprises” and, in smaller letters, “offices in London, New York, Buenos Aires, Tokyo”.  A large half Quonset hut serves as his garage.  Inside this garage can be seen Cutter’s dirty Zebra Black/White 110 Land Rover.  Over near the river can be found a wire link fence leaning toward the water; a crocodile fence.  Just above the fence, on the safe side, is a hammock strung between trees.  The “Croc taunter”, as Cutter calls it.  Beyond that, we find a dock with a single engine pontoon plane and a military style river recon boat, both kept in top mechanical shape by Mendehlson.

***LAGOON***

Quite simply, this is a fairly small lagoon off the LaMista river.  Clear and pure water runs over a cliff at one end forming the crystal sheets of a waterfall.  The water’s edge has overhanging trees and brush.  One bank has a “slide”, which is a muddy area that animals use to approach and enter the water.  Behind the falls is Sheena’s Lair.  Entering requires swimming underwater or dropping in from a hidden entrance above the rocks.

***JUNGLE SET***

The Jungle Set will be a standing, moveable greenery set that we can redress to look like various areas of the jungle.  Two sides will be masked with berms so that we can dress them with enough foliage to cover the background.  Shooting in this area will restrict our movement, but will afford the maximum amount of visual effect as we can make it look like an infinite number of locations.  Ideally this area would be located very near our soundstage so that we can move the mobile greenery inside to shoot night scenes in the jungle.

***KALI’S VILLAGE***

A small village, it consists of rectangular huts, maybe only five or six, laid out in square.  The huts are made of a combination of grass and mud with doors made of hanging skins.  A main “road” runs down the middle.  Goats and cattle wander the streets.  The area is kept clean, though.  Each hut has small items hanging outside on the walls.  Some have skins being dried, others have good luck charms that Kali gave them.  As with the Jungle Set, we can redress and move the huts to look like any village that we need.

***INTERIORS:***

***CUTTER’S OFFICE***

Cutter’s Office is best described as in a perpetual state of optimistic disarray.  A small one-time bar, the office has a counter running along one side of the room.  Behind that are filing cabinets filled with who knows what.  A western saloon style bawdy painting sits on the wall behind the bar, a leftover from better days.   Another poster shows a rendition of the infamous “Golden One”, the savage beast of the LaMistas.  The poster has the image of a cross between Big Foot and the Abominable Snowman, glowing red eyes in a darkened face, blood splattering ground, sharp claws wrapped around a severed arm.

Various decorations and awards are on the walls, some he won in battle, some he won on the card table, a couple that he stole.  Prominently displayed on the bar itself is a beautifully framed picture of a gorgeous woman he’s named Amanda.  This, he tells everyone, is the girl he left behind. The one who was too demanding, who tried to take away his liberty.  She is example enough to anyone of Cutter’s adventurous and freedom seeking nature.  Unfortunately, none of it is true, the picture came with the frame.  In fact, there is precious little of the real Cutter here to be seen.  Except, of course, for the college football memorabilia that line the walls.  A game football is encased in plastic and sits high atop a cabinet, away from anyone’s touch.  This happens to be the ball that was in Cutter’s hands when he sustained that career ending (or career beginning) injury.

What you can’t see in his office are the weapons.  Hidden about the office are guns and knives, necessary tools in the line of work he pursues.  Also under the bar is a bunk.  Instant bedroom when he needs it.

***SHEENA’S LAIR***

A small cavern behind a waterfall, Sheena has made it her home.  Here she has stored the few artifacts of her parents and the small things that she calls her own.  A small hammock bed is near one wall as well as a stone basin that catches water from the river above.  A broken mirror is against one wall and a small grass bed is on the floor, once occupied by Shabetha.  Behind this Lair is a series of caverns that stretch off into the darkness.  In one huge room is an ancient city of a long dead civilization.  Sheena had explored it as a child and takes little interest in it now.  She respects the spirits of those who lived there, but has no use for the diamonds that line the walls.  Having been to the West, she knows their value.  But she also knows what greed does to people, so she isn’t likely to reveal this place to anyone.  Except, perhaps, Cutter, who will stumble onto it by accident.  His decision to keep its location a secret is less because he is worried about Sheena’s wrath and more because he respects her wishes.  He knows what men are like where wealth is concerned.  After all, he is one of those men.

***KALI’S HUT***

Kali’s hut looks more like a colorful museum piece than an African hut.  It is small and unassuming, but brightened by the color of her art.  Shamanistic icons of all sort hang from the supports in the hut.  Beads, herbs, totems, all placed in such a way to imply spiritual power.  There is a woven grass mat in the middle of the floor, just in front of a small cushion.  It is from this cushion that the Shamaness Kali meets with the villagers.  Overall, though, her hut is the African version of Feng Shui.  Everything is where it is supposed to be to maximize the personal energy of the individual.

**THE STRANGE WORLD OF SHEENA**

***ON SHEENA’S ABILITIES***

Sheena has two abilities of note.  One is the ability to communicate with animals.  It should be stressed that this is not like telepathy and has little to do with the way we communicate with each other.  It is not Doctor Doolittle.  It is more like the way we communicate with our pets but on a much higher level.  It is a look, a gesture, a nod.  Sheena is able to convey her meaning with little effort.  Of course, that’s only half the effort.  If the other animal isn’t willing, it means nothing.

The other ability is her being able to shape shift into an animal.  Now without getting into the scientific explanation of how this is done (we have one, if need be known) it is only done under very strict circumstances and has many inherent dangers.  It isn’t an easy fix to a dilemma.  Sheena has to be in the line of sight of the animal she wants to change into.  She has to make eye contact for it to happen.  And when she morphs into the animal, she takes on the characteristics of that animal.  Understand, she does not replace the source animal, that animal may just wander away.  She is a brand new animal of the same species.  As mentioned, though, there are certain dangers.  For one, the longer she stays as a particular animal, the more she carries traits of that animal back when she returns to human form.  For example, if she is a leopard to long and changes back, you do not want to get near her for fear of your life.  If she is a rhinoceros too long, she is nearsighted for a while when she changes back.  There is also the risk that if she stays too long, she might not be able to return to human form.  Or that she might be caught in between, a she-creature (which only adds to the Golden One Legend).

Sheena cannot shape shift into reptiles, insects or fish.  She is restricted to warm blooded animals.  Birds and mammals are okay.  She also cannot shape shift into any creature that knows hatred.  Therefore Rogues and other human beings are outside her abilities.

You might ask why do her clothes morph with her?  Mostly because we don’t want to spend half the episode wondering how she got her clothes back after she morphed out of a situation.  As long as her clothes are organic, that is made from animal skins, they have the ability to morph with her.  However, put her in a synthetic gown and when she morphs, the clothes don’t.  And, as a further note, these clothes are made from the skins of animals she has had to kill.  Wearing the skins is a way of honoring the animal.

To repeat, this ability is not an easy fix for a dangerous situation.  If she is falling off a cliff and she can’t find a bird to fix on, she has a problem.  She has to find other ways to save herself.  The moment the audience thinks that her shape shifting will solve a problem, we should make her inability to do just that part of the problem itself.  Perhaps the animal near her is not what the audience would expect, but we find a creative way that particular animal can solve the problem.  All of these rules will come out during the course of the series as needed.

***ON ROGUES AND SHEENA’S RELATIONSHIP WITH ANIMALS***

As mentioned before, most animals are at ease with Sheena.  However, just as there are good people and bad people, there are good animals and bad.  Some animals just don’t like Sheena at all.  They will not be of any help at all.  But worse than these are the **Rogues**.

Rogue animals know anger and hatred.  They are the only enemies that Sheena truly has among the animals.  Examples of Rogues would be the Man-eaters of Tsavo, popularized in the movie “The Ghost and the Darkness”.  They can range from lions to gorillas and are all individuals.  The basic rule is that these animals know hatred, therefore they hate.  The extreme subtext to this has to do with Kali’s people and what happened to them.  As stated, the legend told of a great calamity.  Kali’s people were all shape shifters.  They all had the ability to change their shape into that of an animal, just as Kali has taught Sheena.  The problem is that they eventually made the choice to change and remain as animals.  In their mind, it was their way of finalizing their communion with nature.  But the danger wasn’t in what they changed into, it was in what they took with them. Certain human qualities such as intelligence, cunning and, of course, hatred.  These rogues do not have the intelligence of humans anymore, we can’t communicate with them as we do with each other.  They are animals in every respect except that they kill for the sake of killing.

***THE LAMISTAS***

A strange land in the middle area of Africa.  One of the last areas to be explored, it has more legends and mysticism than most countries.   An area that has tall mountains, low-lying jungles and vast open areas, it is ripe for the picking by the civilized world.  Only its inaccessibility has protected it so far.  That protection is quickly being eroded.  The LaMistas is also the legendary home of the Golden One.  To the outside world, the Golden One is this vicious half beast creature that feeds on the living hearts of her victims.  Obviously another reason to avoid the area.  Sheena knows her reputation and does nothing to correct it.   Basically, the LaMistas is a strange, mythical land that can be whatever we want it to be.  It can be the home of a lost civilization, as well as the ancient Elephant Burial grounds.  It is an area that is so vast, that even Sheena has not seen it all.  But as she finds her way into the deeper regions, she discovers more adventure.

**THE TONE OF THE SERIES**

To ensure our success, we have to accomplish two basic things.  One is to stop that remote control as it flicks over the stations.  In our teasers and trailers, we have to give the audience the kind of quick eye-candy that will bring them to our show for a sampling.  Humor and action will do that.  In the fifteen to thirty seconds that they are likely to focus on us, we have to convince them that there is a wild ride in store for them.  Secondly, we then have to guarantee that they will return next week.  That will be done with engaging stories and characters.

Every episode of Sheena should be an adventure.  We want to audience to be left wanting more and setting their VCR’s in order to catch the next episode.  Putting an emphasis on character and action, the series will have its own sense of humor, about the situations and about itself.  You are just as likely to hear Cutter comment on the comparisons of Sheena and Tarzan as you are to hear him tell any other joke.  We can’t try to take ourselves too seriously.  We are telling fanciful tales about fantasy people.  There is a high level of B.S. factor to contend with.  The best way to defuse it is to address it.  The moment the audience is likely to lose their suspension of disbelief is when we should hit it right on the head.  If a situation seems like it is unbelievable, one of our characters should reflect that idea.  There should always be a wink and a nod toward the audience.  It will add to the fun of the series.

There will be adventure stories, dramas and humorous stories.  We don’t want to tie ourselves down to one arena.  At the same time, we certainly don’t want to give our audience the idea that they are seeing three different series.  With a certain deftness, all three areas will be addressed in each episode.

Obviously, as this is a series with a heavy fantasy aspect, we should always be careful to follow the rules we set up for our universe.  We don’t want to complicate things with lengthy explanations and, at the same time, we want to audience to trust that we won’t violate our own world.  The audience doesn’t need or want to work at enjoying Sheena.

Additionally, though the obvious lean of the series is toward conservation and animals, we can not become a platform to lecture these points.  They are a natural part of the series and are a given.  But while all our stories should have moral points, they should not be morality tales.  We aren’t Western Union, our purpose is not to deliver messages.  The moment the audience senses a lecture is the moment we lose them to the Discovery Channel.

The bottom line is that series should be written and directed with its own particular style.  We want Sheena to be unlike any other TV Series.  It will be compared to Xena and Beastmaster, that’s a given.  But it has to stand alone in its style.  With original thinking and creativity, it will.