

CHILDHOOD'S END

FADE IN

Super black letters over white:

PROLOGUE

The word dissolves away. The white becomes a swirling, grey fog, a blanket that muffles sound and obscures the landscape. A dull, thudding noise grows louder and louder. Out of the fog, a helicopter materializes. Camera pans with it as it stays low to the ground, skimming over a nightmare-world of volcanic ash strewn with oddly-shaped rocks. If it weren't for the helicopter, we might think we were on the surface of the moon.

1

INT. THE HELICOPTER - DAY

1

Doctor Gregory Reinhold rides in the passenger's seat. The pilot is a former Air Force hotshot who doesn't seem bothered by the lack of visibility. Reinhold is sixty years old and a scientist. He wears glasses; behind the lenses, his eyes are narrow and grim.

PILOT

(shouting over
the noise)

Should be right around here somewhere.

The pilot banks over hard, following the circular rim of the volcano that reared this mountain, half a million years ago.

2

EXT. THE RIM OF THE CRATER - DAY

2

A lonely figure is moving in the shifting eddies of the fog. In his late twenties, he wears old dungarees and a safari jacket, one pocket bristling with pencils, an electronic calculator clipped to his belt. He walks with a limp, using a cane to pick his way through the rocks. Despite the handicap, he is well built and looks athletic. His name is Jan Rodericks.

3

CLOSER ON HIM

3

as he drops to one knee next to an instrument on the ground, a seismograph. About to check a reading on the instrument, he looks up. He can hear the helicopter in the distance, muffled and ghostly. He frowns.

4

EXT. A CAMPSITE - DAY

4

which consists of a two-man tent and several folding aluminum tables full of scientific instruments. The helicopter buzzes over the campsite like an insect, propwash buffeting the tent. The pilot sets down on the flattest spot he can find and kills the engine. Reinhold gets out carrying a thick stack of computer printouts folded accordion-style. As the sound of the helicopter's engine dies away:

REINHOLD

(shouting)

Jan! Rodericks!

His voice is swallowed in the fog. He walks toward the tent, the pilot catching up with him.

REINHOLD

Check his radio.

(shouts again)

Jan!

The pilot goes to a shortwave radio on one of the tables and snaps it on, scanning quickly across several bandwidths, getting static.

PILOT

Nothing.

Reinhold nods. The pilot meets the older man's eyes for a moment. There is a mutual, unspoken fear in the look between them.

5

MOVING WITH JAN

5

as the outlines of the helicopter appear ahead of him, then the tent. He waves with his cane.

JAN

Hey!

6

FAVORING REINHOLD

6

as he turns. Jan is an apparition that grows solid as he draws nearer.

JAN

What're you doing here? You've ruined my readings ---

Reinhold just stares at him. Jan stops walking.

CONTINUED

JAN

What's wrong?

REINHOLD

Look at this.

Reinhold holds out the stack of computer sheets. His tone of voice doesn't invite further questions. Jan takes the sheets to one of the tables.

REINHOLD

We got a positive fix on whatever that is about one o'clock.

(beat)

Then it got into the military radar net. It must have set off every early warning system on earth. The United States went to Condition Red ---

(checks his watch)

-- forty three minutes ago.

Jan is bent over the printouts, running a finger rapidly along rows of numbers. He glances up.

JAN

Is it military?

REINHOLD

You tell me.

A few moments pass, while Jan works his way to the bottom of the first sheet of paper dense with figures.

JAN

It's a long way out...it's not orbital
...it's not ballistic....

(looks up)

Did you look for a Doppler shift?

REINHOLD

(nods)

Look for yourself. See if you get what I did.

Jan unhooks the calculator from his belt. It's the programmable type and he takes a moment to set it up. Then he enters a series of figures, referring to data near the bottom of the folded stack of printouts. He looks up at Reinhold, stunned.

JAN

It's coming in fast. Very fast.

CONTINUED

Reinhold nods in confirmation. Jan slaps his hand on the stack of papers in growing excitement.

JAN

Is it slowing down?

REINHOLD

I would have checked for deceleration, but there wasn't time. We were monitoring stateside radio through Pasadena... the Chinese must have thought they'd picked up an ICBM.

JAN

Must have ---?

REINHOLD

They set off a nuclear attack....

All the blood drains out of Jan's face. Now he finally understands the grim expressions on the two men facing him.

JAN

At us?

REINHOLD

At the Russians first. Then at us. Sixty ICBM's, before we lost radio contact with California.

JAN

Did you try Honolulu?

REINHOLD

(nods)

All the radios are dead. So are the telephones.

Jan nods, his eyes turned cold and hard with anger.

JAN

(to pilot)

Which way is the wind blowing?

PILOT

South-east.

(shrugs)

If they've hit Honolulu, we'll be dead in a week. Washington's probably gone already. It takes twenty-four minutes for an ICBM to come over the pole.

CONTINUED

Jan looks out at the strange lunar landscape surrounding them, the helicopter looming vaguely in the fog, the wind ruffling the flaps of the tent and blowing streamers of mist.

JAN

(after a long beat)

This is what the world looked like in the beginning, once the volcanoes cooled down. Have you ever seen ground zero after a bomb?

(shakes his head)

Looks just the same. Except the dirt is fused into glass from the heat....

He picks up the printouts and slams them back onto the table.

JAN

Greg, this radio source is extraterrestrial. And if it's hostile, why the hell would it be talking to us? At the speed it's coming, it could have been inside the radar net before the data was even processed! It was telling us where it is and what it is...if anyone had just asked us about it ---

REINHOLD

I know. But it happened too fast.

JAN

Yeah.

(nods)

Thanks for coming up to get me.

He ducks into the tent and comes out a moment later with a battered old briefcase and a puzzled expression.

JAN

Did you say all the radios are out?
Even this one?

PILOT

Nothing but static.

That doesn't seem to make sense to Jan. He scoops up the stack of printouts and balances it above the briefcase in his left hand. The three of them walk toward the helicopter.

as the helicopter lifts off and disappears in the fog.

8

INT. THE HELICOPTER - DAY

8

They move through a blank greyness, the pilot keeping his eye on the altimeter. Gradually, the fog begins to dissipate as they drop out of the cloud on the top of the mountain. A breathtaking panorama unfolds beneath them. The helicopter skims over lush jungle and broad green valleys sweeping down to the Pacific far in the distance -- the island of Hawaii, serene and untroubled. During this, Jan is bent over the printouts, studying the numbers, ignoring the view. Suddenly, he circles a number in red ink. He looks up at Reinhold.

JAN

What time did you lose contact
with Pasadena?

REINHOLD

About one-seventeen.

JAN

Perfect...look at this. At one-seventeen p.m.
That's an amplitude -- in the right portion
of the electromagnetic spectrum to inter-
fere with radio transmissions. That's
an incredible amount of power. Even
narrowband microwaves couldn't make it
through that....

Reinhold peers at the numbers and shakes his head.

REINHOLD

What does it mean?

JAN

I'll tell you what it might mean -- that
Pasadena's still there....

9

EXT. A RADIO TELESCOPE INSTALLATION - DAY

9

perched on the windward side of the mountain, under clear
skies flecked with clouds. Three radio telescopes look up
at the heavens from the perimeter of a cleared area. The
helicopter swoops in and lands near a cluster of pre-fab
buildings. Jan and Reinhold are out and walking toward the
largest of the buildings before the rotors stop turning.
As they walk:

JAN

Greg...what if I'm an alien intelli-
gence, and I want to make contact
with us, but I know how trigger-happy
we are -- how do I do it? And I mean
physical contact.

CONTINUED

9

CONTINUED

9

JAN (Cont'd)

(points to the sky)

I'm out there and I want to come in.
I know our entire military network
depends on microwave communications
-- so I blanket the microwave spectrum.
Nobody can talk to anybody else --
there's no way to coordinate an attack.

REINHOLD

Forget it. It doesn't work ---

JAN

Because the Chinese don't have as
sophisticated an early warning system
as we do. They don't have the fail
safes. But do we know for sure they
fired everything off?

REINHOLD

(flat)

Yes.

JAN

(defeated)

Then it doesn't work. Half the world's
gone before I can get in and stop it.
Jesus!

They walk up the steps and into the building.

10

INT. THE TRACKING STATION - DAY

10

The long building is filled with electronic monitoring de-
vices, computer terminals, digital memory storage banks. A
young engineer sits at a stainless steel desk with an open
bottle of bourbon in front of him, smashed. He raises his
glass as Jan and Reinhold enter.

CONNORS

Just in time for an end-of-the-world
drink. Here's to Armaggedon.

JAN

We've got work to do.

CONNORS

Nobody's ever gonna care....

Jan grabs the bottle, half empty. Reinhold is already at one
of the computer terminals, calling up data.

CONTINUED

10

CONTINUED

10

JAN

Dammit, you picked a lousy time to get drunk -- something's up there, and we can find it.

REINHOLD

Jan...we've got five separate radio sources in a high orbit ---

Jan goes to look over Reinhold's shoulder.

JAN

Five?

(stares at the screen)

We should be able to see the damn things!

11

EXT. THE COMPOUND - DAY

11

There are vapor trails in the sky, high above and moving quickly in staggered formation -- five separate sparks of light trailing thin streamers across the blue. Two of the vapor trails are breaking off to the south, two are heading due east, one is dropping below the others in a lazy arc, coming toward the island. Jan and Reinhold hurry out into the compound, Connors behind them. The pilot is already staring at the sky.

PILOT

ICBM's?

JAN

Too high and too fast -- the trajectories are wrong. They're spacecraft, entering the atmosphere....

There's a dull rumble of thunder from the south. They all turn. Four angry plumes of fire are rising into the sky, climbing quickly and turning out over the ocean.

PILOT

From the missile silos, on Kauai. Minutemen. Heat seekers. Each one carries a megaton. See how they're lining up? If the first one misses, the second one comes in, then the third, then the fourth. One of 'em reaches the target.

The four missiles are streaking out over the ocean on an interception course with the single point of light dropping down toward the island. One by one they move in on their target...and one by one, as they reach it, they disappear.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED

11

CONNORS

What the hell happened to them? No
flash, no nothing?

REINHOLD

They're gone....

The entire sky from horizon to horizon is a filmy network of vapor trails, feathering and starting to dissipate. The object that absorbed the missiles is losing its train as it enters the moist, thicker air near the ocean. Its outlines are becoming distinct, its speed is dropping.

REINHOLD

My God, maybe your plan does work...
if all the missiles were swallowed
up like that ---

JAN

(eyes on the sky)

The the end of the world may have
been postponed.

(a whisper)

Look at the size of it....

12 THEIR POINT OF VIEW - CLOSER ON THE INCOMING SPACECRAFT

12

It looks like a disk at first, but as it draws nearer it seems to expand rapidly. It turns to the south, and the sun reflects off it. It shines against the deep blue of the sky, a gleaming silver shape, impossibly huge, magnificent, alien, unlike anything human eyes have seen before... a starship come to earth.

13 FAVORING JAN

13

watching in awe, his eyes bright with wonder.

REINHOLD

What kind of propulsion system could
it have? To be able to move that much
mass around so precisely....

Camera moves in on Jan's face. He is starting to grin in almost childlike delight.

14 ON THE SPACECRAFT

14

fifty miles away, and still large enough to dominate the sky. It moves in utter silence, defying gravity, hovering now almost motionless as it turns. It has no windows or lights, no sign of exhaust. We can barely make out an aurora of energy along its underside. Its course adjustment completed, the ship begins to move forward again.

15 EXT. THE PUNCHBOWL - DAY

15

overlooking the city of Honolulu, as the ship comes in over the island, large enough to cast its shadow over the entire city.

16 EXT. HONOLULU - DAY - A SERIES OF SHOTS

16

of people looking up, cars stopped on the streets, every activity frozen. As the trailing edge of the ship's shadow passes by, and the sunlight returns....

CUT TO

17 EXT. OAHU - DAY

17

The ship leaves the island in its wake and accelerates over camera.

18 EXT. THE COMPOUND - DAY

18

The four men turn as the ship departs, its speed increasing until it shrinks from sight as rapidly as it appeared. Jan slowly realizes he's been holding his breath. He turns to look at the others. All four of them are grinning without being aware of it, their eyes wide. Jan takes a deep breath and lets out a shriek of pure joy.

JAN

Did you see that thing!? Did you see how big it was? Jesus Christ! It was incredible!

REINHOLD

(shakes his head)

Incredible....

JAN

But it was real! Greg, it was real!

He grabs Reinhold by the shoulders, completely carried away.

JAN

We're not going to die...we're going to go to the stars!

He steps back from Reinhold and suddenly throws his cane high into the air, as hard as he can.

19 ON THE CANE

19

as it twists and turns against the sky, and falls to the ground.

CUT TO

- 20 EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY 20
as the ship hurtles eastward.
- 21 EXT. THE CLIFFS OVERLOOKING SANTA MONICA - DAY 21
as the ship comes toward Los Angeles, first a speck in the sky, then a line against the blue, then a full disk. As in Honolulu, traffic has stopped, people are staring. The ship, slowing, comes in low -- too low. A few people begin to run, others throw themselves instinctively down on the grass. As the ship slides over the city, the sun is eclipsed.
- 22 EXT. A FREEWAY - DAY 22
Cars are skidding to a stop at odd angles as the shadow falls over the freeway. Drivers are getting out of their cars and staring at the sky. In both directions, the worst traffic jam in history is starting to form.
- 23 EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY - HIGH SHOT 23
as the ship comes to a full stop and floats in the air.
- 24 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY - LOOKING UP 24
from one of the avenues as another ship moves overhead, erasing what little of the sky there is between the skyscrapers.
- 25 AERIAL SHOT 25
as this second ship comes to rest and hangs in the air over Manhattan Island.
- 26 EXT. PARIS - NIGHT 26
The traffic is frozen on the Champs Elysees. Over the Eiffel Tower is another ship, its pulsating aurora of energies vivid against the darkness.
- 27 EXT. MOSCOW - NIGHT - SHOOTING UP 27
from Red Square. A ship blots out the stars. The interplay of pale, cold fire along its underside ripples in waves of color.
- 28 EXT. TOKYO - DAY 28
Still another ship floats over the city, catching the rays of the morning sun and reflecting them in a golden radiance so bright as it be almost painful to look at it, rivaling the sun itself.

DISSOLVE TO

29

A TELEVISION SET

29

and a breathless, distracted newscaster talking over a shot of New York with the ship above it.

NEWSCASTER'S VOICE

-- over Tokyo, Hanoi, Sri Lanka,
Johannesburg, Cairo and Tel Aviv.
Rome, Tehran, Moscow, Berlin....

CUT TO

30

INT. A BAR - DAY

30

and another television set. The bar is jammed with people, craning over each other's shoulders to see the screen.

2ND NEWSCASTER

...and it now appears certain at least seventy air-to-ground and intercontinental ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads were fired -- not one of which impacted. Incredible as it may seem, the missiles simply disappeared....

31

EXT. A STREET - DAY

31

in a South American city. A crowd is gathered around a television store window, watching a news broadcast in Spanish.

32

A SERIES OF SHOTS

32

of television screens from around the world, each with pictures of the spaceships over the cities, each carrying a babble of commentary in all the languages of earth.

33

INT. A TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

33

where a Walter Cronkite-type commentator is delivering an assessment of the situation, his calm, reasonable manner a contrast to the near hysteria of the other newscasters.

COMMENTATOR

...and with the fact of contact with an alien civilization now upon us, the question remains -- what do they want with us, and why are they here? Their technology so far surpasses ours that it would be folly indeed to contemplate a military retaliation.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED

33

COMMENTATOR (Cont'd)

And inasmuch as they have so far refused to communicate with us in any way, we can only wait. And wonder....

DISSOLVE TO

34 EXT. THE EARTH IN SPACE

34

as seen from a height of fifty kilometers, at the fringes of the atmosphere. We are looking down on the east coast of North America. The shot pulls back to include a ship, glistening in the cold sunlight of space. A perfect sphere drops down from the underside of the ship, falling to earth far below. As it's lost to sight,

CUT TO

35 EXT. THE UNITED NATIONS PLAZA - DAY - SHOOTING UP

35

The ship is much higher above the city than when it first arrived. The sphere is a point of light growing brighter and larger as it descends. It plummets downwards and then stops abruptly, a hundred yards above the Secretariat building. More slowly, it settles to the ground.

36 SHOOTING ALONG A FENCE

36

which has been erected around the plaza. The sphere is thirty meters in diameter. It comes to a final stop just above the fenced-off area, emitting a low-pitched hum which sets the chain-links vibrating.

37 REVERSE ANGLE

37

First Avenue is cordoned off and soldiers line the sidewalk under the flags of the United Nations. A battery of television cameras and mobile video trucks occupy the street. We can see crowds of people on Forty-Fourth Street pressing against the barricades.

38 ON THE SPHERE

38

An opening appears in its otherwise seamless surface. A stairway extrudes itself to the pavement, but stops short of actually touching it.

39 ON THE ENTRANCE TO THE SECRETARIAT BUILDING

39

also blocked by soldiers. The lobby of the building is a crush of milling bodies as people stare at the plaza. A group of men come outside and walk together toward a gate in the fence. As they reach the opening:

CONTINUED

39

CONTINUED

39

A VOICE

The Secretary-General alone, please.

As one, the group stops. The voice booms out over the plaza, not an unpleasant voice, but not exactly human, as if alien vocal chords were approximating English.

40

SHOOTING PAST THE STAIRWAY

40

The men hold a brief, huddled conference. All but one of them turn back, leaving Rikki Stormgren at the entrance to the gate alone. He holds a large briefcase which is obviously heavy. Stormgren is tall, fifty-five years old, with the eyes of a poker player. He stares at the sphere for a long moment before squaring his shoulders and walking forward. At the foot of the stairway, he stops and turns back. All the television cameras are on him. He looks up at the entrance to the sphere.

41

FAVORING STORMGREN

41

The stairway leads up into what looks like a compartment within the sphere, white-walled and as featureless as the outside. Stormgren hefts the briefcase and walks up the stairs.

42

WIDE SHOT - THE PLAZA

42

as Stormgren disappears inside the sphere. The stairway retracts itself, the doorway closes up as mysteriously as it appeared. The sphere begins to rise, and the fence gradually stops vibrating. The television cameras pan up with it. Once it's reached the height of the building, it hurtles into the sky.

43

INT. THE SPHERE

43

Stormgren has set down the briefcase and stands in the compartment. There is no sensation of movement, and no windows. There is a single chair, designed to accommodate a human anatomy. Other than that, the compartment is sterile and blank.

THE VOICE

Please, sit down. The journey will take several minutes.

Stormgren walks to the chair, puts his hand on it, but doesn't sit. The voice is neither as loud nor as commanding inside the compartment, and it seems to carry a trace of humor:

CONTINUED

43

CONTINUED

43

THE VOICE

Put your fears aside, Rikki Stormgren.
No harm will come to you or any of
your race, because of us.

STORMGREN

With whom am I speaking?

As he says this, he comes around the chair and sits. His
voice carries the trace of an accent.

KARELLAN

My name is Karellan. We will be work-
ing together closely over the next
several years. I am sure we will get
to know each other well.

STORMGREN

(trying out
the name)

Karellan...

(then)

Where do you come from?

KARELLAN

Another star system, in the heart
of our galaxy -- where it is, is of
no importance.

STORMGREN

...why did you come? And why, so
suddenly ---

KARELLAN

All in good time, Rikki Stormgren.
All in good time.

44 EXT. THE SPACESHIP - DAY

44

as the sphere returns to it, dwarfed by its immensity. It
enters the underside of the ship.

45 INT. A CORRIDOR IN THE SHIP

45

several miles in length and intersected at various points.
The sphere goes hurtling down the corridor, slows, and turns
at one of the intersections.

46 INT. THE SPHERE

46

Stormgren sits, unaware his journey is finished until the
doorway opens again, giving onto a hallway twice the height

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED

46

of a man and as featureless as the sphere. Stormgren rises and goes to pick up his briefcase.

47 INT. THE CONTROL ROOM OF THE SHIP - ON A SCREEN

47

which shows us a strange image of Stormgren walking into the hallway. This screen is meant for alien eyes, whose vision is shifted to the red and infrared portions of the spectrum. Stormgren is oddly distorted, and surrounding his body are patterns of energy like auras. A shadow obscures part of the screen. We can hear a breathing sound, and a dry rustling as the shadow rises, giving us a vague sense of a shape before it moves out of the shot.

48 INT. THE HALLWAY

48

as Stormgren walks. Ahead is an opening, leading into a room not unlike the compartment in the sphere. Stormgren enters the room. A table and chair sit facing what looks like a large smoked glass window.

49 REVERSE ANGLE - THROUGH THE GLASS

49

from the other side. Again, the view is distorted and this side of the room is bathed in reddish light. As Stormgren walks to the table, sets the briefcase on it and sits in the chair, Karellan enters and moves in front of the camera, a silhouette in passing. Karellan settles into a seat.

50 FAVORING STORMGREN

50

looking at the smoked glass, which reflects his own image back to him. He opens his briefcase, filled to capacity with papers of various sorts. He finds a small tape recorder and takes it out.

KARELLAN

You may turn on your recorder, if you wish.

Stormgren jumps. The sense of Karellan's presence on the far side of the glass is unnerving.

STORMGREN

I seem to be at a loss in this conversation.
I presume you can see me?

CONTINUED

KARELLAN

Yes.

STORMGREN

Then shouldn't I also be able to see you?

KARELLAN

I would prefer to meet face to face, but there is a limit to the psychological discontinuity human beings can accommodate. Your race is in a state of shock. Actual contact with us would only deepen and prolong that shock, unnecessarily. After all, we do not look like you....

STORMGREN

I see.

KARELLAN

Tremendous changes are upon you, Rikki Stormgren. You have killed one another and raped your planet quite freely now for several millenia. This is understandable. Your race is young, and given to making mistakes. But allowed to continue unchecked, your own history would lead you inevitably to self-destruction. We have come to prevent this.

Stormgren has frowned as he listens to this.

STORMGREN

Why?

KARELLAN

We have been assigned to you.

STORMGREN

Assigned?

KARELLAN

By a higher authority, one you could not comprehend even if I were permitted to describe it to you, which I am not.

Stormgren looks through the glass, the auras of energy licking around his body.

CONTINUED

51 CONTINUED

51

KARELLAN

Understand this, Rikki Stormgren. The Universe is a living thing. Our galaxy is an evolving part of the Universe. Life seeks out life. You may think of us as teachers. We will protect you, from yourselves if necessary, until all of you are ready to determine what your role is to be in the Universe. When you have no further need of us, we will leave you.

52 CLOSE ON STORMGREN

52

frowning again.

STORMGREN

And you expect nothing of us in return?

KARELLAN

You have nothing to offer us.

STORMGREN

What is our role in the universe to be...?

KARELLAN

What you decide it to be, when you are ready.

STORMGREN

And when will we be ready?

KARELLAN

When it happens.

Stormgren looks down at the table, not really satisfied with Karellan's answers.

KARELLAN

Until then, you will continue to govern yourselves, and even kill each other occasionally. But we will help you accomplish your noblest ideals -- true peace on earth, equality among men, an end to hunger, disease, poverty, and much of human suffering.

A moment passes, as if Karellan were assessing Stormgren's reaction.

KARELLAN

Does this disturb you?

CONTINUED

STORMGREN

(looks up)

Only one thing disturbs me...that we seem to have no choice in the matter.

There is a long pause.

KARELLAN

I fail to understand. Without our intervention, you have no hope of survival. What other choice would you make?

Stormgren shakes his head at the difficulty of explaining it.

STORMGREN

We have always cherished our freedom....

KARELLAN

Is the freedom to destroy yourselves so precious to you?

Stormgren shakes his head again.

KARELLAN

We are not your masters. We are merely Supervisors.

Karellan waits. Stormgren says nothing.

KARELLAN

(a trace of annoyance)

You greeted our arrival by unleashing a number of rather primitive nuclear weapons. If these had been allowed to detonate, a significant fraction of your own population would have been killed. That was not the action of a mature, intelligent species, you must admit.

STORMGREN

No....

There are several moments of silence. Stormgren starts taking out the stacks of papers from his briefcase.

STORMGREN

I've been asked to put some questions to you, from members of our scientific community. I also have letters of greetings from various heads of state, some legal documents....

CONTINUED

52 CONTINUED - 2

52

He looks up at the glass expectantly.

STORMGREN

Karellan?

There's no reply.

STORMGREN

Am I dismissed? Karellan?

Stormgren arches an eyebrow and snaps off the tape recorder. He stands. He looks at the mountain of paper, shrugs, picks up the recorder and, leaving the papers on the table, walks out of the room.

53 EXT. THE SPACESHIP - DAY

53

as the sphere comes hurtling out and down to earth again.

FADE OUT

SUPER OVER BLACK

PART ONE

54 INT. J.F.K. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

54

Five years have passed. The airport is busy as moving sidewalks bring a flood of arriving passengers into the terminal. Clothing styles have changed; so, apparently, have the general attitudes of people. The faces we see are healthy-looking. No one is in a great hurry. Calm orderliness prevails despite the crowds. The camera singles out a strikingly pretty girl of twenty-five or so, with long blonde hair and wearing what might be mistaken for an airport uniform. She has a canvas bag slung over her shoulder, stuffed with papers. She is trying to intercept the arriving passengers with a cheery smile. As she falls into step with a businessman:

CAROLINE

Hello...would you like a pin for your lapel? It's free....

The businessman glances at her and keeps walking. Caroline turns to an older woman passing by.

CAROLINE

Hi. How are you today? May I give you something to read?

CONTINUED

54

CONTINUED

54

Caroline takes a flyer out of her canvas bag and offers it to the woman.

THE WOMAN

(glancing at
the flyer)

You should be ashamed of yourself.

Caroline shrugs, undaunted. She zeroes in on a pleasant-looking man in his late fifties.

CAROLINE

Hello. My name's Caroline. Can I give you something? It's free ---

THE MAN

(stops)

What is it?

CAROLINE

A pin for your lapel.

As she takes the pin from a pocket to show it to the man,

55

JAN RODERICKS

55

moves past her, still walking with his cane, but moving quickly. He looks tanned, healthy, and not very happy. Carrying the same old battered briefcase, he stops and looks around, disoriented. A flashing sign over a doorway says BAGGAGE CLAIM. Jan walks to the door, which leads outside.

56

EXT. THE TERMINAL - DAY

56

It's apparent Jan hasn't been to New York in quite a while. Everything outside the airport has been automated, including the baggage system. There are rows of what look like coin-operated lockers, and over each locker is a flashing number. Watching the other passengers to see how it's done, Jan finds the number that matches his claim check. He inserts the claim check in a slot. Nothing happens. On either side of him, people are doing the same thing with better results: the lockers pop open, revealing luggage. Jan stares at his locker with consternation. He tries to pry the door open. It won't budge. He rattles it. Still nothing.

57

INT. THE TERMINAL - DAY

57

Caroline is going about her business, accosting people.

57

CONTINUED

57

A heavy-set man takes offense with her, and when she offers the free lapel pin, he swipes at her hand, knocking the pin to the floor. The man stalks away. Caroline bends to pick up the pin.

58

HER POINT OF VIEW

58

An airport security guard, watching her through the crowds, is starting to move her way with a menacing look.

59

CAROLINE

59

retrieves her pin and melts into the crowd pouring through the outside doors.

60

EXT. THE TERMINAL - DAY

60

as Caroline comes outside. A few yards from her, Jan is still trying to cope with his recalcitrant locker. Getting nowhere, his frustration overcomes him and he hits it once, hard, with his cane.

61

FAVORING JAN

61

as Caroline appears beside him.

CAROLINE

Hi...what's wrong?

Jan turns, scowling. Caroline is smiling at him.

JAN

This damned machine ate my claim check.

CAROLINE

That happens a lot around here. Have you got a knife? I think I can fix it.

She steps up beside him. Jan reaches into his pocket and hands her a penknife. She opens the blade and slips it into the slot that took the claim check, jiggling it around. The door pops open. Inside is Jan's single suitcase.

CAROLINE

Viola. The wonders of automation.

JAN

Thanks very much.

CONTINUED

61

CONTINUED

61

CAROLINE

Can I give you something? It's
free.

She takes one of her pins and comes next to him to put it on his jacket. He is pleasantly aware of her proximity. Her hair brushes his cheek. She smells good. He smiles.

CAROLINE

(stepping back)

There. That looks nice on you.

Jan turns his lapel around to see what it is -- an emblem of some sort, a stylized bird in flight. Caroline is wearing the same emblem. He leans over to look at hers.

JAN

You don't work at the airport, do you?

CAROLINE

Unh-unh.

He takes one of the flyers out of her canvas bag.

JAN

You belong to the Freedom League.

CAROLINE

Right.

He glances over the single sheet of printed paper. It is a political tract. In big letters on top, it says WORLD FREEDOM LEAGUE. At the bottom is a slogan: "Human Beings Have the Right to Govern Themselves. Our Destiny Is In YOUR Hands. Join The Freedom League Today." Jan shakes his head.

JAN

Why?

CAROLINE

Take that with you and read it. It explains what the League stands for ---

JAN

I know what it stands for. I meant,
why do you belong to it?

CAROLINE

(just a bit
defensive)

I believe we should have some say in the
decisions that affect our lives ---

CONTINUED

61

CONTINUED - 2

61

She breaks off as someone grabs her arm from behind -- the security guard who spotted her inside.

GUARD

No soliciting is allowed in the airport, miss.

She snaps her arm away from him.

CAROLINE

I'm not asking for money. I'm giving things away.

GUARD

Nobody wants what you're giving away.

He grabs her again, about to move her bodily. Jan puts his cane on the guard's arm.

JAN

That's not true. I asked her to talk to me, and I'd like to finish our conversation.

The guard stares at Jan, still holding Caroline.

JAN

If you don't mind, that is.

He taps the guard's arm lightly. The guard lets Caroline go, glares at them both, and then retreats.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

JAN

My pleasure. Maybe we could talk about this later? Somewhere the atmosphere's a little more friendly?

She smiles at the come-on, looks him over and considers it.

CAROLINE

Maybe.

He waits. She points to the address on the bottom of the flyer.

CAROLINE

I'll be there later tonight.

JAN

Later when?

CONTINUED

61 CONTINUED - 3

61

CAROLINE

(shrugs)

Whenever. Thanks again.

She puts out her hand. He takes it.

JAN

Thank you.

She flashes him one last smile and turns away, quickly swallowed up in the crowds. Jan watches her go, then turns to get his suitcase from the locker.

CUT TO

62 THE CURB

62

and a row of electronic panels, each labeled TAXI. Jan sets down his luggage, reads the instructions and pushes a button.

COMPUTER VOICE

Destination, please?

JAN

Manhattan. The Plaza Hotel.

COMPUTER VOICE

One moment.

From a line of waiting cars, a taxi moves forward and comes to a stop at the curb. The taxi is driverless: an electronic sensor, in contact with the roadway, picks up power and navigational information which allows the car to drive itself. As the car stops, its back door opens.

COMPUTER VOICE

Do you require assistance with your baggage?

JAN

No. Thank you.

COMPUTER VOICE

You're welcome.

63 INT. THE TAXI - DAY

63

as Jan sets his bags on the seat beside him. His body weight activates another electronic panel. His destination is already displayed on the panel.

CONTINUED

63

CONTINUED

63

COMPUTER VOICE

(inside the
cab)

Please insert your credit card in
the designated opening....

A light is flashing over a small slot. Jan takes a credit card from his wallet and slips it in the slot. The card disappears inside, the back door closes, the panel lights up and the cab starts to move. LED read-outs tell him his estimated fare (about \$2.00), and even displays a schematic of the highway system with the cab's location as a moving red dot. The cab drives itself smoothly into a feeder lane leading out of the airport.

64

EXT. THE EXPRESSWAY INTO NEW YORK CITY - DAY

64

A huge billboard advertising air travel says FLY THE BIGGEST, QUIETEST, FASTEST SST TO EUROPE -- ANY CITY, \$25 ONE WAY. Next to this is a picture of an ultra-modern airplane, unlike anything we've seen before. Under the billboard, the automated cars move onto the expressway in precise order, joining the traffic flow at evenly-spaced intervals.

65

INT. THE TAXI - DAY

65

Jan has been reading the Freedom League flyer. He doesn't seem too impressed with it. About to crumple it up and throw it away, he remembers the address on the bottom and decides to save it. He folds the flyer, takes the pin from his lapel, and puts them both in his pocket. Then he looks over the inside of the cab. Where the driver would be if there were a driver is a pair of small retractable handles for steering and a sign that says THIS VEHICLE NOT LICENSED FOR MANUAL OPERATION. In the back are various amenities -- magazines, a small television, a vending device for soft drinks and snacks. Jan settles back to enjoy the ride. Up ahead, through the windshield, we can see the skyline of New York across the river.

66

EXT. THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING - DAY - SHOOTING UP

66

at Karellan's spaceship, high over the city, remote and implacable. Panning to reveal the building, which is now called the World Federation Headquarters,

CUT TO

67 INT. A CORRIDOR ON THE TOP FLOOR - DAY

as Peter Van Ryberg steps out of an elevator and walks quickly past camera, holding a sheet of paper. Van Ryberg is well-dressed and fussy, a meticulous man and a good administrator. He turns into a door marked OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE WORLD FEDERATION.

68 INT. THE OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Van Ryberg heads for the door to the inner office, waving the sheet of paper at the secretary.

VAN RYBERG

Just got a message from on high.

SECRETARY

He's in the conference room.

VAN RYBERG

Right.

He turns on his heel and goes back into the corridor.

69 INT. THE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

There are half a dozen large video screens in a semi-circle at one end of the long room. At the other end is a semi-circle of chairs, where Rikki Stormgren sits alone. The images on the video screens are larger than life-sized and in color, each of a participant in the conference. On one of the screens, a young exobiologist named Sanders is speaking:

SANDERS

(on video screen)

-- based on a profile of human avoidance characteristics...the things that seem to be unpleasant to people regardless of cultural background. We came up with a series that field-tested pretty well. All of them include what we actually know about the Supervisors -- what little we know, I should say....

as the door opens and Van Ryberg enters. Stormgren is thinner than when we last saw him, and now wears a moustache. He looks up as Van Ryberg approaches and hands him the sheet of paper. He takes reading glasses and perches them on the bridge of his nose. During this:

SANDERS

Now if any of these are close to what Karellan really looks like...we think we can devise a gradual deconditioning process to overcome our human repulsion for slimy, creepy, crawly things....

(looks up, sees

Van Ryberg)

Hello, Peter.

Van Ryberg looks at the screen and nods.

VAN RYBERG

Sorry for the interruption, doctor.

SANDERS

No problem. I'm glad you're here.

I'd like your reaction to this....

Sanders pushes a button and his image is replaced with a drawing of a malevolently evil-looking, hideous alien creature -- drawn with too much precision to be the result of some mad artist's inspiration. The effect of the picture is instantaneous. A woman on one of the other screens groans and turns away. Van Ryberg and Stormgren frown.

VAN RYBERG

That's pretty repulsive....

Sanders reappears on the screen.

SANDERS

It's supposed to make your skin crawl and your stomach heave.

STORMGREN

(wry)

My compliments to your artist.

SANDERS

Thank you. There are several others....

STORMGREN

I'm afraid I won't have time. This is a message from Karellan. My presence is requested immediately....

CONTINUED

70

CONTINUED

70

As Stormgren rises, Sanders looks disappointed.

SANDERS

We were hoping you could show these pictures to the Supervisor....

VAN RYBERG

Can you get hardcopy downstairs in ten minutes? I'll put them in the pouch for the Secretary-General to take up with him.

SANDERS

I'll have it there in five. I'm eager to hear how Karellan reacts....

Sanders' image disappears. Stormgren turns to the other screens.

STORMGREN

My apologies to you all....

71

INT. STORMGREN'S OFFICE - DAY

71

with its sweeping view of the city, the river, and the ship overhead. Stormgren enters and crosses to his desk with Van Ryberg behind him.

STORMGREN

How much have we spent on this exobiology project so far?

VAN RYBERG

About a million dollars over the last three years.

STORMGREN

That much?

(shakes his head)

Let's terminate it. Remind me to write all the usual complimentary letters....

VAN RYBERG

All right.

(makes a note to himself)

Do you want to hear my latest theory?

Stormgren smiles and collects various papers from his desk.

STORMGREN

Must I?

CONTINUED

71

CONTINUED

71

VAN RYBERG

It won't cost you a million dollars.
(beat)

What if the Supervisors won't show themselves because they're hiding the fact they've got nothing to hide?

STORMGREN

(looks up)

What?

VAN RYBERG

Suppose they look just like us. They know us well enough to realize we would never accept being ruled by members of the same species. But we would accept being ruled by beings we imagine to be alien, and therefore superintelligent. Good psychology, right?

Stormgren shakes his head and chuckles. He gathers his papers and puts them in an envelope briefcase. He starts for the door, Van Ryberg in step with him.

VAN RYBERG

By the way, I want to take you out through the garage today.

STORMGREN

Why?

VAN RYBERG

We have the Freedom League downstairs again. I don't want them to see you. It gives them an excuse to try for publicity.

For a moment, Stormgren's shoulders seem to sag, as if the burdens of his office were weighing on him.

STORMGREN

All right.

CUT TO

72

EXT. THE WORLD FEDERATION BUILDING - DAY

72

Another automated taxi glides to a stop outside the building. Its back door pops open. Jan, having showered and shaved and changed his clothes, retrieves his credit card from the electronic panel and gets out carrying his briefcase. The cab drives away. Jan stands for a moment, looking up at the ship overhead. Then he walks into the plaza.

73

MOVING WITH HIM

73

The plaza is full of tourists, many with cameras shooting pictures of the spaceship. Near the entrance to the Secretariat is a group under the banner of the Freedom League, carrying signs that say WHO ARE THE OVERLORDS? WHAT DO THEY WANT FROM US? One poster has a picture of Stormgren and across it: THE SECRETARY-GENERAL...KARELLAN'S MESSENGER BOY. Most of the people in the plaza ignore all this. The band of demonstrators seems a little pathetic. One of them makes a move on Jan as he walks past; he waves the man away and goes inside.

CUT TO

74

THE SPACESHIP IN ORBIT

74

with the earth far below. The same glowing sphere that first took Stormgren to meet Karellan comes rocketing up to the ship.

75

INT. THE SPHERE

75

The procedure is unchanged after five years. The opening appears once the sphere has reached its destination within the ship. Stormgren gets out and walks into the blank corridor.

76

INT. THE ROOM

76

as Stormgren sits at the table facing the smoked glass window and opens his pouch, taking out papers and copies of the weird drawings the exobiologists came up with. Stormgren regards the pictures distastefully and puts them face down on the table.

KARELLAN

Hello, Rikki.

STORMGREN

(smiles at
the window)

Hello, Karellan.

There is a note of affection in their greetings. Unquestionably they have gotten to know each other as Karellan predicted, despite the awkwardness of their meetings. Stormgren turns on the tape recorder.

KARELLAN

What have you brought me today?

CONTINUED

76

CONTINUED

76

STORMGREN

A few reports...we're having a problem with some of our food and medical supplies showing up on the black market in South America.

KARELLAN

I'll look into it. Will the names of those responsible be sufficient?

STORMGREN

I should think so.

(moves to another set of papers)

There are severe weather predictions for India and the Middle East. The governments involved have requested weather modification programs. The political situations may grow unstable if food supplies run short.

KARELLAN

You can leave those with me. We'll inform your meteorologists before we take any action....

As Stormgren prepares to move on to the next topic,

CUT AWAY TO

77

INT. AN OFFICE IN THE WORLD FEDERATION BUILDING - DAY

77

as Jan enters. The man behind the desk gets to his feet, smiling. His name is Setswana, a black who towers over Jan. He speaks with a cultured, English accent.

SETSWANA

Jan! Why didn't you let me know you were coming? I would've had someone meet your plane ---

JAN

I did. I sent you a telex.

SETSWANA

Oh? Well....

He waves at his rather untidy desk.

SETSWANA

All this work...it must've gotten lost.
(smiles again)
You look marvelous. When are you going to let us fix that leg for you? Nobody has to walk with a cane anymore.

CONTINUED

77

CONTINUED

77

JAN

Maybe I'm old-fashioned, Alex. I prefer face-to-face meetings, among other things.

SETSWANA

Of course you do. So do I. But they are inconvenient....

Jan sets his briefcase on the desk and opens it.

JAN

I've brought you the plans for the lunar observatory.

He unfolds a blueprint. Setswana is watching him unhappily.

SETSWANA

Jan ---

JAN

Also the feasibility studies, funding proposals, and letters of endorsement from the world's leading astronomers.

SETSWANA

(beat)

You know that project has been cancelled....

JAN

No, I don't know that. I got a form letter from some bureaucrat who misspelled my name, telling me the request for a hearing had been denied.

SETSWANA

I should've called you personally. I apologize.

JAN

I want a hearing with the World Science Council. Dammit, I've been working on this for five years. We've reached the limits of our ground-based telescopes. We have to go to the moon ---

SETSWANA

It's impossible.

JAN

What do you mean it's impossible? Look up there!

CONTINUED

77

CONTINUED- 2

77

He points out the window to the spaceship.

JAN

Nothing's impossible anymore.

SETSWANA

This is.

Jan turns back from the window. Setswana is looming over him.

SETSWANA

You can't put an observatory on the moon without men to build it, and the manned space program is dead.

Jan stares at him. Setswana nods grimly.

SETSWANA

By order of the Supervisor. Personally. We were told any astronomical information we require would be supplied to us. I can get you enough data to keep you busy for fifty years ---

JAN

How you get the data is just as important as how you interpret it! You're a scientist. You know that.

SETSWANA

(a beat;
sincerely)

I argued for your project.

(looks at
the blueprints)

I know we could put a thousand-inch reflector on the moon and get range and definition that's almost beyond limit.

JAN

We could reach out to the farthest galaxies in the universe.

SETSWANA

The wording of Karellan's order was quite unambiguous. Space is closed to us.

JAN

I can't believe the Science Council accepted that.

CONTINUED

SETSWANA

They had no choice. Jan, all the priorities have shifted. Money is going into food, housing, medicine and education. By the twenty-first century, everyone on earth will have the same standard of living. Look out there....

He puts an arm around Jan's shoulder and takes him to the window. He waves his arm, encompassing the city beneath them.

SETSWANA

Society is beginning to function properly for the first time in history. People are happy. No one gets mugged in the subways. No one goes hungry. Prices are falling. Things are so cheap, nobody steals....

(looks at him)

Maybe if you had public opinion on your side....

JAN

Would that make any difference?

SETSWANA

I doubt it. After all, the stars have come to us.

He points up at the spaceship.

SETSWANA

They have the answers. All we have to do is ask the questions.

(shakes his head)

We don't need to build a new observatory. That's like throwing away your calculator and balancing your credit account by hand.

JAN

When can I speak to the Science Council?

SETSWANA

You can't. It's a dead issue.

Jan nods. He goes back to the desk and begins replacing the blueprints.

CONTINUED

77

CONTINUED - 4

77

SETSWANA

(trying to make a joke)

Be happy you're not a lawyer. They've got a real problem. Nobody sues anymore. We don't have to write a dozen new laws every day. Five million lawyers all over the world are out of luck. We're having quite a time re-integrating them into society....

Setswana chuckles at the thought, but Jan doesn't seem to think it's funny.

CUT BACK TO

78

INT. THE ROOM IN THE SPACESHIP - CLOSE ON

78

one of the drawings as Stormgren reluctantly holds it up to the window for Karellan to see it.

KARELLAN

That's very imaginative. What is it?

STORMGREN

(embarrassed)

You....

There's a moment of silence, and then Karellan laughs. The laughter is deep and rich, but has less of a human quality than his carefully-modulated speech. Stormgren turns the rest of the drawings face up on the table.

STORMGREN

A team of exobiologists came up with these...they wanted to know if any one in particular approximates your actual appearance...?

KARELLAN

I'm afraid not, although the one on your left would be very appetizing to a race of beings in the star system Antarus.

Chagrined, Stormgren collects the drawings again.

STORMGREN

It was intended to be serious, you know.

KARELLAN

(still chuckling)

If there's nothing else, can we move along? There was a reason I asked you to come today...I've received word the first of our supply ships will be arriving in the near future.

CONTINUED.

KARELLAN (Con'd)

We'll need to work out a large landing area where its cargo can be unloaded.

STORMGREN

How large?

KARELLAN

The cargo portion of the ship is several miles long. I would think a desert would be most expedient.

STORMGREN

I'll put a committee to work on it.

KARELLAN

I'd like the ship to take something back with it when it returns to our home world. We have a museum for displaying artifacts of the various cultures we've come in contact with....

STORMGREN

What kinds of artifacts do you have in mind?

KARELLAN

Something that gives a sense of the history of your planet and its culture. I thought you might form another of your committees....

STORMGREN

I'll have some proposals drawn up.

KARELLAN

Thank you. Is there anything else?

STORMGREN

This isn't on the agenda, but I'd be interested to know what you think of the Freedom League....

KARELLAN

(a beat)

What do you think of it?

STORMGREN

It worries me. Not the League itself, but what it represents.

KARELLAN

It represents a very small percentage of your world's population. Utopia never appeals to everyone.

CONTINUED

78

CONTINUED - 2

78

STORMGREN

Still, I don't think it would be wise to ignore these people. They've seized on the one issue we don't have an answer for -- the fact that five years have passed now, and you still haven't revealed yourselves to us.

KARELLAN

That problem remains unavoidable.

STORMGREN

Curiosity is part of human nature. When it's frustrated, it can turn to resentment.

KARELLAN

I find that hard to understand. Haven't we brought security, peace and prosperity to earth? For the first time in your history, all men have enough to eat ---

STORMGREN

If I were the leader of the Freedom League, I might say 'man does not live by bread alone.'

KARELLAN

Perhaps not, but man certainly starves without it. Don't you have another old saying -- curiosity killed the cat?

STORMGREN

We keep cats as pets. Is that what we are to you?

79

FAVORING KARELLAN

79

We can hear him take a breath, not unlike a sigh. On his side of the window, the large bulk of his body shifts.

KARELLAN

No, Rikki. But I think I do understand what you're trying to say.

(beat)

I'll put this matter to my superiors. But I wouldn't hold any hopes for a change in policy.

80

ON STORMGREN

80

He nods on hearing this, but seems disappointed.

CONTINUED

80

CONTINUED

80

KARELLAN

I will do what I can....

CUT TO

81

EXT. A STREET ON THE EAST SIDE - NIGHT

81

The marquee of what was once a movie theatre now reads WORLD FREEDOM LEAGUE - EAST SIDE HEADQUARTERS. In place of movie posters are pictures of the League's founder and leader, Thomas Wainwright, a white-haired man with piercing eyes and a stern expression. League slogans and posters line the entrance to the theatre like coming attractions. The set-up looks none too prosperous.

82

FAVORING CAROLINE

82

who is in the process of changing one of the posters while a young man about her age stands on a ladder, putting up letters on the marquee to say MEETING TONIGHT - 8:00 P.M. As Caroline finishes with the poster and closes the glass on the display case, she sees Jan's reflection behind her.

JAN

Hello. Remember me?

CAROLINE

(turns, notices
his lapel)

Sure. Where's your pin?

JAN

In my pocket. You noticed.

CAROLINE

I went to a lot of trouble to put
it on you.

She starts to turn away from him. He puts a hand on her arm.

JAN

(smiles)

I went to a lot of trouble to find
you again.

CAROLINE

So we're even. I've got work to do.

JAN

Take a minute and talk to me.

CAROLINE

Why should I?

CONTINUED

82

CONTINUED

82

JAN

Because I'm interested in the Freedom League.

She gives him a look of cool appraisal.

CAROLINE

Okay. You helped me out this morning.

(calls to the
man on the ladder)

I'll be back in a few minutes!

83

FAVORING THE MAN ON THE LADDER

83

whose name is Denton. He looks down at Caroline walking inside with Jan, an instantaneous flash of jealousy in his eyes.

84

INT. THE LOBBY OF THE THEATRE - NIGHT

84

There is coffee on the refreshment counter and we can hear voices from inside the auditorium. Caroline pours a mug from the coffee urn and offers it to Jan. He shakes his head and she keeps it for herself.

CAROLINE

How'd you hurt your leg?

JAN

Beats me. I was born with it.

CAROLINE

(sips the coffee)

So what do you do?

JAN

I'm an astronomer.

CAROLINE

Really....

JAN

Really. I don't suppose you get many scientists in here....

CAROLINE

What makes you think so?

JAN

I've read some of your literature, including that flyer you gave me this morning. It doesn't make a lot of sense.

CONTINUED

CAROLINE

If it doesn't make sense, why are you here?

JAN

I'd like to know what the Freedom League really stands for, if anything. You people can't honestly hope to overthrow Karellan....

Caroline laughs out loud and looks at him like he's crazy.

CAROLINE

Overthrow him? Whatever gave you an idea like that?

(shakes her head)

Look -- we're not opposed to the benefits the Overlords have brought us. We're not opposed to the Overlords themselves if they'd only stop hiding from us and playing God. It's the long term effects of their policies -- on ambition and personal initiative, for instance. We're getting used to having our problems solved for us.

(sarcastic)

Are you with me so far?

JAN

I think I can follow it.

CAROLINE

(ticking off the points on her fingers)

Religion is on the decline. So are the arts and sciences. People aren't inventing things anymore.

JAN

Why should they?

CAROLINE

Obviously, there's no reason to. But isn't it all a little sinister, really?

(points up)

They tell us what we can do and what we can't. And they only talk to one person. There's no participation, no democracy ---

JAN

And no wars, no corruption in government ---

CONTINUED

CAROLINE

No government at all!

JAN

Is that bad?

CAROLINE

(frustrated)

I don't know why we're having this conversation.

JAN

I'm just acting the Devil's advocate.

CAROLINE

You said you were interested in joining the League ---

JAN

I said I was interested, not in joining. And from the looks of this place, not too many other people are, either.

CAROLINE

(angry)

They will be. When people like you start to realize nothing comes for free, that there's a reason the Overlords came and took over and that reason may not be in our own best interests -- then they'll be ready to join. And it may be too late.

JAN

Too late for what? Aren't we right back to the same question? What's the alternative -- overthrow the Overlords?

She looks away from him, flushed and upset.

CAROLINE

I don't know how to get through to people like you.

JAN

(realizing he's gone too far)

Look, maybe I should apologize ---

CAROLINE

(flat)

I don't want to hear it. All right? You're welcome to your opinions.

CONTINUED

84

CONTINUED - 3

84

JAN

But I haven't told you my opinion ---

CAROLINE

Don't.

She stalks away from him quickly. He watches her go, angry with himself.

JAN

Damn....

She walks into a small office and slams the door without looking back. After a moment, Jan turns to go outside.

85

EXT. THE THEATRE - NIGHT

85

Denton has moved the ladder to the other side of the marquee and is climbing it as Jan comes out, alone. Denton watches him go to the sidewalk and walk away.

DISSOLVE TO

86

A STAR FIELD

86

as seen from deep space, beyond the orbit of the moon. Something is beginning to happen to the star field. A line of light appears, like a seam across the heavens. As it extends, the light from the stars near it is bent inwards. Space itself is warped by a tremendous gravitational field. The seam of light grows brighter and brighter and starts to move toward us, and now within it is a line of darkness. Like a hole in the fabric of reality, the darkness within the light expands. A blurred image rushes forward and becomes the outlines of the alien supply ship -- one moment an expanding brightness, the next moment the ship itself, bathed in a constant flux of energies. As the ship seems to solidify, the seam it came through shrinks and closes again. The stars in the vicinity of the ship return to their normal positions. The entire phenomenon lasts only a few seconds, and then the supply ship is passing over camera.

87

REVERSE ANGLE

87

The supply ship hurtles toward the earth and a rendezvous with Karellan's spacecraft over North America.

DISSOLVE TO

88

EXT. THE ISLAND OF HAWAII - DAY

88

A dirt road cuts through a verdant valley, far from the coastline. A truck is barreling along the road, dragging a dust cloud in its wake.

89

INT. THE BACK OF THE TRUCK - DAY

89

Jan is riding in back with a man named Wooster, both of them holding on for dear life as the driver slides around the curves with abandon. There aren't any automated roadways here, although from the look on Jan's face he wishes there were. Wooster is talking and pointing to the cargo, lashed to the truck bed with ropes -- a polished black box two meters on a side. Wooster bangs on it with his open hand.

WOOSTER

Hardest damn material I've ever seen in my life. Don't tell anybody, but I took a crowbar to one of 'em, back in the warehouse...just to see what was inside.

(shakes his head)

I couldn't even scratch it. Who knows what it's made of? Overlord technology ...but I'll tell you one thing. It works.

Jan gives Wooster a sharp look.

JAN

You said 'Overlord'...why'd you call them that?

WOOSTER

(shrugs)

Overlords, Supervisors -- what's the difference? Look ---

He slides back a panel on the top of the box, revealing two meters and a row of standard electrical outlets.

WOOSTER

There's enough power in here to run everything in a good-sized village -- lights, pumps for water and sewage, even electric stoves if you want 'em. Just plug it all in and forget about it. And you know who's gettin' 'em first? The poor people -- the way it oughta be, fer once.

He pats the black box affectionately, closes the panel again and sits on it.

90

EXT. A LOCKED GATE - DAY

90

on the side of the road. Gregory Reinhold is waiting at the gate with a jeep. As the truck approaches the gate, it stops. Jan lets himself down from the truck bed, and hands him his briefcase.

JAN

Thanks for the ride!

Wooster waves and the driver honks the horn. The truck pulls away, continuing along the road and out of sight.

REINHOLD

Where's your suitcase?

JAN

I'm not going to stay, Greg. I came to say goodbye.

Reinhold seems stunned. Jan walks past him to the jeep. Reinhold follows and gets behind the wheel.

DISSOLVE TO

91

EXT. THE RADIO TELESCOPE INSTALLATION - DAY

91

It's approaching sunset. Jan sits alone on the hillside beneath one of the disks, lost in thought. He turns as Reinhold comes up the path, breathing heavily from the exertion. Reinhold sits beside Jan and the two men look out over the valley and the sea as the sun begins to paint the sky in fiery colors.

JAN

You know what I saw, that day the ships first came?

Reinhold shakes his head.

JAN

I saw a doorway to the stars open up. I saw space stations, colonies on the moon and Mars, deep space observatories, a stardrive that could take us anywhere in the galaxy.

He rests a hand on his bad leg.

JAN

I would have been able to go, too. My leg wouldn't have been a problem with that kind of technology. But that door into space only opened one way. It let the Overlords in and it shut us out.

(beat)

Twenty years from now, I wonder if anyone will even remember we walked on the moon....

CONTINUED

91

CONTINUED

91

Reinhold turns to look at him, concerned.

REINHOLD

Are they going to close the station?

JAN

Not so far as I know.

(looks at him)

You're worried about your job.

REINHOLD

I'm a little older than you are. I've spent most of my life around radio telescopes.

JAN

You can always track satellites.

REINHOLD

So can a computer.

Jan nods. He leans back and looks up at the sky in the growing twilight.

REINHOLD

What are you going to do?

JAN

I don't know. Something. I've got a strange idea I'm thinking about....

REINHOLD

Want to talk about it?

JAN

Not yet.

Reinhold gets to his feet and starts back down the path. The camera moves in on Jan.

92

HIS POINT OF VIEW

92

The first star is beginning to shine overhead.

DISSOLVE TO

93

INT. THE ROOM IN THE SPACESHIP - ON STORMGREN'S IMAGE
as seen from Karellan's side of the window.

93

CONTINUED

93

CONTINUED

93

KARELLAN

Turn your tape recorder off, Rikki.

The camera pulls back to include Karellan's silhouette as Stormgren looks up, surprised, and snaps off the recorder.

KARELLAN

I've received an answer from my superiors on the matter of our concealment.

94

ON STORMGREN

94

He leans forward slightly, betraying his eagerness.

KARELLAN

You've told me in the past, Rikki, that no matter how unlike you we are physically, the human race would grow accustomed to us. In your case, I think that's true...but you are hardly a typical human being. Despite the progress we've made in the last ten years, the majority of your race is still extremely primitive.

Stormgren frowns slightly, his eagerness turning to disappointment.

KARELLAN

We know rather accurately what would happen if we revealed ourselves to the world in its present state of development. I can't go into details, even with you. But I can now make the following promise.

(beat)

In fifty years -- two generations from now -- we will come down from our ships and humanity will at last see us as we are.

Stormgren's last glimmer of hope disappears. For a brief moment his disappointment turns bitter, but he hides this emotion behind a perfect poker face. He nods.

STORMGREN

That is a piece of news. Is it for public release?

KARELLAN

Yes. I asked you to turn off the recorder for another reason.

CONTINUED

Stormgren looks at the window with curiosity.

KARELLAN

I know this disappoints you personally, Rikki, and I'm sorry. You are the first human being I could call a friend. I would have you there to greet me, on that day....

STORMGREN

(smiles)

Fifty years is a little too long to wait for a man of my age.

KARELLAN

I would have it otherwise, if the decision were mine to make. Unfortunately, there is convincing proof of the danger of any other course of action.

STORMGREN

Proof? Then man have seen you before?

KARELLAN

I didn't say that. Yours is not the first race we have supervised.

STORMGREN

But you've been observing us for thousands of years...and we have legends of visitors from other planets ---

KARELLAN

Indeed. Your legends make earth look like the crossroads of the universe.

STORMGREN

But if you haven't made direct contact with us before...how can you know the reactions we'll have?

KARELLAN

You'll have to accept our analysis on faith. These are delicate matters. I can assure you, the concealment doesn't make our work any easier....

And as Stormgren nods, accepting this if not altogether happily,

DISSOLVE TO

95

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

95

where a rally is in progress. Thomas Wainwright is speaking, his voice booming out over a crowd waving signs and banners:

WAINWRIGHT

-- in fifty years, the damage will be done! Humanity will have forgotten its heritage. Men who know what it means to have liberty -- to fight for liberty -- will be dead! Independence will be a word in the dictionary, empty of meaning! We will be slaves!

A roar of protest answers his words. The people in the crowd shake their fists at the sky above them, and their angry faces fill the screen.

96

FAVORING JAN

96

at the edges of the rally. From this vantage point, we can see the numbers are not that great, and the vehement ones are clustered near the front by the speaker's platform. Toward the back of the gathering, people are listening more with curiosity than conviction, and many are drifting away.

97

JAN'S POINT OF VIEW

97

Wainwright is being escorted off the stage by a cordon of beefy-looking security men. Croline and her friend Denton are among those leaving with him.

98

MOVING WITH JAN

98

as he gets closer to the stage, entertaining the idea of contacting Caroline. It's a losing proposition and he gives it up. He walks off into the park alone.

99

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

99

The spaceship flickers and glows in the night sky, rivaling the lights of the city.

100

EXT. THE LOWER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

100

A robot street cleaner is purring along the curb, leaving the pavement wet and spotless. This section of the city has managed to retain its bohemian character despite the intrusion of robot street cleaners and electronic information boxes along the sidewalk. An automated taxi drives down the street.

CONTINUED

100 CONTINUED

100

Music is coming from somewhere, strange music to our ears, a futuristic blend of rock and electronic classical. The taxi comes to a stop and the door opens. Jan is the passenger. As he reaches to get his credit card from the meter:

COMPUTER VOICE

This is a warning...your available credit is below normal limits... this is a warning...please contact your central credit office immediately. Thank you.

The card pops out and Jan snatches it, glaring at the machine. He gets out and the taxi slides away. The street is dark and a little unnerving. Jan has to look hard to find any house numbers. He orients himself to the sound of the music and goes in that direction.

101 ON A STAIRWAY LEADING DOWN

101

with a single light over it, and a number -- the number Jan is looking for. He seems puzzled, but goes down the stairs.

102 INT. A CLUB - NIGHT

102

which is dark and weirdly-lit. The music comes from a band on a low stage. The musicians are shadows, hunched over instruments, producing unearthly sounds rhythmic enough to be on the borderline of music. The room is crowded, the audience as shadowy as the musicians.

103 SHOOTING PAST THE BAND

103

as we follow Jan's progress through the crowded room. There is a bar along one wall, although what is being dispensed over its counter is hard to tell. Jan leans over to ask the bartender a question. The bartender refers him to someone else at the bar, who speaks to Jan for a moment, then shakes his head and turns away, ignoring him.

104 ON A BOOTH NEAR THE STAGE

104

Jan sits down, turning in the booth to scan the faces in the audience, looking for Caroline's distinctive blonde hair. The ullulations of the music wash over him, shrieking and howling.

105

ON A DOOR NEAR THE BAR

105

as Caroline steps out of the shadows and into the club. She speaks with the man at the bar, who points across the room to Jan's booth. Caroline peers through the darkness and recognizes him.

106

FAVORING JAN

06

as he turns around in the booth to wait, and finds Caroline looking down at him. Their eyes meet, each with a guarded, neutral expression. Then Caroline slips into the booth beside him.

CAROLINE

Why are you looking for me?

JAN

I have a proposal to make to the Freedom League. I was hoping you'd help me with it.

Caroline just looks at him, dubiously.

JAN

I'm sorry about what happened, the last time we met. I didn't mean to upset you.

CAROLINE

(beat)

What's the proposal?

Jan moves closer to her, bringing his head next to hers so he can speak softly and still be heard over the music.

JAN

The Overlords have a museum on their home planet. They want an earth-display -- art objects, scientific instruments, cultural artifacts...things that represent the history of the human race.

CAROLINE

I've heard about it....

JAN

All these things are going to be transported on an Overlord ship, back to their own world....

CONTINUED

CAROLINE

So?

JAN

Every one of these objects has to be protected during the trip. I've been researching the project. Packing crates have to be built that are hermetically-sealed, with an earth-type atmosphere and capable of withstanding extreme variations in pressure and gravitation. Paintings, for instance, have to go in their own space capsules since we can't predict the effects of an alien atmosphere on works of art hundreds of years old.

(smiles at her)

Are you with me so far?

Caroline smiles slightly, in spite of herself.

CAROLINE

I think I can follow it.

JAN

Karellan has put a ban on space travel. We've been restricted to our own planet.

Caroline nods.

JAN

I want to do something about that.

(beat)

I want to go along inside one of those space capsules. I want to stowaway on the Overlord supply ship. I want to defy Karellan's order, and prove the human race can't be treated like some endangered species.

He waits for a reaction. Caroline is staring at him, trying to grasp what he's told her.

JAN

Do you think the Freedom League would be interested?

CAROLINE

I don't know....

JAN

(beat)

What do you think of the idea?

CONTINUED

106

CONTINUED - 2

106

She continues to look at him for a long moment, before:

CAROLINE

I think it's brilliant.

(then)

Can it be done?

JAN

It can be done.

(eagerly)

Are there any scientists or engineers in the Freedom League? And is there money behind it -- big money? This would be expensive.

She smiles at him.

CAROLINE

You'd be surprised at who some of our members are...the ones who can't afford to support the League publically because they hold positions of power and influence.

JAN

Can you get me to them?

CAROLINE

(thinks a moment)

Not right away. Let me talk to some people about this, alone.

JAN

(frowns)

I should be there to explain it.

CAROLINE

(shakes her head)

Not a good idea. Trust me -- I know these people.

After a beat,

CUT TO

107

INT. A SMALL ROOM - NIGHT

107

with its windows blacked out and sparsely furnished. Four people are in the room with Caroline: a man named Carstairs, in his sixties and obviously holding the most authority; an older woman named Margaret Downing; a dour-faced man named Stein; and Robert Denton. Of the group, Denton seems the least interested in the proposal as Caroline has explained it. On the cut:

CONTINUED

MARGARET

(thoughtfully)

A stowaway...fascinating. Think of the coverage we could get in the world press....

The others are still thinking about it. Then Denton shakes his head.

DENTON

It's too risky. Karellan's bound to be monitoring the project ---

CAROLINE

But we know he isn't watching everything, everywhere, all the time. We could take precautions.

Denton frowns at her. She gives him an annoyed look.

STEIN

To accomplish what? To send one man to the stars?

MARGARET

Not just a man -- a representative of the human race. A symbol of everything the Freedom League stands for. A hero.

STEIN

A martyr, more likely. What happens when he's found on board the ship? What happens when his oxygen and food run out?

DENTON

And there could be reprisals, once he's discovered.

MARGARET

Which we could turn to our advantage. And when we publicize what's happened, when we get the world's attention -- wouldn't that pressure Karellan to guarantee his safety?

CARSTAIRS

Perhaps.

(to Caroline)

It's an interesting proposal. But it has a serious drawback.

(beat)

The Overlords' home planet is light years away from us. From what we've been able to gather, at least thirty light years. Our stowaway might make headlines once, but then what happens?

CONTINUED

107

CONTINUED - 2

107

DENTON

Nothing. There's no pay-off.

CARSTAIRS

Precisely.

(looks to all
of them)

I'm afraid it would be a stunt -- long on danger, short on reward. If he made the trip and returned, how many years would have passed? Eighty? One hundred? No one alive a century from now would be likely to care. And if he were to die, he wouldn't be a martyr because no one would know.

Carstairs shakes his head, apparently dismissing the idea.

CAROLINE

How can you be so cold-blooded about it? He's the one who's willing to risk his life. If he's prepared to take that kind of chance --

DENTON

(cutting her off)

Then he's obviously crazy.

Caroline glares at Denton.

DENTON

Caroline -- think about it. What kind of a man can he be?

CAROLINE

A brave one.

DENTON

Not a single person alive today would be here when he came back -- do you realize that? He'd be foresaking everything he knows, and that's assuming he makes it....

She looks at the others. Their expressions tell her she hasn't convinced them. She turns away from them abruptly and leaves the room.

108

INT. JAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

108

which is a utilitarian living space, impersonal and efficient.

CONTINUED

108

CONTINUED

10

The furniture seems to have been stamped from plastic and is probably indestructible. It obviously isn't a very expensive apartment. On the single table are library books and reams of notes. The books are technical volumes with titles like "Practical Applications of Long-Term Life Support Systems." There is a knock at the door and Jan gets up from the table. Caroline is outside.

JAN

(seeing her face)

They didn't buy it.

She comes in and he shuts the door behind her.

CAROLINE

(angrily)

It didn't have enough publicity value for them. I'm sorry. I don't think it would have made any difference if you'd been there.

Jan nods. Caroline goes to the table and looks down at the books and the notes.

CAROLINE

(thoughtfully)

That was only the Executive Council for North America....

(turns to him)

I'm going to go over their heads. I'm going to get to Thomas Wainwright.

She looks determined, and from her look,

CUT TO

109

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

10

Jan is crossing the park toward the west side. He pauses by one of the lakes. A boy and a girl are lying side by side in the grass, necking. Jan stares at them. Little by little the enormity of what he wants to do is coming home to him; he watches the young lovers with a sudden rush of wistfulness. He shrugs off the feeling and continues walking.

110

EXT. THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

11

as Jan walks up the broad stone steps and inside the massive old building.

111

INT. THE MUSEUM - DAY - ON THE SECOND FLOOR

11

where the dioramas are.

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED

111

Groups of school children and tourists stand admiring the depictions of African habitats and prehistoric creatures. Jan wanders among the groups. He glances at his watch.

DISSOLVE TO

112 JAN - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

112

sitting alone on one of the benches. The last of the tour groups is filing out of the long room. A clock reads 6:00 -- closing time. Jan remains sitting. A robot janitor is sweeping up. Two members of the museum staff come walking down the room, dressed in work smocks. They go to a door marked EMPLOYEES ONLY and open it with a key. One of them goes through the door. The other looks at Jan, catches his eye, motions for him to come over. Jan gets up quickly. The man ushers him through the door, then shuts it behind them.

113 INT. THE MUSEUM BASEMENT - DAY

113

A freight elevator descends into a huge room where the dioramas are constructed. There are pieces of work in progress, elements of some extremely large construction. The two men lead Jan out of the elevator past strange, skeletal shapes and what looks like a section of an antedeluvian jungle, toward an office built into a corner of the room.

114 INT. OFFICE - DAY

114

as Jan enters alone and Professor James Sullivan rises to greet him from behind a cluttered desk. Sullivan is sixty years old and the world's leading authority on extinct species. Waiting in the room with him are Caroline, and Thomas Wainwright.

SULLIVAN

So...here's our fearless traveller.
How do you do? My name's Sullivan.

JAN

Jan Rodericks.

SULLIVAN

(as they
shake hands)

You know the young lady, of course.
And this is Thomas Wainwright.

Jan shakes hands with Wainwright and the two of them appraise each other.

CONTINUED

SULLIVAN

I've been going over your notes.
They're quite thorough. You did your
homework.

Jan nods. Sullivan sits again, deferring to Wainwright.

WAINWRIGHT

Professor Sullivan is rather intri-
gued with your project. Apparently,
it makes sense on paper, but that
doesn't necessarily mean it's feasible....

JAN

It isn't.

Wainwright frowns.

JAN

Unless you have access to a lot of
money and the best technology on
earth.

WAINWRIGHT

And on the assumption we do?

JAN

Then it's feasible. The key to it
is a drug that's been recently syn-
thesized -- narcosamine. It's a
hormone produced in animals that
hibernate for the winter. It slows
down the bodily functions. With
the right dosage, I can put myself
in suspended animation for up to
twelve weeks, and during that time
use very little oxygen and no food.
When I wake up ---

WAINWRIGHT

You'll be weak as a kitten. Dehy-
drated. Possibly not even strong
enough to open a package of food.
Your metabolism will be so sluggish
you might not even realize where
you are. You could starve to death
before you come to your senses.

JAN

How do you know that?

WAINWRIGHT

It's part of the literature.

CONTINUED

114

CONTINUED - 2

114

Jan looks at him in amazement.

WAINWRIGHT

We are a humanitarian organization.
We would never consider throwing away
a human life, no matter how much bene-
fit we might derive from it.

JAN

If you've read about narcosamine...then
you're seriously considering this.

WAINWRIGHT

Very seriously. As a scientific
project, primarily...an experiment we
are forbidden to undertake by the Over-
lords. Obviously, it therefore fits
into our philosophy rather neatly. If
you can survive the journey...and if
you can return to earth in eighty years
to tell us what you've seen -- then
this may turn out to be the most impor-
tant think mankind has done since the
Overlords arrived.

Jan looks from Wainwright to Caroline. She smiles at him.

WAINWRIGHT

Which leaves us with the question, how
do we do it?

115

INT. THE MUSEUM BASEMENT - DAY

115

Sullivan leads the group of them through the shadows and the
looming shapes to a large table covered with a sheet. He
turns on a work light next to the table.

SULLIVAN

This is what we're building here....

He removes the sheet. On the table is a scale model of a
prehistoric scene, a brontosaurus feeding in a placid, swampy
lake and a smaller, carnivorous dinosaur watching it hungrily
from the bank. Sullivan takes a pencil and points to the
stomach of the brontosaurus.

SULLIVAN

This area is ideal for our purposes.
We can build all the life support sys-
tems into the stomach cavity. On the
plans it will look like pressure equali-
zation apparatus, so Karellan shouldn't
have any reason to be suspicious.

CONTINUED

115

CONTINUED

115

He waves the pencil over the entire model.

SULLIVAN

We're building to their specifications, and they've assured us the beasties will arrive intact. Which means you'll arrive intact as well.

JAN

It looks perfect.

WAINWRIGHT

It should be, for what it's going to cost. This may be the most expensive journey any man has ever taken....

SULLIVAN

You'll be working with us down here after hours. I don't want you around when the regular crews are here. And you'll have to supervise everything -- it's your life at stake if we miscalculate. We have less than a month to get it done ---

JAN

A month?

SULLIVAN

(nods)

We're already behind schedule. Karellan is holding up his ship for us.

JAN

That soon....

As the reality of it strikes home to him, Jan swallows hard. Caroline comes next to him and takes his hand.

116

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY - SHOOTING UP

11

at Karellan's ship, high overhead in an achingly blue, cloud-flecked sky. We slowly pan down to include Jan, looking up at the ship. He is sitting on the grassy hillside overlooking Riverside Drive, the river and the Palisades of New Jersey in the distance. A light breeze is blowing. It is a beautiful day, and very possibly the last such day on earth Jan will ever see. He drinks in the moment until he can hold no more. Then, reluctantly, he picks up a small tape recorder and snaps it on.

CONTINUED

116

CONTINUED

11

JAN

(into the recorder)

What a beautiful planet we live on.
I don't think I've ever appreciated
its beauty so much as now, as the time
approaches for me to leave it.

(beat)

By the time anyone hears this tape,
I will be gone. I don't think the
Overlords will stop the supply ship
once they discover I'm on board,
to turn around and bring me back.
Perhaps they'll throw me out into
interstellar space. Although I doubt
that, too, it really wouldn't matter
...I'll be the first human being to
journey beyond our solar system.

(beat)

The dosage of narcosamine has been
precisely calculated. I'll be asleep
eight weeks. When I awake, there will
be food and water to sustain me for
several months inside the capsule,
if necessary.

(beat)

People on earth have taken great risks
to make this possible, and expended a
great deal of money. There may be some
who fail to understand the reason for
it. I hope I can explain it. What I'm
about to do is a statement, not just to
the Overlords, but to everyone on earth
-- that man can go to the stars....

Jan snaps the recorder off and puts it in his pocket. He
gets up and walks down the hill. Caroline is waiting for
him below. He puts his arm around her and they walk off
together back toward the city.

DISSOLVE. TO

117

INT. JAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

11

Jan is packing a very small suitcase carefully, conserving
space. He has few possessions with him in New York, but
still has to decide which to take: his calculator, a book
of star maps, underwear, a tiny camera and a supply of film,
a few photographs of landscapes cut from magazines and slip-
ped in with the star maps, two cassettes of recorded music
...a pitifully small collection of things to remind him of
his home. Caroline is watching him.

CONTINUED

117

CONTINUED

117

CAROLINE

It's hard to imagine, if I ever
see you again...I'll be a hundred
years old, and you'll look just
the same as you do now....

They hold a long look, and then she smiles.

CAROLINE

I hope you weren't planning on
sleeping tonight.

JAN

I'll be sound asleep for the next
eight weeks....

He grins and walks over to her as we

DISSOLVE TO

118

THE BED - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

118

She lies in his arms, apparently sleeping, her blonde
hair cascading over his chest. His eyes are open, staring
at the ceiling. He looks at his watch. It's 4:00. Very
gently he slips away from her, gets up and starts to dress.
Caroline's eyes open. She watches him silently, her eyes
brimming with sadness. He dresses quietly, trying not to
wake her. When he's ready to go, he starts to lean over
the bed to kiss her goodbye, and finds her looking at
him.

CAROLINE

(softly)

Goodbye, traveller....

JAN

Goodbye.

Neither of them smiles. Jan picks up his suitcase and
leaves, shutting the door behind him.

CONTINUED

118

CONTINUED

118

CAROLINE

(a whisper)

Farewell.

A cold chill passes over her. She curls up her legs and wraps her arms around herself, shivering.

CUT TO

119

INT. THE BASEMENT OF THE MUSEUM - NIGHT

119

Footsteps echo in the cavernous space. Various sections of the anatomies of the dinosaurs are here and there, some with skin already applied. There is a work light next to the mammoth torso of the brontosaurus. A ladder on wheels waits directly beneath its belly. Three men walk out of the gloom into the harsh circle of light by the ladder: Jan, Sullivan and Wainwright.

SULLIVAN

(to Wainwright)

We'll finish putting the skin on tomorrow. Then all the pieces go outside for the final assembly. Another week and we ship it all out to the desert for loading.

WAINWRIGHT

(admiring
the torso)

You've done an incredible job. Both of you.

Wainwright turns to Jan.

WAINWRIGHT

Good luck.

JAN

Thank you.

He hands Wainwright the tape recorder.

JAN

Here's the tape you asked for. I did the best I could with it.

WAINWRIGHT

(nods)

As soon as the freighter goes into stardrive, we'll make the announcement. We'll release this tape, and

CONTINUED

119

CONTINUED

119

WAINWRIGHT (Cont'd)

inform Karellan where you are on the freighter. It probably won't do any good. Our scientists don't feel it's possible for them to communicate with a ship in stardrive -- but we'll do what we can to see they're aware of you.

Jan nods. Wainwright takes his hand.

WAINWRIGHT

You are the first. All the dreams of the human race go with you. Be of strong heart and good cheer.

JAN

Thank you again. For everything.

Jan shakes hands with Sullivan, smiles at both men, and then goes to the ladder.

120

SHOOTING UP

120

as he climbs the eight feet to what we now see is an aluminum cube inset within the rib cage of the dinosaur, six meters on a side. A handle is recessed into the bottom of the cube. When Jan turns it, an air lock opens with a hiss, retracting itself inside the cube. Jan gives a last glance down at Sullivan and Wainwright. He waves, then places his cane inside the compartment. He reaches in and lifts himself through the air lock.

121

INT. THE COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

121

which is barely high enough for Jan to stand upright. A single, contoured chair built into the floor takes up most of the available space. The rest is tightly packed with life support systems, monitoring devices, storage compartments for food and oxygen. Jan reaches down as Sullivan lifts his suitcase to him.

SULLIVAN

(to Wainwright)

Even the astronauts had more room than he does....

JAN

But they had to stay awake.

Jan takes the suitcase and fits it into an opening obviously designed for it. Then he turns around awkwardly and eases himself into the chair. A place for his cane has been provided.

CONTINUED

121

CONTINUED

121

Settling in, Jan makes a quick check of the systems.

JAN

(calling)

I'm going to seal the air lock.

WAINWRIGHT

God be with you....

Jan activates the air lock, which swings back into place.

122

INT. THE BASEMENT - NIGHT

122

as the door slides into place again, cutting off the glow of light from inside.

WAINWRIGHT

And God help him if we've done the wrong thing.

SULLIVAN

Be of strong heart yourself. I think he'll make it.

Sullivan wheels the ladder away from the dinosaur and turns off the work light, plunging the two of them into shadows as they walk away.

123

INT. THE COMPARTMENT

123

Jan is continuing the final checks, referring to a manual, keeping his mind occupied with details. The quiet inside the compartment is absolute. As all the indicator lights on the panel glow green in readiness, he settles back into his chair and sighs. A switch near his hand operates a tape recorder.

JAN

I have sealed the airlock and finished the last of the routine checks. The systems are functioning perfectly. There's nothing else to be done. If anything should go wrong, I won't be aware of it. Although there are still ten days before the journey begins, I am as isolated now as if I were a billion miles from earth.

(beat)

The narcosamine will take two minutes to put me out, sufficient time for me to strap myself securely into the chair.

CONTINUED

123

CONTINUED

12

JAN (Cont'd)

My next entry in this diary will
be eight weeks from now, assuming
there is a next entry....

He switches off the recorder. He removes an already-prepared syringe from a compartment in the arm of the chair and calmly injects the dose of narcosamine into his arm, replacing the syringe and closing the compartment again. Then he straps himself into the chair. He settles back, and smiles. His eyelids close. He sleeps. We watch the monitors on the walls for a few moments, recording his heart rate and respiration as they slowly sink toward hibernation. All is going well....

124

EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

12

The Overlord cargo ship, several miles long and half a mile high, floats motionless a few meters above a flat expanse of desert. The scale of this ship is truly incredible. A few trucks, pre-fab buildings and people moving around in its vicinity are dwarfed to insignificance. We can see the diorama being moved from the ground into the ship. It looks like a toy.

DISSOLVE TO

125

THE EARTH IN SPACE

12

as the cargo ship comes hurtling past camera, back into space.

CUT TO

126

THE OVERLORD SUPPLY SHIP

12

itself much larger than the cargo transport, which now rushes toward it in preparation to dock.

127

INT. A CARGO HOLD - HIGH ANGLE

12

as the diorama is lowered to the floor of the hold. We are watching this from a catwalk high, high above an open space as wide as the Grand Canyon and almost as deep.

CONTINUED

127

CONTINUED

12

The floor of the hold contains a large number of recognizable artifacts from earth, but none so impressive as the life-sized pair of dinosaurs. We almost expect to hear them bellow in protest as they float down to join the other displays far below. The entire operation is automatic, but as the diorama slips beneath our field of view, the silhouette of an Overlord passes in front of us....

128

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM OF KARELLAN'S SHIP - ON A VISION SCREEN 12

recording the progress of the diorama. We hear an Overlord voice, one we aren't familiar with:

VINDARTEN

We have located the life support unit, in the abdominal region of the larger saurian.

KARELLAN

Can you monitor life signs?

VINDARTEN

Yes. Heart rate and respiration are normal for a human being under the influence of narcosamine.

KARELLAN

Please continue to monitor until the subject awakens. After all the trouble they've gone to, we wouldn't want Mister Rodericks to have an accident.

VINDARTEN

I will take every precaution....

129

THE SUPPLY SHIP

12

prepares to activate its stardrive. The interplay of energies along its underside become increasingly rapid and intense, until the aurora patterns begin to engulf the entire ship. The seam we saw before begins to form in this region of space, distorting the light from the stars nearby. The doorway into the void opens and, with a blinding flash of light, the ship is gone.

130

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

13

The effects of the stardrive are visible across the whole of the night sky, a cosmic light show of short duration, indescribably vivid.

131

INT. THE FREEDOM LEAGUE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

13

The auditorium is a scene of feverish activity. Television cameras are being readied to broadcast a statement from Wainwright. Press releases have been printed and are about to be distributed. Jan's picture appears on the cover of the Freedom League magazine, a special edition under the headline THE STAR-TRAVELLER. Wainwright is standing while a make-up man makes last minute touch-ups. There is an air of steadily mounting excitement. Wainwright looks over at a floor manager wearing a headset.

WAINWRIGHT

How long?

FLOOR MANAGER

Seven minutes.

Wainwright nods. He looks at the typewritten speech he's holding, going over his lines silently, his lips moving as he rehearses. Then the floor manager hears something in his earphones....

FLOOR MANAGER

Wait a minute...they're breaking into the regular program ---

(amazed)

Karellan is going on the air to make a statement, worldwide.

The blood starts to drain out of Wainwright's face. He walks away from the make-up man.

WAINWRIGHT

He's never done anything like that before....

FLOOR MANAGER

(into his headset)

Can you give us audio down here?

Karellan's voice suddenly booms into the room. All the activity ceases. Caroline comes over to Wainwright.

KARELLAN

(amplified)

A supply ship has just departed, making its return voyage to our home world. That ship carried a precious cargo... treasures collected from around the earth, donated generously by all your peoples, to become a living testament to the achievements of your race, for other races and intelligences to see.

CONTINUED

131

CONTINUED

13

During this, certain key words produce a marked reaction in Wainwright -- "precious cargo", "living testament."

WAINWRIGHT

(a whisper)

What is he doing...playing with us?
Does he know?

KARELLAN

We are grateful to all of you, for helping us to broaden our understanding of the Universe. There was, however, an unexpected addition to that cargo....

CAROLINE

He does know.

Wainwright has turned ashen pale.

KARELLAN

...a stowaway, a young man named Jan Rodericks who, with the assistance of the Freedom League, is now already several light-years away.

Gloom descends on the room. Wainwright looks down at the speech he was about to make and drops the pages to the floor.

KARELLAN

We will do everything in our power to see that this brave if somewhat foolhardy young man comes to no harm on his unauthorized journey.

Caroline, listening to this with growing apprehension, heaves a sigh of relief.

KARELLAN

What he has done, however, suggests the need for clarification of one of our decisions concerning the affairs of the human race. We have imposed a ban on travel beyond the confines of your planet. We do not take such actions for the pleasure of it. When we came to earth, humanity was demonstrating a rather notable inability to deal with the problems of its own, small world. Without our intervention, the earth today would be a radioactive wilderness.

During this:

CAROLINE

They must have known all along! Why didn't they stop us?

Wainwright just shakes his head grimly.

as a technician wheels it around. The image is of the spaceship with the earth beneath it.

KARELLAN

Instead, with our help, you now have a world at peace, and you are a united people. Very soon, you will be civilized enough to manage the affairs of your planet without our supervision. Perhaps, in time, that civilization might be extended to other worlds within your solar system....

The point of view on the screen changes, showing us the solar system and moving away from it, until gradually the entire galaxy comes into view, a lovely spiral against the blackness of space.

KARELLAN

But there are powers and forces that exist in the Universe beyond your comprehension. One of my duties is to protect you from these forces which, were you to encounter them in your present stage of development, would certainly destroy you as a species. Our galaxy is only one of many millions. Races far more brilliant and developed than your own have ceased to exist because precautions were not taken to protect them.

CUT TO

INT. STORMGREN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

where he, too, is watching the broadcast.

KARELLAN

Do not set your sights on the stars. You do not realize how lucky you are. You are about to enter a Golden Age of prosperity and happiness. Enjoy it, for even this will end. The destiny of Man is as yet undreamt of by any of you....

The images on the screen dissolve, the galaxies giving way to the picture of the earth again.

KARELLAN

Live on the earth. Fulfill your dreams. There is but one fact you must accept -- the stars are not for man.

The picture on the screen fades out. We move in on Stormgren's face and hold on his thoughtful look.

133

INT. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD FEDERATION - DAY

13

Super over:

FIVE YEARS LATER

Stormgren is addressing the assembly for the last time, his valedictory at the close of a long and distinguished career as a statesman. We hear the final words of the speech:

STORMGREN

We have seen miracles within the span of our lifetimes, and there are miracles yet to come. Mankind has set its course toward a bright future, shining with promise. If I would leave you now with a single note of caution, it would be this -- let us look within ourselves for the solutions to the problems of the future, for only in this way will we continue to grow as a race.

(beat)

Once we worshipped forces greater than ourselves, and called them gods. What we were unable to understand, we feared, as children fear the unknown. We are no longer children, and we must put away such childish things. We are coming of age. We are the masters of our destiny, and woe to all of us if we should ever, again, forget it...

(beat)

Now I take my leave of you. Thank you, and goodbye.

As he turns to step down from the podium, the gallery breaks into a roar of applause.

CUT TO

134

INT. THE LOBBY OF THE SECRETARIAT - DAY

13

as the applause grows thunderous. A cadre of photographers and reporters waits in the lobby for Stormgren to come out following the speech. The doors to the assembly open, giving us a glimpse of the delegates inside, acknowledging Stormgren with a standing ovation and packing the aisle to shake his hand as he leaves. Flanked by security guards and assistants including Van Ryberg, Stormgren finally manages to reach the doors and escape into the lobby. Ignoring the flashbulbs and questions from the reporters, he moves quickly toward the doors to the plaza.

135

EXT. THE PLAZA - DAY

which has been cordoned off once again, and waiting as we first saw it is Karellan's glowing sphere, its stairway extended. Stormgren comes outside and proceeds across the plaza. Van Ryberg and the others drop back as he walks to the sphere and climbs the stairway for the last time.

DISSOLVE TO

136

INT. THE ROOM

136

as Stormgren enters, unburdened by briefcase or tape recorder. Karellan is waiting for him. His voice is heard before Stormgren sits.

KARELLAN

It was an excellent speech, Rikki.
I'm certain you'll be quoted for
many years to come.

STORMGREN

Thank you. Of course, Van Ryberg
wrote most of it.

KARELLAN

The thoughts were yours.

Stormgren takes his seat at the table. As always, his reflection looks back at him.

KARELLAN

I've been looking over the statistics
on world opinion.

(amused)

My approval rating has been dropping
again. I think it may rise, after
your speech....

STORMGREN

(smiles)

I fully intend to spend the rest of my life
in complete ignorance of world opinion.

KARELLAN

Of course.

(a beat)

I'll miss you, Rikki. These meetings
have been very important to me. You may
have guessed they were more for my benefit
than yours.

STORMGREN

(after a beat)

I'll admit, I've often wondered why you
didn't arrange a one-way television system....

CONTINUED

KARELLAN

Because direct contact with even a single human being is useful to us.

(beat)

Not until we deal with you directly can our real work begin. Humanity will then be a more stable species, capable of the tasks ahead of it. For the people of that generation, we will have always been a part of their lives. When they meet us, we will not seem so ...strange, as we would to you. .

STORMGREN

What are the tasks ahead of us? Will we ever become a part of your Universe? Will we ever work with you, as equals...?

KARELLAN

As equals?

(a long beat)

No...although ---

Karellan breaks off, a clear but inexplicable note of sadness in his voice, which causes Stormgren to frown in concern.

STORMGREN

You were about to say something and then changed your mind. I've never heard you do that before.

KARELLAN

Forgive me. There are still so many things we cannot speak about....

Karellan doesn't go on. The silence between them lengthens until, at last, Stormgren prepares to rise.

STORMGREN

Well...I suppose I should say goodbye.

He stands. There is still no reply. Stormgren starts for the door. As he is about to leave the room:

KARELLAN

Rikki?

Stormgren stops and turns back to the window. The same note of sadness is evident in Karellan's voice.

CONTINUED

136

CONTINUED - 2

136

KARELLAN

We are truly alien to each other, your race and mine. There are things about us you could never understand, just as we have had difficulty with aspects of human nature such as your curiosity.

Stormgren stands waiting and says nothing.

KARELLAN

It has been said one of the hardest of all things for men to do is to keep a secret..is that true?

Stormgren thinks about it for a moment or two.

STORMGREN

In some cases, yes. It depends on the secret, and the man.

KARELLAN

Come and sit down again, Rikki.

Stormgren returns to the table, wearing his perfect poker face.

KARELLAN

Our race is old, many millions of years older than yours. We have been supervisors, going wherever we were needed in the galaxy. We have learned to be cautious and not to rush, because each race is different, and we have had our failures...

Gradually, the lighting in the room begins to change. The bright illumination on Stormgren's side of the glass begins to dim, while through the glass a different light source becomes perceptible, coming from behind the glass and reddish in hue.

KARELLAN

Most of humanity alive today, will be dead when we finally come out of our ships...this is as it must be. But you of all men have been my friend, and I would not have you live out your life in ignorance...

137

CLOSE OF STORMGREN

137

as the lighting around him continues to grow dimmer, until he sits in almost total shadow except for the light from the far side of the screen, which plays over his face with a distinctive reddish cast. Stormgren leans forward, straining to see.

CONTINUED

137

CONTINUED

137

KARELLAN

Judge the nature of the problem for yourself, Rikki. After all, fifty years is a very short time, especially for a race with memories as long as yours...

The light behind Stormgren goes completely out. In the red glow from the screen, we see his eyes go wide. A look of stunned amazement comes on his face, followed quickly by a sudden, instinctive rush of fear...then that, too, is replaced by an illuminatory flash of understanding, before we

CUT TO

138

EXT. A MOUNTAIN LAKE - DAY

138

in Finland. Stormgren's house overlooks the lake. Fifteen years older, nearing the end of his life, Stormgren walks along the shore of the lake. The sunlight sparkles on the water. The tall pine trees cast their reflections, upside down. Stormgren stops walking. He puts a hand to his chest. A small, electronic beeping sound is coming from a medical alert unit under his jacket. Stormgren turns to the house. It is at least a hundred yards away, and he doesn't think he can make it. He takes several steps, still clutching his heart, then his face constricts with pain and he falls...

139

INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

139

Another medical alert unit is beeping furiously. A private nurse comes running into the room to grab a medical bag and rush out again.

140

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

140

as the nurse stands uncertainly, trying to see where Stormgren is. She spots him by the lake, and runs in that direction. As she grows smaller and smaller in the shot,

DISSOLVE TO

141

INT. STORMGREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

141

Ghostly pale, his skin almost transparent, Stormgren lies propped up in bed, reading glasses perched on his nose, having fallen asleep over a book. His breathing is rapid and a little forced.

#85362

142

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

142

A bright spark in the sky is growing larger, coming in over the lake at tremendous speed. It passes the camera, heading toward the house.

143

IN THE BEDROOM - DAY

143

The light passes through the walls of the room, resolving itself into a glowing sphere which hangs over the bed. Stormgren stirs, as if sensing its presence.

KARELLAN

Rikki...

Stormgren wakes up, disoriented.

STORGREN

Karellan? Is that you?

KARELLAN

Hello, Rikki...

STORMGREN

I was dreaming...where are you?

KARELLAN

In my ship. I have a small probe by your bed.

Stormgren turns to the glowing sphere, and where he is comes back to him. He smiles.

STORMGREN

You've come to say goodbye.

KARELLAN

No.

STORMGREN

Then why?

KARELLAN

Not to say goodbye.

Stormgren looks puzzled.

KARELLAN

Rikki...in another decade, we will be introducing medical techniques which will allow your doctors to prolong human life and even reverse the process of aging. I am not permitted to make these advances available to the world as yet...but I could make an exception in your case, as I did once before...

STORMGREN

(nods)

Yes.

KARELLAN

In thirty more years, I will be able to leave my ship. Our secrecy will be finished. Your race and mine will see each other face to face.

STORMGREN

Yes.

KARELLAN

Would you not...be there, if you could? You are my oldest friend on earth. It would please me if you were there.

STORMGREN

No.

(a long beat)

Thank you, Karellan, but no. I have lived a long, full life. I've seen my dreams come to pass.

KARELLAN

Death is not inevitable in the Universe.

STORMGREN

Death is something we've learned to live with for such a long time. I'm glad our younger people can be free of it...but as for me, it has come to feel like a very old friend.

KARELLAN

Then it seems I must say goodbye. I would have it otherwise.

Stormgren smiles affectionately.

STORMGREN

Isn't it strange...even you cannot have everything you want.

KARELLAN

Not strange, Rikki. Not strange at all.

There is a deep sense of loss and sadness in Karellan's voice.

STORMGREN

Goodbye, Karellan.

CONTINUED

143

CONTINUED - 2

143

KARELLAN

Goodbye, Rikki.

The light begins to withdraw from the room. Stormgren settles back against the pillows, exhausted.

144

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

144

as the glowing spark returns across the lake and into the heavens.

DISSOLVE TO

145

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

145

Half a century has passed since the Overlords arrived on earth, and now even the skyline of New York City has changed. Magnificent new buildings sweep skyward with grace and symmetry, testifying to the fabulous advancements made in just two generations. It is a clear sparkling day. High overhead, Karellan's ship begins to move, for the first time since the day it arrived. It comes down out of the cold of space, aglow in the sunlight, moving slowly and majestically until it hovers over the island.

DISSOLVE TO

146

EXT. THE WORLD FEDERATION BUILDING - DAY

146

The streets around it have changed, but the old United Nations building is the same. First Avenue is a solid wall of people as far as we can see. Around the perimeter of the plaza, a grandstand has been erected. Television cameras are broadcasting this event around the world. Dignitaries from every nation on earth are in attendance. A hush falls over the crowd as an opening appears in the underside of the great ship now almost claustrophobically close overhead. A glowing ball of light appears, larger and of a different color than the sphere which used to transport Stormgren. Reddish-hued, this large sphere drops toward the plaza, solidifying as it comes to rest. A circle of darkness opens in it. A bright silver disk appears within the darkness and floats out, dropping to the pavement. As one, the watching crowd leans forward to see into the darkness, to see Karellan for the first time.

KARELLAN'S VOICE

There are some children here,
I would like two of them to come
and meet me.

147

ON THE SPECTATORS

147

in the first few rows of seats as, in response to the words, half a dozen children jump to their feet and start toward the silver disk. One or two are restrained by their parents, whose faces betray a sudden, inexplicable foreboding. Four of the children approach the disk.

KARELLAN'S VOICE

Two will be enough -- a boy and a girl.

Karellan chuckles as the children turn to each other and dispute briefly which of the four will step onto the disk. Finally a boy and a girl resolve the question. The other two return to the seats.

148

ON THE BOY AND THE GIRL

148

as, with mounting excitement, they step onto the silver disk. The girl is six years old, a beautiful child with silken blonde hair. The boy is eight or nine, darker and with sharp, intelligent eyes.

149

WIDER SHOT

149

as the disk lifts gently into the air and floats toward the dark hole in the sphere, the two children peering into the darkness eagerly. The disk enters the sphere and is lost to sight. There is silence.

150

ON THE FACES IN THE CROWD

150

waiting. There are several elder statesmen who are old enough to have been alive when the Overlords first came. As one, every person in the crowd takes a breath and looks --

151

ON THE SPHERE

151

as we begin to see a movement within it. The disk is coming out again. Emerging from the darkness is a shadow-- very large, twice the height of a man. Before we can see Karellan clearly, we can see the children, cradled in his arms. He holds them gently and effortlessly. We can hear scattered gasps and people crying out as Karellan moves into the sunlight. The children don't seem to notice. They're having too much fun playing with his wings...

152

ON THE CROWD

152

A woman of thirty, suddenly and illogically, screams. Faces turn pale, a few look away. Those who stare at Karellan

CONTINUED

152

CONTINUED

152

do so with open mouths and looks of primeval fear, not unlike the look we saw on Stormgren's face. Only the younger children seem unaffected by the sight. Several of them smile happily, laugh, and one of them points, delighted:

A CHILD

Look -- he's got a tail!

153

ON KARELLAN

153

as the silver disk carries him out of the glowing red sphere and down to earth. His body is crimson and ebony black, not really human but of a similar design. His feet are hooves, cloven. His tail is supple and flattened on its end. His wings are magnificent, flaring slightly as a gust of wind passes over him. A pair of horns sweep back from his brow. His fingers are long, graceful, taloned. His face could be that of any demon ever seen by men in the most fearful of dreams.

154

ON THE CROWD

154

Here and there, a woman has fainted. There is some confusion in the crowd, but mostly a stunned and awe-struck silence as the people stare.

155

FAVORING KARELLAN

155

as the disk takes him gently to earth. He bends down and sets the children on their feet. They stay by his side and now other children have run forward, some picking up his tail, others touching the wings. As they gather around him, Karellan stands in all his majesty.

156

FAVORING A CHILD OF FIVE YEARS OLD

156

in the crowd, looking with some confusion at a woman who has just fainted, at a loss to understand the reactions of the adults.

AN OLDER MAN

(half-whispered)

He looks like the Devil...

The child frowns, looks at Karellan, then at the man.

THE CHILD

What's the Devil?

157

ON KARELLAN

157

as he raises his arms in salute to the crowd and the cameras,
and slowly walks forward....

FADE OUT

Super over black:

PART TWOTWENTY FIVE YEARS LATER

Holding these words on the screen,

FADE IN

158

INT. THE COMPARTMENT - ON JAN RODERICKS

158

exactly as we last saw him, sleeping. Camera pans off him
to an elapsed time counter on a panel near his head. The
seconds are ticking off, the minutes and hours becoming days
and weeks. Within the starship, slightly more than four
weeks have passed. The superimposition fades out. We watch
the clock for a moment or two, then

CUT TO

159

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

159

It has become a city of the future, full of marvelous high
graceful buildings extending out over the ocean, everything
clean and gleaming under clear blue skies.

DISSOLVE TO

160

INT. A MAGICAM SOUND STAGE - DAY

160

An actor is standing in front of a large blue backing, dressed
in a business suit appropriate to the 1950's. One hand in his
pocket, he comes walking forward, on a floor which is also blue.

ACTOR

'In a tragedy, nothing is in doubt
and everyone's destiny is known.
It makes for tranquility...for he
who kills is as innocent as he who
gets killed. It's all a matter of
what part you are playing.'

161

REVERSE ANGLE - ON GEORGE GREGGSON

161

who is crouched by an ultra-modern television camera, directing this scene from Jean Anouilh's "Antigone." George looks more like a college professor than a director. He is thirty years old, with a pleasant, bright face and sharp eyes. He is mouthing the dialogue along with the actor:

ACTOR

'Tragedy is restful; and the reason is that hope, that foul, deceitful thing, has no part in it. There isn't any hope. You're trapped. The whole of the sky has fallen on you and all you can do about it is to shout.'

162

WIDE SHOT

162

Despite the starkness of the stage, on a video monitor we can see the actor in the middle of an extremely elaborate set reminiscent of occupied France in World War Two. A technician is watching the monitor.

ACTOR

'Don't mistake me -- I said shout. I did not say groan, whimper or complain. That, you cannot do....'

During this speech:

TECHNICIAN

(a loud whisper)

He walked through the table.

ACTOR

What?

GEORGE

Jesus Christ!

George gets up beside the camera. The concentration broken, the rest of the people on the stage begin to move around and talk.

TECHNICIAN

Look for yourself.

George looks at the monitor. Sure enough, in the composite the scene the actor appears to be standing in the middle of a large table.

CONTINUED

162

CONTINUED

162

GEORGE

This is a rehearsal! We're trying to work out performance, not furniture ---

TECHNICIAN

I'm sorry. I thought you'd want to know....

George shakes his head with a strangeld groan of frustration. A gofer has come tiptoeing up behind him.

GOFER

Phone for you.

GEORGE

Great.

(shouts)

Five minutes!

He walks off the set toward the door to a control room, following a thick bundle of cables which snakes across the floor from the camera.

163

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM - DAY

163

The camera cables pass through the wall and lead to a periscope camera which photographs a miniature of the set we just saw on the video monitor. As George enters the control room, more technicians are fussing with the lighting on the miniature. George goes to a picture phone. As he moves in front of it, he watches what the technicians are doing.

GEORGE

(distracted)

Hello....

JEAN MOREL

George, for heaven's sake sit down, I can't see you.

GEORGE

(calling)

Bring the light up on that far wall a little....

(sitting)

Sorry, Jean. How are you?

164

OVER GEORGE'S SHOULDER

164

as he smiles at a stunning woman whose image appears on the picture phone facing him.

CONTINUED

164

CONTINUED

164

JEAN

I'm fine. You?

GEORGE

Don't ask. What's up?

JEAN

(a little smug)

I'm having a party. Friday night.

She smiles at him, the kind of smile that says she has a secret.

GEORGE

I don't know if I can make it ---

JEAN

George, you have to. Please....

GEORGE

If I can wrap this show on time ---

He realizes he's being distant, shakes his head and smiles at her.

GEORGE

I'm sorry, baby. You know I'd love to come.

JEAN

I think you could use the rest. You're awfully frazzled.

GEORGE

(nods)

Okay. I'll be there, promise.

JEAN

Can you stay for a few days?

GEORGE

(grins)

Sure. What's the occasion?

JEAN

There are several occasions....

GEORGE

Oh yeah?

JEAN

Not a word till you get here. Big surprises are guaranteed....

George smiles at the mystery.

GEORGE

How's the weather?

JEAN

Gorgeous. See you Friday....

CONTINUED

164

CONTINUED - 2

164

GEORGE

I love you.

JEAN

I'm glad you said that. I love you
twice.

GEORGE

Three times....

JEAN

Four.

GEORGE

I have to get to work.

JEAN

'Bye.

She breaks the connection and her image fades. George, getting up, sees two of the technicians smirking at his verbal intimacies. He scowls and heads back out to the stage.

DISSOLVE TO

165

EXT. AN ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC - NIGHT - ON JEAN MOREL'S HOUSE 165

which is a good example of how people live in the twenty-first century, seventy-five years after the coming of the Overlords. The house is like a glowing jewel set down on the otherwise inaccessible side of a cliff overlooking the sea. No technology we're familiar with could have put this house where it is, nor even have built it. Its structure defies the laws of gravity. Delicate geodesic struts support transparent membranes which form the walls and ceilings. The various rooms cascade down the side of the cliff, no two of them on the same level. Trees and foliage grow inside and outside the walls, creating the feeling of absolute harmony with nature. A waterfall even runs through several of the levels. Completely self-sustaining, the house is isolated, with total privacy and an unsurpassable view. After we've had a moment to appreciate its setting, we see a tiny winking light approaching the house from over the sea. As the light draws nearer we see it is an airplane of some sort, rather small by our current standards. The plane flies around the house and past the camera, which pans with it as it approaches a landing area. Perhaps half a dozen other planes are parked here, each of a different design. As the plane settles in for a feather-like landing,

166

INT. THE PLANE - NIGHT

166

George, the only passenger, is sound asleep. The plane lands itself. There is room inside for six people at most. Once the engines have been shut off, a small beeping noise wakes George up. Sleepily, he looks around, realizes he's arrived, and shuts off the power. The beeping stops and George gets out.

167

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

167

George walks up a landscaped path to the level nearest the landing zone. We can hear music coming from a higher level, and there are people visible through the transparent walls.

168

INT. THE ENTRY LEVEL - NIGHT

168

as George steps through the door, which is a pressure-differential to keep insects and dirt out. We can see George's hair ruffle slightly as he steps through into the cooler interior.

COMPUTER VOICE

Good evening, Mister Greggson. Did you bring any luggage with you?

GEORGE

I left it in the plane. I'll bring it in later.

COMPUTER VOICE

Very good, sir. May I have a drink ready for you upstairs?

GEORGE

Yes. Your coldest beer would do fine.

COMPUTER VOICE

Thank you, sir.

George walks through the entry level onto a garden path leading up toward the rest of the house.

169

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

169

which has, like the rest of the rooms, a very high ceiling. Fifteen or twenty people are present. A pleasant buzz of laughter and conversation commingles with the music. The party guests come from every conceivable background and nationality. There is a wide variety of hairstyles and clothing. Individual expression is the keynote, and comfort is in fashion. Even facial makeup is radically different from what we're used to. As George enters the room, he acknowledges the greetings of several guests and looks around for Jean.

170

MOVING WITH GEORGE

170

as he collects his beer from the automated bar. He spots Jean across the room at the same time she sees him. They come together, hug and exchange a long, happy kiss.

CONTINUED

JEAN

Mmmmm...good. Too long.

GEORGE

(smiles)

Absence makes perfect. New dress?

JEAN

Special occasion, like I promised.

She twirls to show off the gown, a filmy, diaphanous thing that's very sexy.

GEORGE

Out with the secrets ---

JEAN

Not yet, not yet. Come on. I'll introduce you around.

She takes his hand and leads him to the group she was standing with.

JEAN

(beaming)

This is George.

(points to
the others
in turn)

Doctor Richter from Oxford, the famous historian. Jena Poole, archaeologist -- came all the way from Syria. Savin Setswana, oceanographer.

(hugs George)

My very own George, telly director and lover.

GEORGE

Not in that order. How d'you do...?

He shakes hands all around. Then:

GEORGE

Jean's being very mysterious tonight. Do any of you know what's up?

JENA

(shakes her head)

She won't tell us.

JEAN

Prizes for anyone who can guess.

CONTINUED

170

CONTINUED - 2

170

SAVIN

(British accent)

Then we should have a hint.

JEAN

Just one. You're going to meet
somebody.

JENA

Friend of yours?

JEAN

Only one hint.
(kisses George)
Later for you.She floats away, George smiling after her. Then, as he turns
to the others, .

DISSOLVE TO

171

THE PARTY - AN HOUR LATER

171

George is trapped in a long-winded discussion with Doctor
Richter about the decline of values in Utopia. Jena has
managed to escape, leaving only Savin Setswana to share the
ordeal. George's glass needs a refill and he keeps looking
around for Jean to rescue him as Richter holds forth with
his favorite thesis:

RICHTER

You see, it was the struggle for exis-
tence that gave human culture its meaning.
Only by rising above the vicissitudes
could the artist or the scientist ac-
complish anything. Now -- everything's
too easy. Consequently, we have no new
art, no real scientific breakthroughs
that don't come from the Overlords in one
way or another. We're stagnant.

SAVIN

I don't think that's true. We have poets,
musicians, actors, playwrights ---

RICHTER

But no great ones. Interpretation is
everything. Creation is a thing of the
past. Yes, George?George, waving to Jean across the room, turns to Richter and
Savin.

CONTINUED

171

CONTINUED

171

GEORGE

Yes, I'd have to say that's true.
There doesn't seem to be any real
drama left. We keep re-doing Shakes-
peare and Tennessee Williams and
Horst and Farraday, but every year
they have less to do with our lives.
We don't have any heroes. We don't
have any dragons to slay....

He smiles as Jean comes over to them.

JEAN

Hello...having fun? May I have him
for a while?

RICHTER

But of course.

She links arms with George and leads him away. As they
head for a terrace:

SAVIN

(laughs)

Speaking for myself, I'm glad things
aren't like they once were. Maybe the
arts are suffering, but people aren't.
If it weren't for the Overlords, I'd
be living in some tribal village in
Africa, if I were living at all. I'd
rather be here at this party ---

172

EXT. THE TERRACE - NIGHT

172

as Jean and George come outside.

GEORGE

Saved.

JEAN

The professor's a dear. Long-winded,
but sweet. Lives in the past.

GEORGE

Where do you find these people?

JEAN

(half a frown)

They're interested in my work....

George looks away. Obviously, Jean's work is a sore point
between them.

CONTINUED

172

CONTINUED

172

GEORGE

I should have known....

JEAN

Now, sweetie....

GEORGE

(smiles)

Not another word. I promise.

JEAN

(kisses him)

Are you ready? The first surprise?

George nods.

JEAN

(teasing)

Not here. I'll meet you in the library.

GEORGE

I'd rather the bedroom....

JEAN

And muss my hair?

(shakes her head)

The library.

GEORGE

I don't like your library.

JEAN

(a pout)

You promised....

GEORGE

Okay. Five minutes?

JEAN

Or so.

She goes back inside to play hostess and we

CUT TO

173

EXT. THE LIBRARY - NIGHT

173

which is a separate, dome-like module a bit away from the rest of the house. George comes walking along the path to the entrance. Unlike the other rooms, the library has a door since the inside is a controlled environment to protect the books.

CONTINUED

173

CONTINUED

173

Also unlike the other rooms, the walls are opaque. George, carrying a fresh beer, presses a panel and the door opens, giving onto a small air-lock chamber.

174

INT. THE LIBRARY - NIGHT

174

as the second door of the air-lock opens and George steps in. The first thing he notices is an odd smell. He stands for a moment, sniffing, trying to place it. The library is rather large, the bookshelves arranged circularly so that, in some ways, it resembles a maze. Following his nose, George walks between the shelves.

175

MOVING WITH HIM

175

as he heads for the open central section. We can see the books here are very old, some dating back over a thousand years. Whatever Jean's work is, it obviously requires extensive research. We can tell from the look on George's face that the smell is getting stronger as he gets nearer to the center of the vast room. The light is growing dimmer as well. Then he comes around the last of the bookshelves and stops in his tracks. Caught completely off-guard, mouth open, a sudden feeling of panic rushes over him. Not ten feet away is

176

AN OVERLORD

176

reading a book. Despite the high ceiling, the Overlord's size makes the room seem suddenly small -- very small, claustrophobic. The alien is sitting on a perch which has been constructed for him, giving his wings room to relax in back. He sits in a forward slouch, his cloven feet on the floor. He looks like a strange caricature of Rodin's "Thinker." He looks up at George and straightens slightly. His wings flex. Instinctively, George takes a step backwards and for a moment, he looks like he might turn and run. The Overlord's tail twitches. His face is without apparent expression. He continues to turn the pages of the book he's reading, at the rate of one every several seconds, during:

RASHAVERAK

Hello....

GEORGE

Uh...sorry. I didn't know -- anyone...
was in here.

CONTINUED

176

CONTINUED

176

RASHAVERAK

It's quite all right. I haven't been very sociable, I'm afraid. Jean has such a remarkable library....

Rashaverak's tail makes a sweeping gesture to illustrate his point. The pages of the book keep turning. The Overlord has his head slightly cocked, obviously reading as he carries on the dialogue.

GEORGE

Yes. Yes. Well. I'm George Greggson.

RASHAVERAK

My name is Rashaverak.

George almost puts out his hand, but thinks better of it.

RASHAVERAK

You're Jean's intended mate, I believe.

GEORGE

Ah...yes. You could put it that say.

Rashaverak comes to the end of the book. He shuts it and reaches out to return it to the shelf. His arm is long enough to do this without leaving his perch. Then he turns his full attention to George.

RASHAVERAK

I've seen most of your television productions. They're rather ingenious. I enjoyed them.

GEORGE

Really? Thank you. I had no idea you...watched television.

RASHAVERAK

We're interested in all aspects of your culture.

GEORGE

I'm surprised you're even interested in -- this.

He waves his arm to indicate the library. His tone of voice tells us what he thinks of it.

CONTINUED

176

CONTINUED - 2

176

RASHAVERAK

Some of it is fascinating. The book I just finished, for instance, deals with mental telepathy between identical twins. It was written over a hundred years ago. A strange phenomenon.

GEORGE

I suppose it's a little like studying the superstitions of a primitive race. Magic, mysticism, astrology -- all this mumbo-jumbo....

Rashaverak doesn't reply, but cocks his head at George, suggesting a quizzical expression. George is beginning to feel uncomfortable in this unusual company.

GEORGE

Well...maybe I should -- let you get back to reading. I'm...it's a little strange -- we don't usually get to see an Over -- uh, Supervisor, face-to-face.

RASHAVERAK

(with a hint
of amusement)

I hope it doesn't disturb you.

GEORGE

(hastily)

No, it's not that. It's just, well -- seeing one of you on television is one thing, uh....

JEAN

George? Rashy? Are you here?

George whirls around, grateful for the intrusion as Jean comes through the maze of bookshelves.

JEAN

Hi -- so you've met.

RASHAVERAK

Yes, we've been having a pleasant conversation.

JEAN

You really must come down and join the party before everyone gets too drunk.

CONTINUED

176

CONTINUED - 3

176

RASHAVERAK

Of course. Would an hour be too long?

JEAN

I think that'd be fine.

GEORGE

(heartily)

Well, dear -- let's leave Mister Rashaverak to his reading, shall we?

She gives him an odd look, but nods.

GEORGE

'Bye.

He takes Jean's arm and they walk back to the door. Rashaverak selects another volume from the shelves.

177

MOVING WITH JEAN AND GEORGE

177

as they reach the airlock.

GEORGE

(sotto)

Rashy???

JEAN

Why not? They're only inhuman.

He shoots her a look as they go through the airlock.

178

EXT. THE LIBRARY - NIGHT

178

where George takes her arms and turns her to face him.

GEORGE

Come on, Jean -- Overlords in the library? What is going on?

JEAN

I promised surprises....

GEORGE

What's he doing here?

JEAN

He called me up to borrow some books. I said no. These books are too valuable

CONTINUED

178

CONTINUED

178

JEAN (Cont'd)

to me, but I told him he could come here and read them.

George glances over his shoulder.

GEORGE

Why would they be interested in all that old-fashioned garbage? I have to admit, my opinion of the Overlords has just gone down....

JEAN

(hurt)

George. Please.

GEORGE

You know I don't like all your superstitious pseudo-science.

JEAN

But you like me...and it's my field.

GEORGE

I love you.

JEAN

You'd better love me.

Her eyes twinkle a little. She grins at him.

GEORGE

Why?

JEAN

Because I'm pregnant. Surprise number two.

He stares at her in amazement.

CUT TO

179

INT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

179

which is on the highest level of the house, affording a view of the party from above, the sea below, and the stars. Jean and George enter, George still looking a little stunned. George goes and sits on the whisperbed, an energy field which emits a soothing, resonant hum while it supports his body. It seems to relax him.

CONTINUED

GEORGE

When did you find out?

JEAN

The day I called you.

GEORGE

Boy or a girl?

JEAN

(smiles)

A boy. Eighty-seven point three probability.

George leans back on the whisperbed and looks up at the stars. Jean comes and sits beside him. She takes his hand.

JEAN

We don't have to contract with each other if you don't want to.

GEORGE

Would you keep him if we didn't?

JEAN

Yes.

He pulls her down beside him.

GEORGE

I do love you.

JEAN

Does it make you unhappy?

GEORGE

No.

(beat)

It makes me think.

(then)

Let's make a contract for five years. Standard conditions.

JEAN

Because you love me, or because you're feeling guilty?

GEORGE

What do I have to do -- tattoo it on my forehead? I love you.

JEAN

Then let's make it for ten years and I'll give you a gender clause -- if it's a girl we'll go back to five.

CONTINUED

179

CONTINUED - 2

179

GOERGE

Let's just make it for ten.

She nods, smiling back. They embrace and kiss. The hum from the bed changes slightly, in tune with their movements. George reaches for a row of buttons on the side of the bed and pushes one. The walls of the room begin to darken, shutting out the stars.

180

EXT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT - HIGH ANGLE

180

as the walls and ceiling are polarized and turn opaque. Jean is already starting to undress.

GEORGE

What about your hairdo?

JEAN

What about it?

And then we see them no more.

DISSOLVE TO

181

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - SHOOTING DOWN

181

on a circular table, the surface of which is a myriad of tiny ball bearings, each like the facet of a diamond reflecting the lights and movement in the room. Camera zooms back to show us the entire table, with eight chairs around it. The letters of the alphabet and the numbers from zero to nine are inset at random around the circumference of the table.

182

FAVORING JEAN

182

returned from her tryst with George. Her hair looks as good as before. She claps her hands to get everyone's attention.

JEAN

I promised all of you a surprise tonight, and here he is. I'd like you to meet Rashaverak....

Saying this, she adjusts a dial which dims the lights in the living room and gives them the characteristic red hue of the Overlords. Then Rashaverak steps into the room, regally. There are gasps of surprise and reactions not unlike George's when he came upon the Overlord in the library.

CONTINUED

182

CONTINUED

182

RASHAVERAK

Thank you for allowing me to join
your party.

He walks into the room. People tend to shy away from him,
so overpowering is his presence.

JEAN

Rashy has been using my library to
study psychic phenomena, and since
all of you are also interested in it
in one way or another, I thought you
might like to help me with an actual
demonstration.

She walks to the center of the room, where the table is.

JEAN

I chose the Ouija Board as the most
dramatic example of psychic influences.
We need seven volunteers....

She pulls out one of the chairs and sits at the table. One
by one, other guests come and join her. Jena Poole and
Savin Setswana take seats. The other five volunteers are a
mixture of men and women.

JEAN

(to Rashaverak)

Would you like to join us?

RASHAVERAK

I don't think so, but thank you. I
would prefer to observe.

He moves to one side of the room, where he can look over the
heads of the other spectators and where his presence is not
so looming. He is wearing a belt of some kind which has a
breathing mask attached to it. He takes this mask and puts
it over his face briefly, taking a few deep breaths, refresh-
ing himself from the effects of earth's alien atmosphere.
During this:

JEAN

(to Rashaverak)

Although we still don't have any idea
how this works, we've been able to
make some improvements on the old de-
sign. Friction has been eliminated

She takes a plastic disk ten centimeters in diameter and
places it on the field of ball bearings. It moves freely.

CONTINUED

She flicks it with her finger and it skitters across the table. When it touches the outer rim, the letter or number at that point lights up. To one side of the table is an electronic screen which displays the same letter.

JEAN

...and as you can see, contact with any one of the letters or numbers shows up on the screen. That way we can all read the answers when they come. If they come. It isn't always reliable, of course, and these are unusual circumstances....

George has been standing at the periphery of the spectators with a less-than-thrilled expression. Now he looks over at Rashaverak.

GEORGE

I wonder if the Unusual Circumstances has any idea how it works...?

Rashaverak doesn't reply, his attention fixed on the table as the eight operators settle into place. Jean puts the disk in the center of the field and each operator rests an index finger on it.

JEAN

It's been proven over and over that no single individual can affect the movement of the disk. As a further precaution, let's restrict the questions to those not in the circle. All right? First question....

GEORGE

(sarcastic)

Is it going to rain tomorrow?

JEAN

That's not a good question, darling, because it's ambiguous. It's bound to be raining somewhere tomorrow. The questions should have answers that someone in the room can verify...or they should be intentionally vague. For instance -- 'Is there anybody there?'

Having asked the question, she turns her attention to the table. There is silence in the room. With the eight of them touching it lightly, the disk starts to move, slowly at first,

CONTINUED

182

CONTINUED - 3

182

then swinging back and forth across the table in a widening arc between two discreet words, YES and NO. After several swings of the arc, the disk shoots to Yes and stays there a moment. The word YES appears on the screen. The disk returns to the center of the table.

JEAN

Well. Good. "Who are you?"

A few beats and the disk moves again, faltering at first, then spelling out IAMALL, which appears on the screen.

JEAN

I am all. That's a fairly typical response. It could be taken to mean there's nothing here except the combination of our minds at work...now, for a question outside the circle. A specific question....

Doctor Richter steps forward and holds out his fist.

RICHTER

What is the color of the object I'm holding in my hand?

JEAN

Very good.

All eyes turn to the table. The disk quivers, then darts immediately to four letters in turn. BLUE. Now the eyes turn to Richter. Slowly, he opens his hand, revealing a key -- bright blue in color. There are cries of amazement. Rashaverak takes a step or two closer and leans forward with apparent interest.

JEAN

There. It's working. Another question.

A WOMAN

What was my grandmother's maiden name?

Moving quickly, the disk spells out HARRISON.

THE WOMAN

Amazing....

183

FAVORING GEORGE

183

watching all this with a slight frown.

CONTINUED

183

CONTINUED

183

There's silence in the room. George glances over at Rashaverak.

GEORGE

What do the Overlords really want from us?

With shocked or embarrassed looks, the people turn to George and to Rashaverak. The Overlord makes no reaction to the question. George, his face set, ignores the looks and stares at the disk on the table. Several operators have taken their fingers from the disk. Now they return them, with a little uncertainty. The question seems to hang in the air, defiantly. And then the disk moves....

184

ON THE DISK

184

as it moves, spelling out T...H...E...K....

185

ON THE FACES OF THE OPERATORS

185

watching its movement, fascinated...all except Jean, whose eyes have closed. Her finger moves with the others, but a curious blank expression has come over her.

186

ON THE SCREEN

186

as the letters continue...E...Y...T...

187

FAVORING RASHAVERAK

187

His wings are trembling slightly, his tail twitches. He takes a step backwards. The letters appear...O...T...H...E

188

ON GEORGE

188

spelling out the words as best he can: O...V...E...

189

A SERIES OF SHOTS

189

of all the faces in the room, each staring either at the table or the screen. No one is aware of Jean, whose head has begun to loll, her shoulders slumped.

190

ON THE SCREEN

190

and the letters of the answer: THEKEYTOTHEOVERM -- when suddenly the message stops.

191

FAVORING JEAN

191

who has fallen forward onto the table, scattering the ball bearings and disrupting the progress of the disk. She seems to be unconscious.

GEORGE

Jean!

He shoulders his way through the spectators and takes Jean's arms, easing her back into her seat. The other operators have risen, concerned. People are grouping around. George is patting Jean's cheek gently, her head against his shoulder. Her eyelids flutter and open.

JEAN

What...?

GEORGE

Are you all right? You fainted.

JEAN

I did?

As she straightens up, coming back to herself, George, all concerned, looks up at the screen -- THEKEYTOTHEOVERM -- then whirls to look at Rashaverak.

192

HIS POINT OF VIEW

192

The Overlord is gone.

CUT TO

193

INT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

193

Jean lies on the whisperbed, sleeping peacefully, her face very childlike, a small smile on her lips. George, Jena and another woman stand looking down at her.

JENA

We should be going. I'm sure she'll be all right now.

GEORGE

I'm sorry about all this.

JENA

It's not your fault.

GEORGE

I asked the question.

CONTINUED

193

CONTINUED

193

JENA

Surely you don't think that's why
she fainted?

George shrugs miserably.

JENA

(chiding)

George...you're supposed to be the
one who doesn't believe in all this.

He gives her a sharp look, then averts his eyes.

GEORGE

I don't like it. I wish she wouldn't
experiment with these things.

Jena puts a hand on his arm reassuringly.

JENA

(glances at the
other woman)

Is there anything we can do before
we go?

GEORGE

(shakes his head)

The party's over. We'll clean up
tomorrow.

JENA

'Bye.

George nods to both of them. Once they've left, he goes to
the whisperbed and looks down at Jean, tenderness and love
washing over him. He dims the lights in the room until the
stars shine through the canopy.

DISSOLVE TO

194

EXT. THE OUTDOOR GARDEN - NIGHT

194

overlooking the house. George sits on a rock wall, alone,
staring out to sea. He hears a noise and turns, suddenly
frightened by a looming silhouette only a few yards away.
A sharp intake of breath betrays his fear. The demon-aspect
of the Overlords is reinforced by Rashaverak's shadowy
presence. Only the deep timbre of his voice belays the im-
pression.

RASHAVERAK

I'm sorry if I startled you. Is
Jean all right?

CONTINUED

GEORGE

I think so. She's sleeping.

RASHAVERAK

What happened tonight...was that unusual, for Jean to faint?

GEORGE

Yes. Very. She's always been perfectly healthy...but she's pregnant. That's why I was concerned for her.

RASHAVERAK

She is pregnant?

GEORGE

Yes.

Rashaverak seems to think about this for a long moment. Then he comes forward to join George at the railing.

RASHAVERAK

I came to watch one of our supply ships operate its stardrive....

Rashaverak points to the stars above them, his wing unfurling as he does so.

RASHAVERAK

It should take place any moment now, there -- in the region of the star cluster you call the Pleiades. Have you ever seen the phenomenon?

GEORGE

No. Except on television....

RASHAVERAK

It is an awesome sight.

Both of them, man and alien, look out at the night sky.

GEORGE

Do you ever feel lonely for your home?

RASHAVERAK

(beat)

Yes. Your world is strange to us, with its yellow sun and watery surface. A lovely planet, but alien....

GEORGE

I should apologize for the question I asked tonight....

CONTINUED

194

CONTINUED - 2

194

RASHAVERAK

That isn't necessary.

GEORGE

The answer from the Ouija Board...near as I could make out, it read 'the key to the over...' and then there was an 'm'.' What did you make of it?

Rashaverak turns to look at George, and pauses.

RASHAVERAK

I'm sorry, but I cannot interpret the answer.

GEORGE

Because it didn't mean anything to you, or because you don't want to?

RASHAVERAK

Because I am not permitted to.

GEORGE

Why?

Rashaverak looks away from him, back to stars.

RASHAVERAK

Despite the fact the human race persists in calling us 'Overlords'...we are not your masters, George. We are only supervisors. We do not determine policy. We simply administrate it.

GEORGE

Who does determine the policy?

195

CLOSE ON RASHAVERAK

195

looking up, his face showing almost no traces of humanity in the starlight. Several long moments pass, and he doesn't answer. Then:

RASHAVERAK

There! It's beginning....

196

THEIR POINT OF VIEW

196

The seam of light which we saw before appears across the heavens.

- 197 FAVORING GEORGE 197
as he watches the display, which is truly breathtaking.
- 198 SHOOTING PAST THE TWO OF THEM 198
as the stars above them are fused into a swelling
flash of brilliance, illuminating the landscape, casting
shadows, stitching the starlight into searing flame.
- 199 CLOSE ON RASHAVERAK 199
watching this, and smiling. It isn't exactly a smile, but
as close to one as an Overlord can get.

CUT TO

- 200 INT. THE CONTROL ROOM OF KARELLAN'S SPACESHIP - DAY 200
For the first time we see the nerve center of the ship in
its entirety. It is an awesome place, designed to accommodate
Overlords and not humans. Gravity is adjusted to alien spec-
ifications and we can therefore see the implications of the
Overlords' wings: there are no floors. Walkways are thin
and without railings. Seats are perches, similar to the one
in Jean's library. Three mammoth stalagmites rise from the
depths of the ship to form perches for the three Overlords
who control the craft, overseeing vast arrays of screens.
In the smokey red light the Overlords prefer, these three
aliens with their magnificent wings look like nothing so much
as a vision out of Dante or Blake.
- 201 FAVORING KARELLAN 201
standing on a panel made of some clear material, at first
presenting the illusion that he is floating in mid-air. Next
to him is Rashaverak.

KARELLAN

This woman, Jean Morel...she has
proven useful to us?

RASHAVERAK

Her library is the most complete
collection available on the subjects
of parapsychology and related fields.
When I contacted her to borrow several
volumes, she rather firmly refused.
I saw no harm in studying the works
there, at her home....

CONTINUED

KARELLAN

And?

RASHAVERAK

I've read more than half the library.
It has been a considerable ordeal.

KARELLAN

(dryly)

I can well imagine. Have you uncovered anything among the rubbish?

RASHAVERAK

Eleven cases of partial breakthrough
and twenty-seven probables over a
three hundred year period.

KARELLAN

And why has Jean Morel assembled
this library?

RASHAVERAK

Interest in the field...subcon-
sciously drawn to it, I'm certain ---

KARELLAN

She is twenty-seven years old...too
old to be a Prime Contact.

RASHAVERAK

She must be the channel through
which the information came.

KARELLAN

(dubiously)

Because she fainted?

RASHAVERAK

Because she is pregnant. And only
recently so. If I hadn't been
fortunate enough to learn this
fact, I would have completely mis-
interpreted the situation.

Karellan has turned to face Rashaverak.

KARELLAN

Excellent. We shall open Category
One. You must maintain surveillance
of her. I suppose the identity of
the father is dubious?

CONTINUED

201

CONTINUED - 2

201

RASHAVERAK

Happily, no. Unlike most women her age, she is not promiscuous. The father is George Greggson.

KARELLAN

The one who asked the question....

RASHAVERAK

Precisely.

KARELLAN

Then he, also, goes into Category One. What are his intentions towards her?

RASHAVERAK

There are several other women he has sexual relations with on an irregular basis. None is pregnant. He has signed a marriage contract with Jean Morel, which may preclude any further inseminations....

KARELLAN

I will want to be apprised of that situation.

RASHAVERAK

Should I in any way communicate the importance of this to either subject?

KARELLAN

No. In fact, I want you to have no further contact with them directly. We must allow the process to take its own course....

RASHAVERAK

Very well.

Rashaverak turns and leaves the shot. Karellan remains standing, looking at one of the screens with its image of the earth below.

CUT TO

202

INT. JEAN MOREL'S KITCHEN - DAY

202

George, looking tanned and considerably more relaxed, is fixing lunch. The kitchen does most of the work for him. George simply takes each already-prepared item from the various hot and cold synthesizers and arranges them on a tray. As he is about to carry the tray onto the terrace:

CONTINUED

202

CONTINUED

202

COMPUTER VOICE

Will you be having wine with luncheon?

GEORGE

I'll have a glass -- chilled, white.
Milk for Jean.

COMPUTER VOICE

Very good, sir.

Two compartment doors zip open and George adds the wine and the milk to the tray.

203

EXT. THE TERRACE - DAY

203

as he comes out. Jean is sitting in the sun, reading an illustrated brochure. She is seven months pregnant, aglow with health, more beautiful than ever. She casts a sidelong glance at George as he sets the tray on the table and removes the plates and glasses. She looks back at the brochure, managing to register a significant amount of displeasure.

GEORGE

So...what d'you think?

JEAN

(a little petulant)

I love this house...I like it here
...I don't want to move to someplace
called New Athens.

GEORGE

Come and eat.

Jean gets up, one hand unconsciously on her distended stomach. She leaves the brochure by her chair. George comes around and gets it, taking it back to the table with him. As he sits facing her, he puts the brochure between them.

JEAN

(plaintively)

It sounds primitive....

GEORGE

They have one of the finest hospitals
in the world.

JEAN

They don't have real kitchens....

GEORGE

(smiles)

Yes they do, and real food to cook in
them.

CONTINUED

He points with his fork to their lunch.

GEORGE

It's this stuff that isn't real.

JEAN

George -- why would I want to go back and live like they did a hundred years ago? I really think it's a little silly. No -- let me amend that. I think it's very silly, like converting to one of those new religions every six months. It's some kind of a fad.

GEORGE

It's not. It's a completely scientifically planned community. It has everything necessary for living and living well -- it just doesn't have all this....

He waves his arm to indicate the house around them.

GEORGE

...unnecessary technology.

JEAN

No hovercars, no servorobots, no teleterminals -- no television at all!

GEORGE

Right ---

JEAN

What are you going to do?

GEORGE

This.

He turns to a back page of the brochure and hands it to her. It's a picture of a modern theatre.

GEORGE

The theatre. The stage. Live performances. Real plays.

She looks at the picture and shakes her head.

JEAN

(reading)

'Seats seven hundred and fifty people.'

CONTINUED

203

CONTINUED - 2

203

JEAN (Cont'd)

(exasperated)

George...seven hundred and fifty million
people see your shows now.

GEORGE

That's a meaningless figure. I want an
audience, not statistics. And they're
writing plays -- new plays. It's a
creative environment.

JEAN

(after a beat)

I think you're upset because of the
critics. I know they haven't liked
the last few things you did....

GEORGE

That is not why I'm interested in New
Athens.

JEAN

Then I think you're trying to get me
away from my library. And my work.

GEORGE

(shakes his head)

You could take your library with you
if you wanted...but you haven't been
working at all since that night, at
the party.

JEAN

(softly)

I know.

She looks out over the ocean, her hand drifting down to her
belly again.

GEORGE

It's really for Jeffrey.

She looks back at him.

GEORGE

He'd have children to grow up with,
real schools to attend. He'd have
challenges to meet....

JEAN

(sarcastically)

Like riding bicycles instead of taking
hovercars?

CONTINUED

203

CONTINUED - 3

203

GEORGE

No. Like learning to figure out things for himself instead of pushing buttons and talking to computers.

(an appeal)

Jean...it's the first new thing the human race has attempted in fifty years. I'd like to be a part of it. I'd like my son to be a part of it.

Off her very dubious look,

CUT TO

204

EXT. NEW ATHENS - DAY - ON A HOUSE

204

under construction, which looks like any small, comfortable house in the twentieth century. Ben Saloman, one of the founders of New Athens, is giving Jean and George a tour.

SALOMAN

Most of our people like to build their own houses -- with help, of course. But it's not necessary. The first thing we tried to do in setting up New Athens was to keep the rules to a minimum.

JEAN

But you do have...well, laws and things like that, don't you?

SALOMAN

(smiles)

Very few, and they're almost never broken. Personally, I think that's the criterion for a good law.

JEAN

Can anyone just move in, if they want to?

SALOMAN

Not at all. We give preference to the creative arts and the natural sciences, and to families with children. The children are really the key. In one or two generations, we feel there can be a resurgence of real human creativity.

GEORGE

A renaissance....

CONTINUED

SALOMAN

We hope so.

(looks at
Jean)

And the children love it here.

He lets that thought sink in for a moment.

SALOMAN

Well. Shall we look at the inside of the house?

JEAN

I suppose.

Saloman walks toward the door. Jean hangs back and George stays with her. He takes her hand. She looks at him, a little frightened.

JEAN

You've made up your mind, haven't you?

GEORGE

(lying)

No. Not till you do.

She doesn't believe him. She looks at him earnestly.

JEAN

If we try it...and it doesn't work out...do we have to stay?

George smiles broadly and puts his arms around her.

GEORGE

Of course not.

She buries her head against him. He strokes her hair.

SALOMAN

(calling)

Come and see the kitchen! They've just put the stove in!

CONTINUED

204

CONTINUED - 2

204

JEAN
(looking up)
Stove?

Looking like she'd rather walk through a pit of vipers,
Jean goes toward the house with George.

DISSOLVE TO

205

INT. THE CARGO HOLD OF THE OVERLORD SUPPLY SHIP - LOOKING DOWN 205
at the brontosaurus, ghostly in the dim red light.

206

INT. THE COMPARTMENT

206

The elapsed-time counter says six weeks, two days, seven hours, four minutes, eighteen seconds have passed in subjective time since Jan left the earth seventy-five years ago. Jan's position in the contoured chair is unchanged. Only the faintest stubble of a beard can be seen on his face. All the life-signs are steady. As Jan breathes slowly, each breath coming every ten or so seconds....

CUT TO

207

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM OF THE SUPPLY SHIP

207

which is to all intents and purposes identical to the control room in Karellan's ship. Vindarten is one of the three pilots. Their bodies are all but motionless. Their hands and fingers make almost imperceptible motions as they control the ship, guiding it down mathematical pathways through theoretical realms of hyperspace. In a hemisphere in front of them are vision screens displaying configurations of astonishing complexity, shapes and colors meaningless to us. Short, sharp movements of their heads give an indication of the extent of concentration the three pilots are maintaining. Vindarten, in the center, looks in turn to each of his fellows. After a moment of silent consultation, a decision having been made, Vindarten extends an arm to manipulate a particular control ...and suddenly, the control room itself begins to dissolve away. Walls, floor and ceiling, the vision screens -- all are gone. Only the perches they sit on remain, rising up out of an infinite blackness. Now the other pilots make a rapid series of adjustments to their instruments, and the ship begins its transition back to normal space-time reality.

CONTINUED

207

CONTINUED

207

As the stardrive is disengaged, the inky darkness that now surrounds the ship comes into sudden life. A network of fire appears above and below the Overlord pilots, condensing and resolving itself first into star-trails, then into the stars themselves. An unfamiliar heaven revolves around us in a dizzying spiral, bringing into line of sight a massive, dull-red sun -- a red giant star, brooding and sullen. The ship plunges toward the star, still traveling at tremendous velocities. Its orientation changes as it banks around to pass the sun, which slides out of sight, revealing a planet on its far side -- the home of the Overlords. Their speed diminishes rapidly as the planet grows larger. Like the sun, its atmosphere is reddish-tinged. We can see it moving in great bands around its surface, and through its swirling clouds we can make out features on the planet's surface. There are no oceans, but incredible mountain ranges and deep valleys like fissures etched into the surface. Active volcanoes spew orange-yellow spumes of fire. As the planet swells in size until it dominates the field of view, Vindarten makes another adjustment and the structure of the ship begins to reappear, solidifying around them as the great ship brings its journey to an end. Now we can only see the planet on the main vision screen, and through the endlessly-moving clouds can get the impression of some vast city far beneath us.

Vindarten rises from his perch. His wings unfurl, almost as if he were stretching them in relief. As the others two pilots rise with him,

DISSOLVE TO

208

THE CARGO HOLD

208

where the unloading process has begun. Beams of energy are beginning to lift the diorama from the depths of the hold, gently carrying it toward its final destination.

209

INT. THE COMPARTMENT

209

The elapsed-time counter reads seven weeks and a day. For the first time since Jan injected the narcosamine, there are signs of activity on the life-support monitors. Jan's pulse and respiration are rising. Camera pans to him in the chair. He is stirring. Swimming up to consciousness from his deep slumber, Jan slowly opens his eyes. Clearly, he doesn't realize where he is. He tries to move and finds himself restrained by the straps holding him to the chair.

210

ON THE ARM OF THE CHAIR

210

is a button marked RELEASE, placed in such a position that it can't be reached accidentally. Jan has to move his wrist around within the strap to press it.

211

ON JAN

211

He tries to rise again, then falls back against the restraints. As Wainwright had predicted, he is weak as a kitten. For a moment he starts to doze off again, then snaps himself back to awareness.

JAN

I'm hungry....

The sound of his own voice helps to reorient him. He looks around, blinking at the dials and meters on the panels.

JAN

Strap release.

Remembering, he moves his hand around to the release button and presses it. Automatically, the straps unfasten and retract into the chair. Jan leans forward dizzily. He opens a compartment and takes out a container of nutrient liquid. Exhausted by the effort, he falls back in the chair and raises the container to his lips. The effect of the nutrient solution is almost instantaneous. His blood sugar levels and metabolic rates begin to rise.

DISSOLVE TO

212

INT. THE OVERLORD MUSEUM - NIGHT - ON THE BELLY OF THE DINOSAUR 21

We can hear the air-lock mechanism in the compartment operating. Then the skin on the monster's underbelly begins to tear from the inside. The light from the compartment spills onto the floor of the diorama. Jan continues to tear at the skin until he has a hole large enough to let himself through. Then he gingerly begins to lower himself to the surface of the "water" which the brontosaurus is standing in. He has to let himself fall the last few feet, but he lands lightly, the noise of his exit swallowed in silence. He stays crouched for a moment, no idea where he is or what to expect next. Covering his face is a breathing mask with hoses attached to a canister of oxygen.

213

HIS POINT OF VIEW

213

In the dim red light, all he can see is the diorama and several other of the earth exhibits. As far as he knows, he is still in the cargo hold of the ship.

214

MOVING WITH HIM

214

as he straightens up and reaches into a pocket of his safari jacket for a tiny tape recorder. He has to remove the breathing mask to speak into it. He takes a cautious breath of the alien air.

JAN

(into tape)

The atmosphere seems breathable enough -- thicker than earth's, and with an odd taste...it may not be harmful, but I'll keep my oxygen mask on.

(beat)

The gravity seems to be about one-fifth of a gee. I don't think I'm going to need my cane.

He looks back at the hole in the belly of the dinosaur.

JAN

I hope Professor Sullivan will forgive the damage...but of course, Sullivan's dead by now. I'm not going to try and disguise my presence here. I'll leave the compartment door open. Now to find an Overlord. I only hope I can recognize one when I find it....

He shuts off the recorder, takes a pencil flashlight and starts to go exploring.

215

HIGH SHOT

215

We can now see the earth exhibit in the museum has been completed. Jan, moving away from the diorama, enters a similar scene from a few million years later in earth's history: a group of cavemen around a simulated fire.

216

MOVING WITH JAN

216

He passes through this section and into a display of art works from ancient Greece and Rome. He moves in and out of pools of red light. His footsteps echo in what must be a cavernous space, but the light is too dim to reveal its dimensions and his pencil spot is lost in the murky shadows.

217

ANOTHER ANGLE

217

Jan starts to move diagonally away from the earth exhibits, into the darkness.

CONTINUED

217

CONTINUED

217

The footing beneath him changes. He is no longer within the display, but standing on a walkway intended for the visitors to the museum.

218

CLOSE ON JAN

218

He continues to step into the darkness when suddenly the floor is gone. Perilously close to losing his balance, he falls backwards. The walkway is only a meter wide. Easing himself to its edge, he looks over.

219

HIS POINT OF VIEW

219

A chasm lies beneath the walkway. We can see other levels of the museum far below us, a shadowy suggestion of great depth.

220

JAN

220

breathing hard, fighting acrophobia, waits till his heart stops pounding. He takes off his mask and turns on the recorder.

JAN

It would appear the Overlords
aren't afraid of heights. The low
gravity and the narrow path I'm on
suggests a race of beings which can
either cling to surfaces, or fly.

He puts the recorder away again and slips his breathing mask back on. Then he heads back to the solid footing of the earth exhibit.

DISSOLVE TO

221

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY DISPLAY

221

as Jan moves past such familiar artifacts as obsolete gasoline powered cars, a full-sized ICBM with nuclear warhead (one of the missiles fired when the Overlords first arrived?) and television sets.

222

CLOSE ON JAN

222

Reaching the end of the earth display, there is a darkness in front of him again. Remembering his last experience with an alien unknown, he moves into the darkness very slowly, watching each step as he takes it.

CONTINUED

222

CONTINUED

222

After several moments, he approaches an area looming with ill-defined shadows. Not until he's certain the floor won't desert him again does he raise his eyes. He is in the midst of these shadows. He throws his flashlight on the nearest one and, in spite of himself, yells in terror.

223

HIS POINT OF VIEW

223

Illuminated in the beam is a horribly-malevolent alien creature, taller than Jan and carrying some deadly-looking device in its claw. Jan jumps back. His beam sweeps over the other shadows. It is a group of aliens, insectoid and each carrying weapons.

224

FAVORING JAN

224

scrambling backwards. It takes him several moments to realize these creatures are immobile as statues, and several moments more to see that they are statues. Shuddering, Jan returns to the darkness.

JAN

(into the recorder)

I am beginning to think this is not the Overlord supply ship at all, but rather the museum on their home planet. From the size of it, it looks like I could wander around for years -- and since I don't know what the Overlords look like, I could find myself trying to make contact with God knows how many different aliens, none of them alive. My best course of action may be simply to wait in the earth exhibit until a real Overlord shows up...

He puts away the recorder and starts back toward the twentieth century.

CUT TO

225

THE BRONTOSAURUS - DAY

225

or what is the museum's approximation of daylight on earth, dim because of the Overlords' sensitive eyes but definitely yellow in color. Jan is inside his compartment, dropping things out to the floor: spare oxygen canisters, food supplies, extra film for his camera, his small suitcase.

CONTINUED

225

CONTINUED

225

Then he comes out himself, this time dropping from the hole lightly, his injured leg no hindrance to his movements. He reacts to the change in the light. He can begin to get an impression of the museum.

JAN

(into the tape)

They've turned the lights on. Maybe that means the museum is open for business.

DISSOLVE TO

226

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY DISPLAY

226

where Jan is sitting comfortably in a 1940's American living room, eating his lunch. The museum is no longer silent. We can hear humming noises and sounds of distant activity. The pathway that Jan nearly fell off last night is moving at a steady rate, and as Jan sits with his legs crossed, a pair of Overlords comes moving past the display on the moving strip. Jan stares at them in stunned disbelief, too startled to move.

227

MOVING WITH THE OVERLORDS

227

They stand motionless as the strip carries them along the display. As far as they can tell, Jan is part of it, only his moving head and eyes suggesting he is, in fact, alive.

228

FAVORING JAN

228

as the shock of their unexpected appearance holds him in thrall. Not until they've passed out of sight does he remember to cry out:

JAN

Hey! Wait a minute! I'm not supposed to be here!

He walks to the strip and looks down it. The Overlords are rapidly departing and don't look back at him. Jan walks quickly to his chair and gets his recorder.

JAN

My God...now I realize why they wouldn't show us what they looked like. They're the perfect image of Satan himself. Magnificent-looking creatures, but frightening as hell, literally.

CONTINUED

228

CONTINUED

228

JAN (Cont'd)

I suppose they thought I was part of the display. I wonder if they ever do bring back live specimens? It never occurred to me I might spend the rest of my life in a zoo....

He goes back to the strip and looks in the other direction. Far in the distance, another Overlord is coming toward him, standing as motionless as the last two. Jan starts to wave his arms. The standing figure draws nearer. When it's thirty yards away, an instinctive fear makes Jan back away from the strip. He forces himself to continue waving. As the Overlord moves in front of him:

JAN

Hello -- I know you can't understand me, but look -- I'm not part of the museum.

The Overlord is Vindarten. He steps regally off the moving strip.

VINDARTEN

Hello, Mister Rodericks.

Jan stares at him in speechless amazement.

VINDARTEN

My name is Vindarten. We have been waiting for you to awaken. Unfortunately, this section of the museum was closed while the earth display was assembled...and we didn't expect you quite so soon.

JAN

How long have you known I was here...?

VINDARTEN

From the beginning, of course. You are in good health, I hope?

JAN

Yes. I'm fine. Just a little surprised.

VINDARTEN

We have prepared a habitat for you. A number of our scientists are very eager to meet you. Shall we go?

CONTINUED

228

CONTINUED - 2

228

JAN

Let me get my things. I'm sorry if
I've disturbed the display.

VINDARTEN

It's I who regret not being here to
greet you.

Jan quickly packs up the things from the compartment in the pockets of his jacket and in his suitcase. Ready, he looks questioningly at Vindarten, who goes to the moving strip and waits for Jan to join him. Jan looks at the thin foothold, which seems even less safe in motion.

JAN

I guess you don't need any railings.
If you fall off, you fly....

VINDARTEN

Give me your hand.

He extends his talons. It takes Jan a moment to accustom himself to the idea of grasping the hand of a devil, but he finally does so. Then, together, they step onto the strip. Vindarten continues to hold Jan's hand to steady him as they are whisked away. Camera holds on them as they grow smaller and smaller.

DISSOLVE TO

229

INT. JEAN MOREL'S KITCHEN - DAY

229

Jean is fixing a picnic lunch. The kitchen is a pleasant, sun-washed room with a view out the window to the sea. Jean's hair, still long, is gathered behind her in a ponytail, and there are flecks of grey in it that weren't there when we last saw her. For all the horror she once felt at the idea of an old-fashioned kitchen, it's obvious she has adjusted to it happily. She is chopping vegetables for a salad. A timer goes off and she turns to the stove, taking a freshly baked loaf of bread out of the oven.

230

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

230

It is actually more a cottage than a house, built from stucco and whitewashed, one story high and cheerful; it would be at home overlooking the Mediterranean instead of the Pacific. It sits on a hilltop, a narrow path not intended for motorized vehicles leading to it.

CONTINUED

230

CONTINUED

230

Jeffrey Greggson, seven years old, is getting his bicycle ready for a trip. He is tow-headed and looks healthy. He has inherited his mother's good looks and his father's intelligence. Jean comes out of the house, Jeffrey's picnic lunch neatly wrapped in plastic. He has a pack on his back and she puts the sandwiches into it.

JEAN

What have you got in here?

JEFFREY

All my specimen jars. I'm going down to the tide pools.

JEAN

Well, have a good time. Be careful on the rocks. And don't go swimming by yourself.

JEFFREY

(exasperated)

Mom....

JEAN

Those are the rules.

He nods. She bends to kiss him and he gives her a hug. Then he wheels his bike to the path and takes off. She watches him disappear down the hill.

231

INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

231

as she comes back inside. The furniture in the living room is rustic. There are, here and there, reminders of the vast technology of the future -- in the design of the lamps, for instance, and in the complex electronic telephone -- but other than these isolated things, this room could have existed two hundred years before. On her way back into the kitchen, Jean suddenly pauses. A shudder seems to run through the house briefly. Glasses rattle in the kitchen and the house groans. Puzzled, Jean waits, but nothing else happens. She shrugs and goes into the kitchen.

232

EXT. THE HOUSE - TWO HOURS LATER

232

George is bicycling up the hill on his way home for lunch. He is wearing shorts and his shirt is tied around his waist. He looks tanned and fit. The long haul up the hill has barely winded him.

CONTINUED

232

CONTINUED

232

On the level ground, he pedals faster, past the vegetable garden and the flower garden and up to the house.

233

INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

233

as he enters.

JEAN

(from the
kitchen)

Hi, sweetie!

GEORGE

Hello! Where's Jeffrey?

JEAN

Out exploring. He took a picnic
lunch.

George goes into the kitchen, kisses his wife, then comes back through the living room into

234

INT. THE NURSERY - DAY

234

where a nine month old girl lies in a crib, staring up at the ceiling and gurgling happily, playing with her toes. The ceiling and walls of the room are painted murals, and there are toddler's toys all over the floor. George stands over his baby daughter and looks down at her. He smiles, suffused with love.

GEORGE

How's my little girl? How's the
Moppet today? Give daddy a smile?
Little smile?

He tickes her tummy and she laughs and burbles at him.

235

INT. THE DINING ROOM - DAY

235

Jean is putting out lunch. George comes back and they embrace, eyes closed, content with each other. Then they sit to eat.

CONTINUED

235

CONTINUED

235

JEAN

Was she asleep?

George shakes his head, cutting the bread and buttering it.

JEAN

I don't understand it.. She never cries or complains or gets bored. Just when she's hungry, she raises a fuss....

GEORGE

Jeffrey was the same.

JEAN

It just doesn't seem right for a nine-month old baby -- I mean, what could she be thinking about?

GEORGE

(grins)

How lucky she is?

JEAN

(smiles back)

How are the rehearsals going?

Mouth full, George nods. Then:

GEORGE

Very well. That new girl I chose for the lead is marvelous. Some of my dialogue needs a little help....

JEAN

But at least it's your dialogue.

GEORGE

The second act's weak. I can really see that now ---

He breaks off. An ominous rumbling sound seems to rise up around them and somewhere, far in the distance, dogs are barking. The rumbling grows louder and louder, and then the house begins to shake. The glasses on the table dance. Both Jean and George go pale.

GEORGE

It's an earthquake!

JEAN

Jenny!

CONTINUED

235

CONTINUED - 2

235

George jumps to his feet and rushes for the study. Jean stands, not sure what to do. George rushes back carrying the baby.

GEORGE

Outside!

236

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

236

as they come out quickly. We can hear all the windows in the house rattling. The ground heaves slightly, the trees shake, and then the earthquake subsides. For several long moments, they stand there listening to the silence. Then:

GEORGE

Take her. I'll find out what happened.

He hands the baby to Jean and goes into the house.

237

ON JEAN AND THE BABY

237

Jennifer Anne is whimpering, her face screwed up and starting to redden, on the verge of tears. Jean rocks her and makes soothing sounds.

238

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

238

George is at the electronic console. Already displayed on its screen is information about the location of the epicenter of the quake, its magnitude -- and something else. As George reads the screen with a worried expression,

239

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

239

Jean is walking with Jenny and crooning. George comes back outside.

GEORGE

It was a hundred and fifty miles out to sea, to the west. It wasn't large enough to cause any damage on the island, but they're worried about a tidal wave.
(then)

CONTINUED

239

CONTINUED

239

GEORGE (Cont'd)

Exactly where did Jeffrey say he
was going?

JEAN

Down to the lagoon....

As she says the words, the horror of it hits her.

JEAN

Oh God -- he's below sea level.

They stare at each other. Then George turns and runs back
into the house.

CUT TO

240

EXT. THE LAGOON - DAY

240

Jeffrey Rodericks is standing in water to his ankles, looking
up at a rockslide a hundred yards above him. As the last
of the rocks tumble down the granite face of the cliff and
into the lagoon, Jeffrey turns to one of the specimen bottles
near him which, balanced on a rock, fell during the quake
and broke. Leaning over, he begins to collect the shards
of glass.

241

CLOSE ON JEFFREY

241

as he carefully picks out the slivers of glass from the moss-
covered rock and deposits them in the bottom of the broken
bottle. Leaning over and concentrating, it's a moment before
he realizes something very strange is happening to the water
around him. It is flowing outwards, towards the sea....

242

FAVORING JEFFREY

242

as he stands up. There are odd gurgling noises coming from
the rocks and coral as the waters retreat, exposing things
which have never seen the sunlight before. Now the water
is rushing out more quickly, revealing a beach with a number
of startled fish flapping helplessly on the sand. Jeffrey is
amazed and fascinated. What's happening hasn't dawned on him.
He is actually about to walk out into this newly-formed and
short-lived beach when:

CONTINUED

242

CONTINUED

242

RASHAVERAK'S VOICE

Jeffrey -- no. You can't stay down
here, you'll be drowned.

Jeffrey freezes. He looks around for the source of the
voice.

RASHAVERAK'S VOICE

Go up the cliff, quickly. Run,
Jeffrey!!!

Puzzled and frightened, Jeffrey stands still.

RASHAVERAK'S VOICE

RUN!!!

At that moment we can hear a terrible roar. Jeffrey whirls
to look out to sea.

243

HIS POINT OF VIEW

243

The tsunami is coming, rising up in an awesome wall of
foaming water half a mile away.

244

BACK TO SCENE

244

as Jeffrey runs. He scrambles over the slippery rocks till
he makes the path which brought him down to the lagoon. On
surer footing, he dashes for safety.

245

ON THE TIDAL WAVE

245

still cresting, rushing toward the land, its underside an
awful blue-green-black in color.

246

WITH JEFFREY - SEVERAL SHOTS

246

as the terror grabs him, and he runs for his life. There
are boulders in the road, thrown there by the quake. They
slow his progress. Then the path is wider, switching back
on itself as it climbs the steep cliff. He reaches the
spot where he left his bicycle. He pauses, out of breath,
wondering if he should try to take the bike. He looks back.

247

HIS POINT OF VIEW

247

The tsunami towers above him -- high above him, blocking
the sky.

248

JEFFREY

248

turns again. Behind him, the wave is starting to break, a crashing sound within its terrible roar. There's no way he can make high ground in time, and he knows it. He stops and turns, for one moment an awful bravery forcing him to stare at the incoming wave. Then he covers his face with his hands and waits to die.

249

ON THE TSUNAMI

249

as it thunders down onto the lagoon and the cliffs with the force of an atom bomb, throwing spume and spray high above it, tossing boulders as if they were pebbles, tearing out one entire section of the face of the cliff.

250

ON JEFFREY

250

exactly as he was, hands blocking his eyes. He lowers his hands, and stares in disbelief.

251

HIS POINT OF VIEW

251

The now-spent fury of the giant wave is below him. In one instand he has been transported to the highest spot on the cliffs, out of danger.

252

HIGH ANGLE - ON THE LAGOON

252

as the waters tear at the rocks furiously, lashing out in the last throes of their moment of power. Places which for centuries have been above the water line now stream with water. As the sea retreats again, we can see the wreckage of Jeffrey's bicycle, twisted and mangled, its spokes like broken bones.

253

ON JEFFREY

253

staring down at it, then looking up at the sky in wonder.

JEFFREY

(a whisper)

Thank you....

DISSOLVE TO

254

EXT. THE ROAD TO THE LAGOON - DAY

254

or what's left of it, several sections having fallen from the combined shocks of the earthquake and the tidal wave.

CONTINUED

254

CONTINUED

254

A rescue party is making its way down the cliff face, a dangerous undertaking since the path has been almost completely wiped out. Far below, the wreckage of the bicycle is a grim harbinger of what they can expect when they reach the water level.

255

FAVORING JEAN

255

standing on the road, George's arms around her, both of them looking down as the rescue team makes its slow descent. Jean's expression is hopeless. She has steeled herself for tragedy.

JEFFREY

Mommy!

As one, Jean and George turn. Jeffrey is climbing down to the road from above them. As he runs into his mother's arms and George embraces the two of them,

CUT TO

256

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

256

Jeffrey is sitting on the sofa between his mother and father.

JEFFREY

...and then the voice told me to run.

GEORGE

Had you ever heard the voice before?

JEFFREY

No. It was a funny voice. It scared me.

GEORGE

So you ran....

JEFFREY

(nods)

But the wave was too big. I knew I couldn't make it. And I was really scared. I closed my eyes.

Jeffrey seems to look away for a moment, remembering what happened.

JEFFREY

Then...I don't know....

(looks toward
the nursery)

I was thinking about Jenny....

CONTINUED

256

CONTINUED

256

JEAN

Your sister?

JEFFREY

(nods)

It was like -- she was there with me...and then I heard the wave hit the rocks, and I opened my eyes, and I was up on the cliffs, way above it....

He looks at each of them in turn, wide-eyed.

JEFFREY

What happened?

GEORGE

We don't know, Jeff. Maybe some day we'll find out.

He looks at Jean, both of them worried.

GEORGE

Go to bed. You're exhausted.

He gets up. He hugs each of them, and they cling to each other. Then George goes with him into the bedroom.

257

INT. JEFFREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

257

Jeffrey throws his clothes on the floor and gets under the covers. By the time George has picked up after him, he's sound asleep. George runs a hand through his hair, smiles down at him, and leaves.

258

INT. THE NURSERY - NIGHT

258

Jennifer Anne is sleeping happily, her rattle lying in the crib next to her chubby little fingers. There is a smile on her face. George, looking in, bends over to kiss her forehead and then gently shuts the door as he goes.

259

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

259

Jean is standing at the bookshelves which line one entire wall. At least a small portion of her library has come with her to New Athens. She has a volume out and is glancing through it. As George returns, she puts the book back. He comes over to her and she melts into his arms, chilled.

CONTINUED

259

CONTINUED

259

JEAN

Do you think it was Rashaverak who saved him today?

George nods solemnly.

GEORGE

Ever since that night, at the party... I've felt there was some connection -- between you fainting, and the Overlords, and Jeffrey, even if he wasn't Jeffrey yet.

JEAN

But if it was Rashaverak, it means they've been watching us. Why?

GEORGE

I don't know. But it bothers me.

JEAN

(looks at him)

Strange...it frightens me somehow, but it doesn't -- scare me, if that makes any sense. I feel something cold, and impersonal...inexorable, but not evil. As if Jeffrey were important to them....

She snuggles closer to him. They stand in a pool of light from the single lamp on in the room, clinging to each other and feeling very vulnerable....

DISSOLVE TO

260

THE FIRST DREAM SEQUENCE

260

We are motionless on a vast plain. The horizon is far, far away. This is a planet larger than the earth. There are mountains dotting the plain, and the mountains are burning. The flames are blue, cold and pale. They lick up the mountains to dissipate in a thick, yellow atmosphere. And then a sun comes up, rising quickly, impossibly huge, its color a deeper blue, blazing furiously. As this sun rises, we begin to move, forward past the nearer mountains, traveling toward the sun as it ascends....

JEFFREY'S VOICE

Mommeee....!

CUT TO

261 INT. JEAN AND GEORGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 261

as they both awake at the same instant, startled.

GEORGE

Did you hear that?

Jean nods and gets up to check on their son. George sits up in bed, yawning, rubbing his hair. After a beat, Jean comes back.

JEAN

Sound asleep.

She climbs back into bed. They settle into each other's arms.

GEORGE

I just had a dream....

Jean turns to look at him.

JEAN

What was it?

GEORGE

I really don't know, but it was incredibly real...a blue sun, mountains that were burning....

262 VERY CLOSE ON JEAN 262

Cold terror is in her eyes. She turns away from George. We can hear him yawn again.

GEORGE

I felt like I was there. Far away.
And lonely.

She looks into the darkness and doesn't reply.

DISSOLVE TO

263 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY 263

as George rides his bicycle up the path on his daily pilgrimage home for lunch. He leans the bike against the wall by the front door.

264 INT. THE HOUSE - DAY 264

as he comes inside.

CONTINUED

264

CONTINUED

264

GEORGE

What's for lunch? Honey?

JEAN'S VOICE

Come in here.

There is something cold and flat in her tone. Frowning,
George walks into

265

INT. JEFFREY'S ROOM - DAY

265

Jean is in the doorway, arms folded. She looks at George
as he comes in. Jeffrey is on the floor, crayons scattered
around him, working on a picture.

JEFFREY

(not looking up)

Hi, daddy.

GEORGE

Hi, Jeff.

Returning Jean's grave look, he mouths the word "What?" She
points at the picture Jeff is drawing. George goes to look
over his shoulder.

266

ON THE PICTURE

266

It is a crude but essentially exact representation of what
we saw in the dream the night before.

267

GEORGE

267

turns to look at his wife.

GEORGE

(slowly)

Did you see it too...last night?

Jean nods. Now Jeffrey, the picture finished, gets up,
holding it proudly.

JEFFREY

Can I put it up on my wall?

GEORGE

Jeff...did you dream that picture,
last night?

Jeffrey nods.

CONTINUED

267

CONTINUED

267

GEORGE

And did it seem like...you were
really there?

JEFFREY

(thinks about it)

Yeah, in a way.

GEORGE

And did you get scared, and call
for your mommy?

JEFFREY

I wasn't scared. It was just such
a strange place....

He looks at the picture for a moment, puzzling at it. Then:

JEFFREY

I think I'll try and go there
again....

Jean wraps her arms around herself. George looks at her with
growing alarm.

CUT TO

268

INT. AN OVERLORD INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

268

so called because the perch Rashaverak sits on is recessed
into the floor, bringing his head to the same level as George's.

RASHAVERAK

We have met before. I am Rashaverak.

GEORGE

I remember you, very well.

George looks at the impassive, alien face for a long moment.

GEORGE

Was it you or one of the Overlords
who saved my son's life?

RASHAVERAK

No...although I did try to warn
him of the danger. I told him
to run.

CONTINUED

268

CONTINUED

268

GEORGE

Then you have been watching us....

RASHAVERAK

Not you. Your children.

GEORGE

(a note of
desperation)

Why?

Rashaverak doesn't expand.

GEORGE

Who saved him? How did he get to
the top of the hill?

Rashaverak turns away. George makes a fist, and in frustration pounds on his leg.

GEORGE

Dammit -- something is happening to
my son. And to me, and my wife...if
you know what it is...if you've been
watching us...then tell me ---

RASHAVERAK

I can't tell you, Mister Greggson,
because I do not know what it is --
except that it's something we have
been trying to understand for a
very long time....

CUT TO

269

THE CONTROL ROOM OF KARELLAN'S SHIP

269

as Karellan looks at Jeffrey's drawing.

KARELLAN

So it is beginning at last....

RASHAVERAK

Yes. I've asked the father to write
down details of each new dream and
pass them on to me...and also to en-
courage Jeffrey to make more drawings
like this one. I think we can chart
their progress rather accurately.

KARELLAN

Perhaps we should interview the boy.

CONTINUED

269

CONTINUED

269

RASHAVERAK

I've considered it. In my opinion,
however, he is not Subject Zero.

Karellan turns at this.

RASHAVERAK

He has a younger sister. I believe it
was she who actually made the Break-
through at the moment her brother was
about to be killed.

KARELLAN

Then let us wait.
(looks at
the picture)
Alphanidon Two....

RASHAVERAK

(an Overlord nod)

The sulphur mountains are unmistakeable.
By Mister Greggson's description, the
sun rose quickly. Alphanidon Two has a
very slow rotation. Their time scale
must have been distorted.

KARELLAN

Interesting.
(hands the picture
back)
It shouldn't be much longer now....

DISSOLVE TO

270

THE SECOND DREAM SEQUENCE

270

This time we are in the depths of space, with no landscape
surrounding us, no planet's surface beneath us...only stars
against a velvet darkness, and hanging against the stars a
great red sun, beating like a giant heart. Huge and tenuous,
it shrinks, brightening at the same time, climbing the spec-
trum to hover at the fringe of yellow, beating more quickly.
Then it cools again and expands, becoming a ragged, flame-
red cloud....

DISSOLVE TO

271

INT. JEFFREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

271

A series of Jeffrey's drawings details the sequence of images
we have just seen, tacked on his wall as if they were a
project in an art class.

CONTINUED

271

CONTINUED

271

Jeffrey is asleep in his bed. Despite the fact his eyes are closed, the expression on his face is one of concentration, and excitement. As a dog will chase after rabbits in its sleep, Jeffrey's dreaming is an active thing. His brow is furrowed with thought, there is a smile on his lips. George stands in the doorway watching his son.

272

INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

272

Jean is curled in bed, virtually in a fetal position, waiting for George. When he returns to the bedroom, she speaks to him plaintively:

JEAN

Come to sleep.

George hesitates before getting into bed with her. It's obvious they both dread the dreams they are being forced to share with Jeffrey. Finally, George gets under the blankets with her. They entwine themselves in each other's arms protectively. As their eyes close....

DISSOLVE TO

273

THE THIRD DREAM SEQUENCE

273

It could almost be earth: a white sun and a blue sky flecked with clouds, racing before a storm; an ocean torn into spray by the wind. But nothing moves. The scene is frozen, as if we saw it in a flash of lightning. Far, far away on the horizon is something not of earth -- a line of misty columns, tapering slightly as they soar out of the sea to lose themselves in the clouds. Spaced with perfect precision along the rim of the planet, they are too huge to be artificial, too regular to be natural....

DISSOLVE TO

274

INT. KARELLAN'S CONTROL ROOM - DAY

274

A star-map of the galaxy is projected on the main screen. Karellan and Rashaverak stand looking at it. Winking points of light, connected to the earth at the rim of the galaxy's spiral, pinpoint the actual locations of Jeffrey's dreams. His drawings are in front of them, each more precise than the last.

RASHAVERAK

Sideneus IV and the Pillars of the Dawn....

CONTINUED

274

CONTINUED

274

KARELLAN

They have reached the center of the galaxy.

RASHAVERAK

And it's barely begun. Each journey takes them further from the earth. You'll notice time is becoming increasingly arbitrary. The second dream was of a typical pulsating variable star, seen under tremendous time-acceleration. We've assumed it's Alpha Orionis, although it could be any one of the classical Cepheids.

KARELLAN

(a beat)

How are the parents reacting to this?

RASHAVERAK

Not well....

CUT TO

275

EXT. A HILLSIDE ON NEW ATHENS - DAY

275

George has taken Jennifer Anne out for a walk. Now he sits overlooking the sea, bouncing his daughter on his knees, looking into her bright, innocent face as she screams in delight. He looks haggard, the lines in his face more deeply drawn. We get the feeling he is transferring his affections to his daughter as Jeffrey becomes more strange to him. He holds Jennifer gently, his hands encompassing her tiny body, looking at her with complete and helpless love.

276

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

276

as George returns, Jennifer in a carrier on his back. Jeffrey is playing with some friends in front of the house. George stands to watch him. He looks like any other seven-year old. He waves at his father and George waves back, but the smile on George's face is forced.

DISSOLVE TO

277

THE FOURTH DREAM SEQUENCE

277

The star is a searing ghost at the frontiers of the ultra-violet, a nightmare-vision no opium eater could have ever hallucinated. Long fingers of whitest flame reach out to the

CONTINUED

277

CONTINUED

277

surface of the planet, which is absolutely flat, crushed by an overwhelming gravity. Something is moving on the surface -- life forms which can be no more than a few centimeters in thickness and yet are alive, a myriad of geometrical patterns that crawl and move and change their colors.

DISSOLVE TO

278

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM

278

where the same star is on the screen, seen from several million kilometers away, its single giant planet like a black disk silhouetted against its fiery surface.

RASHAVERAK

Hexanerax Two and nowhere else in the galaxy.

The screen changes to show us the star-map again. Now a light is winking at the furthest end of the spiral away from earth.

RASHAVERAK

It is located on the furthest turn of the galactic spiral. Only a handful of our ships have reached it...and none has ever dared to risk a landing. To think that life-forms could exist in such an environment....

KARELLAN

If those...patterns...are intelligent, communication would pose a fascinating problem.

RASHAVERAK

I have already relayed this information to our astronomers. Obviously, they haven't been thorough enough in their investigations....

DISSOLVE TO

279

INT. THE NURSERY - NIGHT

279

Everything is silent in the house. The camera moves in and down on the crib. Jennifer Anne lies wide awake, her eyes open and staring -- but not up at the ceiling, covered as it is with gaily-painted patterns and cartoon images. Instead, she seems to be looking through the ceiling, and she has a small frown of concentration on her tiny forehead. Her fists clenched, her eyes wide and staring, as we move into her face....

DISSOLVE TO

280

THE FIFTH DREAM SEQUENCE

280

Six colored suns share the sky. The planet caught in their infinitely complex web of gravitational fields, tossed from one star to the other across the aeons, frozen in the outer darkness or seared on passage through the heart of the star system, still supports a kind of life -- great multifaceted crystals, some attached to the planet's surface, some adrift in the gravity fields, veins of minerals glowing within them. Their world loops and spirals through an orbit which will never once repeat itself. The crystals grow, expand, collapse, wait out the cold and darkness, thrive in the light. Inter-connecting them are traveling sparks of energy, neural connections a billion of which might make up a single thought....

281

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM

281

The image of this strange world is frozen on the main screen. Karellan looks at it for a long moment.

KARELLAN

I have never heard of such a world.

RASHAVERAK

I've searched our records. We have no knowledge of that combination of suns.

KARELLAN

Then they have left our galaxy.

RASHAVERAK

There is no doubt of it. They may even have gone beyond the limits of the Universe as we know it.

RASHAVERAK

(beat)

I feel it cannot be much longer now.
I think we should make contact....

KARELLAN

Not yet. We must wait for a complete breakthrough. If we intervene too soon....

(looks back

at the screen)

After all, they are only dreaming.
This is merely the first phase.
When the change comes, we will know it.

Karellan makes a small motion and the image on the screen changes. Now we are looking down on the earth, banded in darkness, the lights from the cities on the Atlantic coast like jewels.

CONTINUED

281

CONTINUED

KARELLAN

They have very little time left as it is. Once it begins, the contact will spread quickly. And we will have to move quickly, also.

RASHAVERAK

I am beginning to feel great pity for these people....

KARELLAN

I have always felt it.

Karellan moves his hand again. A starfield replaces the image of the earth.

KARELLAN

Soon, we will be going home....

The camera moves into the starfield as we

DISSOLVE TO

282

THE OVERLORD'S HOME PLANET

282

with its two moons, slowly turning against the backdrop of the red giant star which is its sun. As one of the Overlord ships moves away from the planet and past the camera, off on some unimagineable voyage,

CUT TO

283

EXT. A TERRACE - DAY

283

Jan Rodericks is standing looking out over the city. He is a few feet away from the edge of the terrace, which has no railing. The strains of a Mozard symphony swell up behind him, contrasting with

284

HIS POINT OF VIEW

284

of the city beneath him. At first glance, it is the perfect image of some medieval hell. From Stygian depths several miles beneath us, slender rocky columns rise up through a tenebrous atmosphere, each a building either carved from the natural rock of the planet or constructed to appear as such. There are doors and windows irregularly spaced in the columns. A steady wind is blowing. The air is thick and heavy, moving sluggishly in the wind. Broad bands of it coalesce at various altitudes, looking very much like the smoke of infernal fires, bathed as this world is in the dull red light of the sun. We can well imagine mighty furnaces in the depths of the city, fueled by the labors of damned souls.

CONTINUED

284

CONTINUED

284

The openings in the spired columns of the city serve a practical purpose. We can see the great winged creatures that live here soaring effortlessly through the drifting atmosphere, rising on the updrafts from column to column or perched vulture-like on parapets miles above the surface. The tops of the columns are lost in heavy cloud-cover, which all but obscures the sun itself and the two giant moons.

285

BACK TO JAN

285

who, having found the air breathable enough, has discarded his oxygen mask. The music comes to an end. He turns and goes back into

286

INT. JAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

286

which seems to be hewn from the rock itself. The room is bare and functional. A bed, table and chair have been provided, probably constructed especially for him. Tacked onto the wall by the bed are the scenes from earth which he brought with him. On the table are two books, a pen and paper, his camera and tape recorder. Jan goes and sits on the bed. He looks at the pictures on the wall and we can immediately tell what he is feeling -- homesickness. Then he rises and sits at the table. He changes tapes in the recorder.

JAN

(into the tape)

Vindarten is late today. I wonder if an hour or two of earth-time could mean anything to beings that live for millions of years...? Probably not.

(sighs)

I know they don't mean to keep me a prisoner in this room. It's hardly their fault I was born without wings. Maybe, eventually, they might build me some kind of flyer so I could at least make some explorations of my own. I've been prodded and poked at and damn near dissected by the Overlord scientists...they seemed so eager to get their hands on me, I'm surprised Karellan didn't send them back a specimen by design. Although, perhaps he did....

(beat)

This city is so large, I could spend a lifetime exploring it, and then there's the rest of the planet to consider.

CONTINUED

286

CONTINUED

286

JAN (Cont'd)

And the museum! I used up all the film for my camera on the second visit. Strange, though, how I found myself returning to the earth exhibit, just to be surrounded with familiar things....

(looks out
the window)

I think the main psychological problem is the colors -- this red sun tends to make everything monochromatic. I'm sure the Overlords see more than I do, and hear more...I miss the blue sky, and the subtle shades of color we take for granted at home ---

Jan breaks off at the flutter of leathery wings at his window.

287

FAVORING JAN

287

Vindarten is perched on the edge of the balcony, his great wings folding back into his body. As he steps into the room, Jan shuts off the recorder.

VINDARTEN

You are well rested, I hope, Jan?

JAN

Very well, thank you. What's on the agenda today? More tests ---?

VINDARTEN

No. Our director of alien studies has asked me to thank you for your cooperation. You won't be subjected to any more prodding and poking....

JAN

You were listening....

VINDARTEN

Of course. I am responsible for you.

JAN

I'm sure I've been quite a nuisance.

VINDARTEN

Not at all. Shall we go?

He extends his arm in an almost affectionate gesture, as a father to his child.

CONTINUED

287

CONTINUED

287

JAN

I miss my camera. Have you had any luck making film for it?

VINDARTEN

We should have more for you soon. And what I am about to show you today, unusual as it is, we could not permit you to photograph....

Vindarten steps back onto the parapet, his arm still extended. Jan comes up beside him, approaching that sheer drop with care and reluctance. He steps up close to Vindarten, whose arm moves around him. The great wing seems to enfold him briefly, then extends itself as Vindarten takes one single step into the abyss before them and, holding Jan effortlessly, soars.

288

EXT. THE CITY - DAY

288

as Jan and Vindarten drop away from the parapet in a graceful arc, swooping down to catch an air current, then riding it up and across the cityscape until they dwindle to a speck, like a dust mote on the wind.

JAN'S VOICE

At first I couldn't imagine what there could be on this world which even an Overlord would call unusual....

DISSOLVE TO

289

INT. AN ELEVATOR - DAY

289

ascending endlessly, or so it seems. Jan stands by Vindarten as the platform beneath them shoots skyward, passing through successive layers of cloud. Gradually, the city drops away beneath them until only the tallest of its spires still reach through the clouds...and then these, too, dwindle as the platform continues to rise.

JAN'S VOICE

...but Vindarten took me to some kind of an elevator, and as we rode upwards, it became apparent our destination was beyond even the range of his wings.

290

EXT. THE OBSERVATION POST - DAY

290

which is a kind of crow's nest, higher than the tallest of the city's buildings.

CONTINUED

290

CONTINUED

Etched into a single, rocky pinnacle reaching out of the eternal cloud cover that surrounds the planet, it thrusts up like a finger pointed to the heavens. We can see the elevator platform making its final ascent and coming to a stop. Vindarten leads Jan onto the craggy floor.

291

FAVORING JAN

291

as he gets as close to the edge of the pinnacle as he dares and looks down.

292

HIS POINT OF VIEW

292

The column of the elevator disappears into the clouds, which seem to be a mile or more beneath them now.

JAN'S VOICE

At first I thought it was the highest point on their planet....

293

BACK TO JAN

293

as he begins to walk around the perimeter of the deck, looking out at a view which extends to the horizon and beyond, clearly showing the curvature of the planet. Here and there in the very far distance are clusters of towers, the tops of other cities, barely breaking through the clouds.

JAN'S VOICE

...and the view was appropriately spectacular. I could see other cities, tantalizing suggestions of the full extent of their culture and technology. And, for the first time, I could clearly see their sun.

Moving now to the second quarter of the circular deck, we can look out on the red giant star, partly risen over an unbroken sea of rose colored clouds. One of the moons is passing swiftly across its surface. We can see the sun's corona and its solar flares, licking out into space.

JAN'S VOICE

It is an old star, nearing the end of its lifetime. As I also learned, it is not the first sun the Overlords have called their own. Their race is so unimaginably old, they have been forced to find other worlds to inhabit, as they will again in a few more million years.

CONTINUED

293

CONTINUED

293

JAN'S VOICE (Cont'd)

I had puzzled over how such a large planet could have this very low gravity, but the answer, of course, is that the Overlords have modified it to their needs.

Now Vindarten is leading Jan one hundred eighty degrees away from the sun, and what Jan sees as he turns in this direction astounds him.

294

HIS POINT OF VIEW

294

At an unguessable distance away is a mountain -- a single, serrated peak climbing up over the edge of the world. It is red in color and its outlines are shifting as we watch, perhaps a mirage caused by its distance from us, perhaps not....

JAN'S VOICE

But it wasn't to admire the view that Vindarten brought me to this place. He steered me at last in a certain direction, and then stepped away from me. There was something respectful about his behavior, almost reverent.

Jan steps into the shot, so captivated by what he's seeing that he forgets to be wary of the precipice.

JAN'S VOICE

It took me several moments to fully grasp what I was seeing. My mind was telling me, logically, that the mountain was on the horizon...but then I saw that it was beyond the horizon, rising up literally from the other side of the world.

Jan turns abruptly, about to say something to Vindarten. The Overlord is looking at the mountain, his head tilted back, apparently unaware of Jan's presence. Jan turns around again, and realizes why Vindarten was ignoring him. The mountain is continuing to change. Its color is becoming less somber, angrier -- and now yellow streams of lava are moving on its flanks.

295

CLOSER ON THE MOUNTAIN

295

as we realize that the lava is flowing up the sides of the mountain...and something else is rising as well:

CONTINUED

295

CONTINUED

295

from the ruby clouds around the mountain's base, a huge ring, perfectly horizontal and perfectly circular, is beginning to form. As it becomes discreet and climbs higher, above the clouds, its color becomes apparent -- the color of everything Jan has left behind...as lovely a blue as he has ever seen.

296

FAVORING JAN

296

What he's seeing is having a tremendous effect on him. His Adam's apple bobs as he swallows, again and again; he seems to be having difficulty breathing.

JAN'S VOICE

And it was alive. There was consciousness there, awareness. I could feel it as strongly as I've ever felt anything in my life.

(his voice getting excited)

And the most fantastic set of feelings came over me. Emotions rocked me like waves...at first it was the color ---

297

HIS POINT OF VIEW

297

The ring is expanding as it climbs, almost to the top of the mountain now.

JAN'S VOICE

-- the color of all the skies of earth. But then it was something else, the feeling of a presence....

As the ring rises over the mountain, it tilts and drifts toward us, flattening until it seems to encompass the whole of the sky.

298

ON JAN

298

his head bent back, watching it. Tears are welling in his eyes and beginning to stream down his cheeks.

JAN'S VOICE

...of being in contact with something that was utterly strange, and yet familiar. Whatever it was, it was reaching inside of me, pulling at me, calling...and I was responding....

299

WIDE SHOT

299

The shadow of the ring passes over them, gaining speed, flying up and away.

300

FAVORING JAN

300

as he turns to follow it. Now it is outlined against the blood-red disk of the sun, then slowly passing above the sun, beginning to dissipate as it moves out into space.

JAN'S VOICE

I realized then that I was weeping.
But what I felt was rapture and
exultation. As the ring flew off
into space, I wanted to go with it,
and in some way, I felt I was....

Now tenuous as a cloud, the ring is almost gone. In another moment, it's as if it was never there at all. Slowly, Jan turns to Vindarten, and realizes with sudden shock that the Overlord is still staring at the mountain.

JAN'S VOICE

I looked at Vindarten then, eager to
speak of what I've seen. But he was
still watching the mountain.

Jan turns around.

301

THEIR POINT OF VIEW

301

The mountain seems to have shrunk in size, a warm molten gold in color, devoid of features.

302

BACK TO JAN

302

as he looks at Vindarten again.

JAN'S VOICE

And I realized whatever he had seen,
was different....

The Overlord seems to notice Jan's presence again. He looks down at him and, without a word, motions for them to return to the elevator.

DISSOLVE TO

303

INT. JAN'S ROOM - DAY

303

Jan is at the table, dictating into the tape recorder.

JAN

(finishing)

Afterwards, he had me describe the vision in elaborate detail. But he refused to tell me what he had seen.

(a long beat)

I am beginning to understand why the Overlords refused to allow us into space.

(beat)

Even our first astronauts were overwhelmed by their experiences. I have seen at least a tiny fraction of all there is in the galaxy, and I am near to reaching my limits. The human race has a long way to go before we will be ready to take the Universe on its own terms. Perhaps a race must be as old as the Overlords, to be able to deal with it all.

(a long beat)

I'm very tired. I have to sleep.

He turns off the recorder, moves across the room to the bed and collapses on it. A moment after his eyes close, he sleeps.

CUT TO

304

THE ROOM - HOURS LATER - NIGHT

304

Two moons are outside the window, one moving quickly across the face of the other. Vindarten stands in silhouette against the smokey lights of the city, motionless as a statue.

305

ON JAN

305

unmoved in hours, dead asleep.

DISSOLVE TO

306

THE ROOM - STILL LATER - SHOOTING PAST VINDARTEN

306

who remains motionless, waiting for Jan to awake. There

CONTINUED

is stirring from the bed. Jan's shadow tosses, and the rhythm of his breathing changes. As he rolls over:

VINDARTEN

Jan...

JAN

Vindarten?

VINDARTEN

Yes. Come and stand on the terrace with me.

Jan gets up and comes out into the night. The Overlord turns to look down at him. Jan yawns.

JAN

I feel like I've been asleep for a long time.

VINDARTEN

You have. I've been waiting for you.

Jan looks up at him. After a beat:

VINDARTEN

The last of our supply ships will be leaving for earth very soon.

JAN

The last...?

VINDARTEN

Yes.

(beat)

You don't have to return if you don't want to. Well over a century will have passed by the time you get back. Much will have happened. You may not recognize your world.

Jan says nothing. He looks out over the city.

VINDARTEN

You're welcome to stay with us for the rest of your life, if that is your desire.

JAN

There's so much still to see...

Now it's Vindarten who remains silent.

CONTINUED

JAN

There's no chance of another ship,
later...?

VINDARTEN

I do not think so.

(beat)

I don't wish to influence your
choice, but I have had some exper-
ience with other worlds...the
loneliness you've felt from time to
time will grow. In five of your years,
or ten, it may become unbearable to
you.

(beat)

I say this only so you will be aware
of it...

There is a stange note of sadness in Vindarten's voice.
Jan looks at him sharply, as if trying to interpret the
tone.

VINDARTEN

To return will very likely be as difficult
for you as to stay. And as inexorable...
the full consequences of either decision
you can only guess at.

Jan nods, and slowly turns away from the city to look
in at his room, then back to Vindarten.

JAN

I want to go home...

The Overlord nods. Then Vindarten does something we have
never seen from an Overlord -- he reaches out to put a
hand on Jan's shoulder. His great wing seems to reach
around Jan's body, enfolding it...a gesture of protection
and farewell.

DISSOLVE TO

307 EXT. THE ISLAND OF NEW ATHENS -- NIGHT

307

and our own familiar moon, over the ocean.

308 INT. THE GREGGSON HOUSE - NIGHT

308

Jeffrey is asleep in his room. Out of the quiet, we hear
a sound -- the baby's rattle, shaking in a regular, precise
rhythm. Jeffrey wakes up, instantly alert. He gets out
of bed quickly and walks into the hall, then into his
sister's nursery.

309 INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

309

George is reading in bed. Jean is asleep. George pays no attention to the sound of the rattle, but something reaches Jean's awareness and she swims back up into consciousness. She opens her eyes, listens to the rattle for a beat or two, then gets out of bed.

GEORGE

What is it?

JEAN

I want to check on the Poppet...

Jean slips on her nightgown and pads out into the hallway. George continues reading. Then, Jean begins to scream...

310 INT. THE NURSERY - NIGHT

310

as George rushes in. Jean is standing in the doorway, her fist pressed against her teeth to choke back the screams. Jeffrey stands in the middle of the room, a smile on his face. George stares in horror. On the walls and the ceiling, the painted designs and cartoon figures have all come to life, writhing and crawling and transforming themselves in a fascinating, frightening kleidoscope of colors. But it isn't this that Jean is staring at in horror. Keeping time with the rhythm of the changing patterns on the walls is Jennifer Anne's rattle, which is floating, suspended, over her bed -- isolated, shaking by itself.

CUT TO

311 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

311

Rashaverak stands outside the window to the nursery, looking in on Jennifer Anne. It's obvious he could not enter the house without a great deal of discomfort, but his vantage through the window is more than adequate.

312 HIS POV - INT. THE NURSERY - DAY

312

Jean and George stand in the doorway to the room. Jean is trembling uncontrollably, and George has an arm around her. Several other members of the community are gathered behind them, mostly women of Jean's age. The rhythm of the toy rattle has changed since we first heard it. Its syncopated patterns are more complex, ever-changing. Directly beneath it, in her crib, Jennifer Anne lies with her eyes tightly shut, her tiny fists clenched, a strange smile of contentment on her ten-month-old face. On the floor near her is Jeffrey, whom we can now see is in some need of a haircut. His eyes are closed, also. He is rocking back and forth in time with the rattle, and no matter how swiftly or unpredictably its meter changes, Jeffrey follows the changes instinctively.

as he turns slowly and leaves the window, walking around to the front of the house. More people are waiting here, other members of the community. All look at Rashaverak apprehensively. Jean and George come out. As George moves toward the Overlord, expecting an explanation, one of the women takes his place beside Jean, holding and comforting her.

GEORGE

She hasn't opened her eyes since...
it began...

RASHAVERAK

Her vision has become superfluous to her. I doubt if she will ever open them again.

Jean moans softly at these words, and her trembling increases. George turns back to her, about to go to her until Rashaverak continues:

RASHAVERAK

(gently, with compassion)

Please don't think she is not aware. She is -- of us, of everything around her, and of much, much more.

(to George)

You were wise not to touch her toy. I don't think you could have moved it, but if you had, she might have been annoyed, and then I can't say what would have happened.

GEORGE

Do you mean...she might hurt us?

RASHAVERAK

She is literally an infant. And she is learning powers which are even beyond our comprehension.

JEAN

Then you're telling us there's nothing you can do for her?

RASHAVERAK

I won't deceive you, Jean. We can study and observe, as we have been doing, but we cannot interfere because we cannot understand...

Jean goes and stands beside her husband. She looks at the faces of their friends, then looks into the

CONTINUED

313

CONTINUED

313

impassive and expressionless face of the Overlord. She looks back at the house. The sound of the rattle drifts out over the distant thunder of the sea.

JEAN

But why us...?

RASHAVERAK

Because it had to happen somewhere, to someone. It is purely chance. You are no different than the first neutron which begins the chain reaction in an atomic explosion...you just happen to be the first.

He looks over the anxious faces staring up at him.

RASHAVERAK

And like a chain reaction, once it's begun, it spreads very quickly.

BEN SALOMAN

But...what is it?

RASHAVERAK

We call it Total Breakthrough. We have been waiting for it since we came to earth.

(to Jean)

That night at your house, many years ago...you entered a trance, and then fainted. For a brief moment, your mind served as a channel, and through it came a knowledge no one alive on the earth could have possessed. When I learned you were pregnant, it was then I knew, almost certainly, your child would be the first.

GEORGE

But it was Jeffrey Jean was carrying....

RASHAVERAK

It didn't matter. It was a mind closely linked to hers. Time is a very much stranger thing than any of you can imagine.

A WOMAN

Will this happen to all our children?

RASHAVERAK

Yes.

CONTINUED

313

CONTINUED - 2

313

GEORGE
(helplessly)
Then...what do we do?

RASHAVERAK
Enjoy them while you may. Share in
as many of their experiences as you
are capable of. They will not be
yours for long.

The Overlord turns from them to look out to sea. A note of
pain and loss can be heard in his voice.

RASHAVERAK
We will assist you in what is to come.
We are as midwives, helping at the
birth of something new and wonderful.
(then)
There are many races in the Universe,
and some discovered these powers long
before your race -- or mine -- appeared.
(looks at
the group)
They are waiting for you to join them.

The people in the group look back to the house and the
sound of the rattle, then to each other, trying to com-
prehend what Rashaverak has told them.

CUT TO

314

INT. THE NURSERY - DAY - ON THE RATTLE

314

lying on the floor, discarded. Jeffrey sits near it, cross-
legged. Some time has passed. Jeffrey's hair now reaches
to his shoulders, giving him a shaggy, wild appearance.
His head thrown back, his eyes wide open, he sits without
moving, staring not at the ceiling but far beyond it. In
the crib, Jennifer Anne no longer smiles. Instead there is
a frown of concentration on her forehead, and she floats
six inches above the mattress. Jeffrey blinks his eyes.
He comes back from wherever he is, looks at his sister and
nods.

315

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

315

as Jeffrey comes out. Jean is sitting on the sofa, reading
a book listlessly. She glances up at her son, and the first
look that crosses her face is one of fear. She looks away,
fighting to control herself. Suddenly, Jeffrey is just a
little boy again. He goes to her side and touches her arm.

CONTINUED

There is an unmistakeable tone of quiet authority in his voice. Responding to it, Jean gets to her feet.

316 EXT. THE VILLAGE OF NEW ATHENS - DAY

316

All the adults in the community are walking toward the meeting hall, in groups of two or more, their faces dulled, looking at one another but exchanging no greetings. A palpable gloom hangs over the street, a depression too deep for words. On the doorsteps of the houses near the center of the village, we can see an occasional child watching the adults, small silent figures who take no part in the gloomy procession. Jean and George come down the street, hand in hand, nodding to acquaintances, grimly proceeding.

317 INT. THE MEETING HALL - DAY

317

The lights are dimmed, the chairs arranged to face a screen which hangs across the entire wall of the long room. On the screen is a picture of Karellan's ship. As Jean and George and the others take their seats and face the screen, waiting, the picture dissolves to the image of Karellan.

KARELLAN

Our work here is nearly ended. The secret we have kept so long, is a secret no more. All over the earth, the change has at last begun...

Karellan's image dissolves to

318 EXT. A SCHOOLYARD - DAY

318

where there are groups of children, standing in isolation from each other, as if each were hearing something which completely entranced him.

319 A SERIES OF SHOTS

319

of other schoolyards, playgrounds, parks...the phenomenon repeating itself, but only with children ten years or younger.

KARELLAN

No one is alone in this. It is happening to all of you.

(beat)

Since its beginning, your race has been drawing nearer to an abyss, the existence of which you never suspected. To cross that abyss, there is only one bridge...and we were sent to help you find it.

320 INT. THE MEETING HALL - DAY - ON THE FACES 320
watching the screen.

321 A SERIES OF SHOTS 321
of other groups in other places, large and small, listening
to the words.

KARELLAN

Had we not intervened, what is hap-
pening now to your children would
still have happened, but with con-
sequences disastrous to yourselves
-- and to the rest of the Universe
as well.

322 ON THE SCREEN 322
there now appears a picture of the earth, and drawing away
from it rapidly, we see our planet in the solar system,
and then our sun within the galaxy, our viewpoint continuing
to retreat as Karellan speaks until the whole of the cosmos
unfolds before us.

KARELLAN

Your children are becoming the
component part of a larger entity,
an intelligence that we ourselves
can only guess at....

(beat)

You have called us the Overlords.
Perhaps the best term for that
intelligence in your language is
Overmind.

As the glories of the Universe sparkle in ever-increasing
complexities, the image dissolves to:

323 KARELLAN 323
looking into the camera, speaking calmly.

KARELLAN

It was the Overmind which sent us to
you. We believe it to be the sum of
many races once like your own, and
long ago it left the tyranny of matter
behind. It is the Overmind which is
reaching out to your children, and
they to it....

CUT TO

324

A SERIES OF SHOTS

324

of the wars of the twentieth century, the arms race, atomic explosions -- all the horror and misery of the past.

KARELLAN

You have thought we came to save you from destruction, but that was not entirely true. Had these tremendous powers come on you spontaneously, you would have become, with your jealousies and hatreds and wars and politics, like a mental cancer, a malignancy upon the cosmic order of things. You would have gone mad, not one by one, but together as a single, irrational, destructive form of energy -- capable of spreading like a disease.

325

BACK TO KARELLAN

325

KARELLAN

This is the secret we kept from you, and perhaps now you can understand why.

(beat)

What is happening to your children is incontrovertible. There is no way back from it, and no future for the world you have known.

326

INT. THE MEETING ROOM - DAY

326

and the watching faces as Karellan lets his words sink in.

KARELLAN

If that seems cruel to say to you, remember this: you have given birth to a great and wonderful thing, and you will always be a part of it. Your children have not altogether abandoned you... they have simply surpassed you.

CONTINUED

327

ON KARELLAN

327

in the control room of the ship, the earth displayed on his own screen behind him.

KARELLAN

My task and duty is to protect those whom I was sent here to guard. Despite their awakening powers, they could be destroyed by the multitudes around them -- yes, even by their parents. I must take them away and isolate them, for their protection, and for yours. Soon my ships will begin the evacuation. I shall not blame you if you try to interfere, but it will be useless. Greater powers than mine are wakening now; I am only one of their instruments.

(beat)

I will leave you with this thought. Perhaps it will be some consolation to you. The road your children are about to travel is denied to mine. Our race is barren. We have no future...never will we be more than what we are today. As harsh as your fate may seem, I envy you... and would trade places with any of you if I could....

DISSOLVE TO

328

JEAN AND GEORGE - EXT. THEIR HOUSE - DAY

328

They are standing on the crest of the hill, overlooking the sea. Karellans' speech has had its effect on them. Gone are the feelings of resentment and of fear. They look out stoically on

329

THEIR POINT OF VIEW

329

The cargo section of one of the Overlords' ships hangs off the coast of the island, as light as the breeze, the surface of the ocean undisturbed beneath it. A gangway extends from an opening in the ship to the cliffs. Singly or in groups, the children are coming. The first are already approaching the gangway, which, once they have stepped upon it, carries them up and inside.

330

MOVING WITH JEFFREY

130

as he comes out of the house, Jennifer Anne in his arms. He walks to his parents' side. He looks up at them calmly, but a fierce light seems to burn in his eyes. They return his gaze with a look of pride.

JEFFREY

We love you, both of us.

GEORGE

We love you, too.

JEAN

Goodbye, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey nods, and for just a moment he appears as any child might, about to leave home for the first time. Then he looks at his sister and his expression changes. He turns and starts the long walk down the hill to the ship.

331

A SERIES OF DISSOLVES

331

as the process takes its course. Many of the parents have come to stand and watch. Here and there, an Overlord stands guard over the procession. No one directs the children; each knows what must be done. When Jeffrey finally reaches the gangway, he turns once, briefly, to look back at the hill and the tiny figures of his parents; then he, like the others, steps onto the ramp and is carried away.

332

FAVORING JEAN AND GEORGE

332

as, finally, the last of the children is taken into the great ship. The ship begins to rise until it hangs over the island. Then, with a rush of speed, it's gone. As one, Jean and George turn back to the house.

333

INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

333

as they enter. George goes to the open door to the nursery and looks inside. For a moment he is about to enter, but then he closes the door, and we know it will never be opened again. Then he does the same to Jeffrey's room. When he comes back into the living room, Jean is standing, looking at him. They face each other.

CONTINUED

333 CONTINUED

333

JEAN

I'll fix us something to eat...

George nods. Neither one of them moves. We hold on them for a long moment and then

DISSOLVE TO

334 THE STARS

334

as an Overlord ship comes hurtling through its gateway into the solar system, sliding down a meteor-trail from the heart of the galaxy.

335 INT. THE CONTROL ROOM OF THE SUPPLY SHIP

335

as the physical reality of space and time resolves itself on the great screen in front of the three pilots, and we find ourselves rushing toward the sun.

336 ON JAN RODERICKS

336

who is making the return leg of his journey in full consciousness, sitting dwarfed in an Overlord chair behind and to one side of the pilots. He leans forward expectantly, eager after all this time for his first glimpse of home.

337 ON THE SCREEN

337

as the ship moves past the moon, slowing, and the silvery crescent of a quarter-earth appears. We are passing over the night side of the planet.

338 FAVORING JAN

338

now on his feet, staring intently at the screen.

JAN

There's something wrong. Where are the lights of the cities...?

The three pilots do not respond. We can see the outlines of North America on the screen, the geographical features barely apparent. There is no sign of life below.

339 EXT. THE OVERLORD BASE - DAY

339

A fantastic city, its architecture reminiscent of the Overlords' home planet, has been reared in the desert of the southwest. The cargo sections of several Overlord ships are docked around

CONTINUED

339 CONTINUED

339

its outskirts.

340 INT. THE CARGO SECTION OF THE SUPPLY SHIP - DAY

340

Jan stands expectantly, waiting for the the opening to form within the walls of the cargo ship, waiting for the sunlight and the warmth of earth. A crack of light appears in front of him, gradually widening. The light that spills in is blinding. Jan finds himself squinting, and then shielding his eyes. Accustomed as he has grown to the dim illumination preferred by the Overlords, this first wash of pure sunlight blinds him. The opening is now wide enough for him to pass through it. The desert wind blows into the ship. Stumbling forward, his eyes streaming from the glare and his face contorted, Jan walks out.

341 HIS POINT OF VIEW - EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

341

What little he can see is flared and distorted, vaguely perceived within the blinding brightness. A figure is before him, an Overlord. As Jan looks up:

KARELLAN

I've been waiting for you. Welcome home.

342 ON JAN

342

trying to see but forced to keep his eyes almost completely shut. Despite the pain, he throws back his head to the sun and smiles.

DISSOLVE TO

343 INT. A ROOM INSIDE THE OVERLORD BASE - DAY

343

where a single, giant screen displays an apparently random sequence of colors and patterns interspersed with views of the various operations of the Overlord base. Karellan sits perched in front of the screen, Jan beside him.

KARELLAN

You must understand...in the last thirty years, events have proceeded extremely rapidly. Civilization has ceased to exist on the earth.

(beat)

The last of your race died out, leaving only this...

CONTINUED

Karellan waves his hand. The screen in front of them seems to dissolve away and we are looking down at a wooded countryside from the height of half a mile or so. There is movement in and among the trees, tiny figures which appear to be undulating in some regular, rhythmic pattern.

JAN

What is it...?

KARELLAN

The children. There are three hundred million of them. They stretch over the entire face of the continent. They do not age, eat or sleep.

JAN

What are they doing?

KARELLAN

We called this the Long Dance...it lasted for more than a year. What it was or what it meant, we have no idea. Perhaps the Overmind was training them, molding them gradually into a single unit...

JAN

Can we get closer?

KARELLAN

Yes...

He turns to Jan.

KARELLAN

But what you will see may distress you. Try to remember, your standards no longer apply. We can observe only the physical aspect of the process. Its true nature is hidden to us...

344 ON THE SCREEN

344

as the camera suddenly swoops downwards like a bird of prey. Now we can make out the individual figures of the children.

345 FAVORING JAN

345

He gasps at what he sees. The children are all but naked, with matted hair and filthy bodies and faces which are utterly blank. They seem like nothing more than savages engaged in some complex, ritual procession. Their ages range from five to fifteen and their movements are precise and identical, suggesting some

CONTINUED

strange and inaudible music. There is no suggestion of emotion or even feeling in their expressions. They are completely indifferent to everything but the Dance. Jan stares at the images long and hard, then abruptly turns away, shaken.

KARELLAN

What you are looking for is no longer there. They have no individuality, any more than the cells in your body do...but linked together mentally as they are, they form an entity greater than we can imagine.

(beat)

This was fifteen years ago.

Jan continues to avert his face from the screen. Karellan gestures and the picture dissolves to a higher shot again. Time has passed. Jan turns to watch.

KARELLAN

When we took them away and isolated them, our work here was virtually finished. The effects on the human race were predictable, and swift. No new children were born...and without children, a race has no continuity, no link with its past or its future.

(beat)

The adults died. Some quickly, by their own hands, by overindulgence or dangerous sports while some lived out their normal lifespans. Religious groups lasted the longest -- monasteries, the highly disciplined orders, took on many new converts. Gradually, however, apathy took its toll. The last adult died shortly before this took place. Perhaps they were waiting until they were alone...

He turns his attention to the screen. The Long Dance has stopped. The figures stand motionless, endless numbers of them.

JAN

They look so pathetic and helpless...

KARELLAN

They're not. We haven't dared go near them. As they began to experiment with their powers, they became capricious...

A moment passes, and then a sudden change takes place in the landscape surrounding the children. The trees, grasslands, flowers begin to flicker and wink and then dissolve away,

CONTINUED

out of existence. Now the children stand on an featureless plain, an image from a nightmare.

JAN

They did that?

KARELLAN

Perhaps the presence of other minds disturbed them, even the rudimentary minds of plants and animals.

JAN

How long ago...?

KARELLAN

Ten years.

JAN

(looks at him)

Why have you stayed?

KARELLAN

To observe, and learn what we can of the Overmind. We will study the metamorphosis until our presence disturbs them. Then we, too, will go.

He waves his hand. Our view of the children changes again. From this perspective, for as far as we can see, they stand like statues.

KARELLAN

This is how they are today. For ten years, none of them has moved. Nothing has happened outwardly. Our instruments have recorded certain things -- fluctuations in the earth's magnetic field, changes of climate in various places, seismic activity -- but it seems to be randomized. We have no idea when they will begin their journey.

JAN

Journey?

KARELLAN

To join the Overmind.

JAN

What will happen then?

KARELLAN

We don't know. This is the fifth apotheosis we have supervised, and each has been different.

CONTINUED

345 CONTINUED - 3

345

Karellan looks at him.

KARELLAN

Perhaps you can tell us, if you choose
to stay...

Sudden shock registers on Jan's face as he realizes a terrible
decision awaits him, and from his look we

CUT TO

346 EXT. A BEACH - DAY

346

Jan is swimming in the surf, a single towel spread out on the
sand. As he comes out of the water and stops to pick up his
cane before proceeding up the beach, we see he has grown a
beard and let his hair go uncut. He looks tanned and muscular,
not unlike a latter-day Robinson Crusoe, alone on this tropical
beach.

DISSOLVE TO

347 EXT. THE HOUSE ON THE MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

347

which once belonged to Jean Morel. Jan is walking up a long,
narrow path to the house, his beach towel over his shoulder.

DISSOLVE TO

348 INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

348

Classical music thunders out over the mountain. Jan sits in
the living room, conducting an invisible orchestra, lost in
the rapture of the music.

DISSOLVE TO

349 EXT. A TERRACE - DAY

349

Jan is exercising, using his body to the fullest, the sweat
gleaming on his muscles. His face is calm, relaxed, contented --
the ritual of the workout completely absorbing him.

DISSOLVE TO

350 INT. THE LIBRARY - NIGHT

350

Jan sits in a comfortable chair, reading. Something makes him
look up, puzzled.

351 HIS POV

351

Through the transparent membrane of the ceiling, one of the

CONTINUED

351

CONTINUED

351

Overlord ships are sliding to a stop over the island. The interplay of energies beneath it diminishes in intensity, and a sphere of light detaches and drops down.

352

EXT. THE TERRACE - NIGHT

352

The sphere comes to rest and Karellan steps out of the opening onto the terrace. Jan stands waiting for him.

JAN

Is it time?

KARELLAN

Very nearly so. We have been advised to leave. If you wish to leave with us....

JAN

(shakes
his head)

No. I'll stay.

KARELLAN

You are welcome to come.

JAN

Thank you, Karellan. I've thought about it, and I can't. I don't know if I can make you understand... but it seems appropriate to be here, especially in this house, where it all began. I'm part of the human race. I should be here.

KARELLAN

I do understand

(beat)

Will you tell us...what you see? Our instruments will be recording, but the way your mind interprets events may be of far greater value to us.

JAN

Is this why you let me stow away -- so you could have one last, human observer?

CONTINUED

352

CONTINUED

352

KARELLAN

That's very devious of you.

Karellan smiles affectionately.

KARELLAN

Goodbye, Jan. I would wish you good luck, but I'm not sure it would have any meaning under the circumstances.

JAN

One last question, Karellan. You've never explained what went wrong, back in the past, when your race first visited the earth. What happened that you became such a symbol of fear and evil to us?

KARELLAN

(beat)

Nothing happened. Our first contact was perfectly routine. There was only one event which could have made such an impact on your people...and that event was not at the dawn of your history, but at its end.

(beat)

It wasn't a racial memory which imprinted our image on your consciousness, but rather a premonition. We were associated with the death of a humanity, and even though it was ten thousand years in the future, its echo reverberated around the closed circle of time from the future to the past.

(beat)

Human beings have always been unpredictable to us, and will continue to be until the very end, I suspect.

After a long moment of silence:

JAN

Goodbye, Karellan.

Jan extends his hand. The Overlord reaches down and they touch their fingers. Then Karellan returns to the glowing sphere.

353

WIDE SHOT

353

The sphere shoots up and into the ship again.

354

FAVORING JAN

354

watching as the ship moves away from the island, growing smaller with increasing speed until it is gone. Jan turns and goes back inside the house.

DISSOLVE TO

355

EXT. THE ISLAND - NIGHT

355

The moon is beginning to rise. It is unnaturally large, and casts a molten pathway on the surface of the sea, like a silver highway.

356

INT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

356

Jan is sleeping on the whisperbed. The room is flooded with moonlight. The tidal currents of unseen energy that make up the bed hum in soothing octaves that are not quite music. Jan seems to be sleeping peacefully, but then he suddenly awakens. He looks up.

357

HIS POINT OF VIEW

357

The stars directly overhead are still bright, the moon not having risen enough to overwhelm them. Far out in space, the stardrive on Karellan's ship flares into life, painting its seam across the heavens. As the illumination starts to fade,

358

JAN

358

gets up. He is naked except for a pair of briefs and, in the tropical night, stays that way. He walks quickly out of the bedroom.

359

INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

359

Jan comes in on his way to the terrace.

COMPUTER VOICE

Good morning. Will you be having coffee?

For a moment, Jan is taken aback by this last touch of civilization. About to ignore the question, he reconsiders.

JAN

Thank you.

CONTINUED

359 CONTINUED

359

A light comes on in a pedestal, illuminating a coffee maker which has just finished brewing. As Jan pours himself a mug:

COMPUTER VOICE

Would you like breakfast?

JAN

(a wry smile)

Not just now. Thanks anyway.

He takes his coffee and walks outside.

360 EXT. THE TERRACE - NIGHT

360

Jan goes to the railing overlooking the valley. Far below him is the sea and the rising moon. Behind him is the mountain. Jan sips the coffee and stares at the moon.

JAN

It's beginning. The moon is twice the size it should be -- and it's spinning! They're starting to come out of their trance. They must be like children stretching their muscles after a long sleep -- they're turning the moon on its axis.

Suddenly, the whole mountain trembles and shudders. The coffee slops over the side of the cup and Jan grabs the railing for support.

JAN

There's been a minor earthquake. I should have expected it. If they alter the moon's spin, the angular momentum has to go somewhere. Perhaps the earth is slowing down.

The ground shakes beneath him again. Somewhere inside the house, something falls and breaks.

JAN

They must have been waiting for you to leave. I can feel something happening inside me. It's hard to describe...an exhilaration, like a rushing energy. And now a wind's coming up...

Jan puts down the coffee cup absently. We can hear the screaming of birds and the noise of small animals, thousands of them on the mountainside, running for safety that does not exist.

CONTINUED

360 CONTINUED

360

Jan looks up at the sky.

JAN

Wait a minute -- the stars are starting to go out!

361 HIS POINT OF VIEW - THE SKY

361

The stars are dimming. Something is beginning to appear in the night sky -- a filmy network of lines, stretching from horizon to horizon and beyond.

JAN

And there seems to be a cloud forming -- no, it has a structure. Like some ghostly spider's web, tangling with the stars. It's growing brighter. It's very beautiful...

362 FAVORING JAN

362

as the sky around him continues to lighten, the network of light fluxing and interreacting.

JAN

...it seems to be alive. Of course. It is alive. Karellan, it's starting to happen! The light is growing brighter on one side of the sky -- I can't quite see it from here. I'll have to go to the other side of the house.

As the pulsating, glowing web of lines concentrates its brightness nearer to the horizon beyond the lower flank of the mountain, Jan rushes back into the house.

363 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

363

as Jan runs through the rooms to a lower level.

364 EXT. A LOWER TERRACE - NIGHT

364

He comes outside and stares in awe.

JAN

There, far off, beyond the horizon -- I can see a column of fire...

365

HIS POINT OF VIEW

365

Rising up from the far side of the earth, reaching out into space itself, is a burning column of living light.

JAN

It's coming from the other side of the world. They're going, Karellan, They're on their way at last. And it looks like the mountain on your world, the place Vindarten took me. That was the Overmind, too, wasn't it? That was why I was taken there.

(takes a breath)

Oh my God, it's incredibly beautiful! Like a fountain flowing outwards to the stars.

366

FAVORING JAN

366

watching this, his reaction much like it was when he saw the ring on the Overlord's planet. Struggling to maintain himself.

JAN

I'm beginning to understand everything now...there are two paths to follow, aren't there, Karellan? Your path is to conquer the universe physically, and yet always to be trapped within your egos, always apart from it. Our path is to become one with the universe to lose ourselves in this cosmic merging -- to be the Universe. And to have the ecstasy of it....

The column of fire, like a finger pointing to the heavens, continues to grow and expand and now, around its base, a ring is forming, like the one we saw before, but golden in color, like the sun.

JAN

There's the ring! Oh -- I wish I could describe what's happening now! Great waves of emotion are sweeping through me. Not joy, not sorrow -- fulfillment, and achievement. They're going....

367

CLOSER ON THE RING

367

as it sweeps into the heavens, expanding and drawing the column of fire up with it.

368 BACK TO JAN

368

as the ground beneath him rumbles and thunders and he has to fight to keep his feet. Behind him, the mountain is beginning to erupt, throwing spumes of smoke and flame into the air.

JAN

Yes! They're gone...but it's not over. The earthquakes are starting. And the volcanoes...it's as if they're taking the earth with them.

(beat)

Wait. Wait -- I'm getting lighter. My weight is decreasing.

He looks around him. Things are beginning to float and he has to hold to a railing as the furniture of the terrace drifts into the air.

JAN

The earth is losing its gravity...how could that be, unless its mass is leaving it...things are starting to become transparent...

The mountain itself is beginning to dissolve, consumed from within by a growing light. A wind is starting to blow, upwards towards the sky, carrying the objects on the terrace with it. The floor, the railings, the structure of the house are transparent.

JAN

Everything is like glass...I can see through it...even through my own hand...

Jan's body is growing insubstantial, and a light is shining from inside him.

JAN

It's getting harder to breath. The atmosphere is leaving...and the ring is rising...the light is getting brighter...goodbye, Karellan...goodbye...I'm sorry...I can't speak anymore... goodbye...

In a sudden surge, the light consumes him as the mountain behind him erupts in a tower of flame that rises and does not fall. The wind carries what's left of the house away, and Jan is gone.

369 EXT. THE EARTH IN SPACE - A SERIES OF SHOTS

369

as volcanoes all over the planet erupt, as the seas empty themselves upwards, and the world itself becomes a part of the column of fire which now reaches out past the moon. The ring has expanded to encompass the moon, which is tugged from its

CONTINUED

369

CONTINUED

369

orbit to join the transmutation.

370

MOVING AWAY FROM THE EARTH

370

The planet is becoming insubstantial, giving up its essence, the light within it exploding into one final eruption of energy which blasts away, reaching out and overtaking our rapidly receding point of view. The streams of energy flow past us and the screen goes white.

371

REVERSE POINT OF VIEW

371

From where the earth once was, the trails of fire radiate outwards, expanding to fill the galaxy before they are gone. The trailing edges of the energy streams rush away from us. The brightness is absorbed in the stardust of the universe, and all is as it was, before....

DISSOLVE TO

372

INT. KARELLAN'S CONTROL ROOM

372

The Supervisor for what was once the earth sits on the middle perch in the control room, watching his main screen. Displayed is a starfield, and in the middle of it a burning point of light like a supernova, gradually diminishing. Karellan makes a sharp gesture. The image changes to a point of view from a remote camera somewhere near the orbit of Jupiter, replaying the celestial phenomenon we have just witnessed. Again Karellan gestures, and again we see the departure of the human race from still another remote camera. He gestures again and we see Jan on the terrace, in the last moments of the metamorphosis. As his body turns to light and energy, we hear his voice, echoing in the great room.

JAN'S VOICE

...the ring is rising...the light is
getting brighter...goodbye, Karellan
...goodbye...I'm sorry...I can't speak
anymore...goodbye....

And the screen goes blank.

373

ON KARELLAN

373

thoughtful, resigned, his great shoulders slumped, his wings folded behind him...he lowers his head and brings his hand to his forehead, a lonely figure of a devil, in despair....

FADE OUT

THE END

CHARACTERS

Jan Rodericks
Doctor Gregory Reinhold
Wooster
Connors
Commentator
First Newscaster
Second Newscaster
Pilot

Rikki Stormgren
Thomas Wainwright
Savin Setswana
Professor James Sullivan
Sanders
Van Ryberg
Security Guard
Man
Woman
Denton
Margaret
Stein
Carstairs
Floor Manager
Older Man
Caroline

Overlords:
Karellan
Rashaverak
Vindarten

Jean Morel
George Greggson
Doctor Richter
Actor
Technician
Gofer
Jena
Woman
Ben Saloman

Children:
Jennifer Anne Greggson
Jeffrey Greggson
Child

Computer Voices (3)

SETSPresentINTERIOR:

Helicopter
Television Studio
Tracking Station
Bar

Overlord Ship:
Corridor in Ship
Control Room in Ship
Hallway in Ship

EXTERIOR:

Hawaii:
Mount Kona Compsite
Radio Telescope Installation

New York City:
Streets
United Nations Plaza

Second Unit

Honolulu
Oahu
Los Angeles
Freeway
Santa Monica Cliffs/Ocean

Paris
Moscow
Tokyo
South American City

Future: Five YearsINTERIOR:

New York City:
World Federation HQ (U.N. Bldg.)
Outer Office
Corridor
Conference Room
Setswana's Office
Secretariat Lobby
Stormgren's Office
World Freedom League
Lobby
Auditorium
Small Room
Natural History Museum
Sullivan's Office
2nd Floor
Basement
Airport Terminal
Taxi
Jan's Apartment

Hawaiian Road:
Truck Bed

Supply Ship:
Cargo Hold
Dinosaur

EXTERIOR:

New York City:
JFK Int'l Airport Terminal
Taxi
World Federation HQ (U.N.)
World Freedom League HQ
Central Park
Lower East Side
Nightclub
Museum Natural History
Desert

Future: Fifty YearsINTERIOR:

House in Finland

EXTERIOR:

United Nations Plaza
House in Finland
Mountain Lake in Finland

Future: Seventy-Five YearsINTERIOR:

Television Studio
Control Room
Magiçam Stage
Plane
Jean Morel's House
Entry Level
Library
Living Room
Kitchen
Karellan's Ship
Control Room
Supply Ship
Control Room
Cargo Hold
Compartment in Dinosaur
House in New Athens
Kitchen
Dining Room
Nursery
Living Room
Jeffrey's Bedroom
Master Bedroom
Meeting Hall in New Athens
Overlord Museum
20th Century Display
Other World Displays
Compartment in Brontosaurus
Interview Room in Karellan's Ship
Overlord's Planet
Elevator
Jan's Room
Overlord Base

EXTERIOR:

Los Angeles
Jean Morel's House
Terrace
Library
Outdoor Garden
Kitchen
Lagoon
Cliffs
Ocean
Road to Lagoon
Hillside
Beach
Village in New Athens
Playgrounds
Parks
Schoolyards

Overlord's Home Planet
Terrace
City
Observation Post