

COURAGE

by

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*Sweet dreams are made of this
Who am I to disagree?
I travel the world
And the seven seas*

Everybody's looking for something

FADE IN:

INT. CORRIDOR - WE HAVE NO IDEA - NIGHT

A MAN is running for his life through the dark, past high-tech metal walls, broken and burned. He moves onwards, gripped with terror because somewhere in the darkness behind him SOMETHING POWERFUL is closing...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(distant, muted)
This... I guess you'd call it a
rat. Maybe a squirrel...?

He corners, revealing up ahead BLAZING LIGHT, as he SQUINTS INTO THE LIGHT, we can for the first time make out:

JAKE PHOBETOR (30s). He wears the hardened armor of a SPACE WARRIOR, the creased eyes of a man who's seen combat.

UP AHEAD: The corridor has been ripped apart by impact onto an alien world. Its jagged edges open onto a sandy expanse where a YOUNG BOY, olive-skinned and also in a space suit, sits in the sand, playing with a small plastic army man...

The boy looks up, SMILES when he sees Jake. Warm recognition.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(distant)
Anyway, the thing's gotten itself
stuck, in one of the storm drains.
It's just this little animal. I
could kill it, just for being
little. But I don't want to kill
it. I want to save it.

But as Jake steps forward... the boy's face falls. His gaze moves beyond Jake, to the dark corridor behind him.

Something HUGE is coming, moving FAST.

Jake hears it, too. He unholsters his PLASMA WEAPON, turns to fire... but it's a technology he doesn't understand, it won't work -- as in front of him the MONSTER LOOMS OUT OF THE DARK!

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(distant)
Hey, hey... Are you...
(suddenly VERY LOUD)
HEY, ARE YOU LISTENING!?

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake STARTS AWAKE, tries to orient as he blinks the nightmare away. He's not a space soldier, he's a psychologist at the end of a long day. A handsome guy, even if in a slightly threadbare suit. He glances around...

A familiar setting, his office. Picture on the desk: Jake in Grants Park, Chicago, with his family: His SON, the boy from the dream, and a beautiful, freckled, brunette. His WIFE.

With Jake, understanding that he's the doctor here while

ON HIS THERAPIST'S COUCH, **GENERAL JOHN GOODE** (55), the patient, cranes around, deeply suspicious -- hell, he already hates coming here. He EYEBALLS Jake, his lip curling up.

GENERAL GOODE
You fall asleep again?

JAKE
No, of course not --

GENERAL GOODE
Second God damned time.

JAKE
Not the second time. I mean, not even a first time. Go ahead. You were saying, a squirrel?

Jake scans the room, still getting his bearings. Tasteful mahogany furniture. A chair. A couch. Books line the wall behind a desk: Jung, Freud... *"The Interpretation of Dreams."*

Everything feels just a little old, dusty.

A gray envelope sits alone on the desk... torn open.

GENERAL GOODE
You think I want to be here? I mean look at me. What's wrong with this picture, Doc? I shouldn't be here.

General Goode is thick and strong, reeks of faded power. Jake smiles, and hates himself for the fake of it.

JAKE
Please, General. Let's not get... excited.

GENERAL GOODE
And there you go again. But that's the problem, isn't it?
(MORE)

GENERAL GOODE (CONT'D)
You god damned head docs...
(rising)
Do you know who I used to be?

JAKE
Yes, of course I do. That's why
you're here, isn't it?

Jake's words are calming. But behind the words... There's something unspoken, AFRAID in Jake. And in the General, too.

JAKE (CONT'D)
(low)
Please, General. Think about what
you're doing. Sit down.

Slowly... the General sits back down. Stares at the ground.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I get it. The squirrel is caught
and you want to save it. And no
one's gonna know. So why not? A
single little squirrel. Right?

The General glances up.

GENERAL GOODE
What's the point? If I can't even
save this dumb animal... What the
hell am I?

JAKE
You're alive, that's the point.
You're here for your family. So
maybe you don't get to save this
helpless animal. That's the cost.
(beat)
So what did you do, in the dream?

GENERAL GOODE
I didn't do anything. I mean, I
watched it drown.

JAKE
Good. You see? You're getting
better.

Beat. Jake glances at a clock which reads "13:57."

The General shakes his head, stands up and puts on his coat.
Jake stands with him, offers a hand.

JAKE (CONT'D)
It takes courage... to walk away.

WHAM! General Goode slugs Jake in the face. Jake goes down as the General lumbers towards him, fists curled.

GENERAL GOODE

Get up you sonofabitch!

Jake DOES NOT MOVE. He speaks low, staring down as blood drips out of his nose onto the carpet.

JAKE

General. Don't do this. You're stronger than this.

Beat... The General's feet turn and walk out of the room. Door SLAMS.

Jake rises, calming himself. He pulls a tissue from a box on his desk, blots his bloody nose. Shakes his head. Jesus.

His eyes land on the grey envelope on the desk.

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - DAY

Jake pushes out onto the streets, raising his collar against the cold. Chicago RESIDENTS mill on the streets, all going somewhere seemingly important. Almost no interaction.

There's something about this world. It's the future, that's for sure. But barely. There's still paper in the gutters, graffiti on brick walls. And there's a *stillness* in the air for the windy city. The BUILDINGS and people's CLOTHING are all a little worn, patched, like depression-era.

Jake moves down the street, angles for a train. He passes an official sign:

"Remember. If you see something, just pretend you didn't."

INT. EL TRAIN - CHICAGO - DAY

Jake finds a seat as the train rattles forward. Outside, buildings flash by. This Chicago is denser, more packed in. Buildings, wires, tracks... You never see the sky.

MOVEMENT down the car catches his attention. Passengers PRESS away from a MAN, also seated, like you might flee someone with a contagious disease. The man is well dressed, affluent. But he's staring straight ahead, seemingly comatose.

Now, like everyone else, Jake looks away. He winds up staring at a small VIDEO BILLBOARD in the train.

On it, a CHILD pulls a silvery letter from another grey envelope, SMILES as camera strobes pop. A Lottery winner: "Issac Lamb."

DING! The NEXT STOP indicator: "*Elysian Fields*."

EXT. "THE LIFE OF THE MIND" PRINT SHOP - DAY

Jake stands across the sidewalk from this quaint boutique. A faded door number, #1562. Typewriters in the window. Letter press cards. Bottles of ink and rough-edged paper.

Behind the store glass, a WOMAN adjusts the display...

LAURA. 30's. Absolutely, ethereally, beautiful. A delicate cardigan sweater. Blonde hair that runs down her neck, towards the swell of her breasts. She reaches to place a small jar of ink, feels Jake's gaze on her.

She looks up, recognizing him... Smiles warm and open.

And in doing so, misplaces the small jar. It tips, spattering her cardigan...

INT. "THE LIFE OF THE MIND" PRINT SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Bell JINGLES as Jake pushes in, gently. He catches a glimpse of Laura as she ducks behind a cloth hung in a doorway separating the shop from rooms in the back.

There are a few other PATRONS in here who all, as does everyone it seems, keep their gaze rigidly to themselves.

LAURA
Hey. Be right there. Spilled...

JAKE
I know. My fault. I'm sorry --

LAURA
(calling from in back)
Don't be. Glad you came around again. Where have you been?

Jake let's his gaze wander over the BOOKS, PAPER, CALLIGRAPHY. Old PASSPORTS and DOCUMENTS...

JAKE
Just... Work, you know. I was --

Jake's words hang up. He can just see past the curtain to the back room. Earthy, warm, low-lit. Bookcases on every wall...

And Laura, changing in front of a small mirror, her back to him, her top off, standing in her bra.

He stares. She glances up, catches his gaze in the mirror.

He looks away, winds up staring at "*Crime and Punishment*."

JAKE (CONT'D)

I've been meaning to come by, but
it's been back to back. A lot more
people need help, you know.

Laura's voice is suddenly VERY CLOSE.

LAURA

You don't have to tell me about it.
Crazy out there. Especially today.

She's come out from the back, having put on a different sweater, also a little threadbare. She tracks his injury...

LAURA (CONT'D)

Your face...

JAKE

It's nothing. Hazard of the
profession.

LAURA

(smiles, then:)
So, what are you looking for this
time? How old is he again? Twelve?

Jake, wanting to get this right...

JAKE

I'm sorry, about just now. I saw
through the curtain. I didn't mean
to...

LAURA

(ignoring that)
How about... this?

She holds up a small dog-eared book. Old, leather binding.
"*Prometheus*." He reaches for it... she pulls it back.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I'll just look for something to
wrap it up with in the back.

She heads back, hesitates, tilts her head.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Do you want to come look with me?

ON JAKE. Hearing the offer in her voice. Feeling that flush he hasn't felt in so long. His mouth smiles... but....

JAKE

I'll just...

He can't look at her. He looks down, at his wedding ring. He shakes his head.

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - EVENING

Jake pushes through the cold, head low. Passes another sign: ***"Remember. Two is a conversation. Three is a conspiracy."***

He turns a corner, starts to cross a square. On another digital billboard: The kid who won the lottery waves self-consciously alongside his middle-eastern parents. The kid wears a proper white shirt, dressed up for the cameras. The parent's smiles seem... pained. Why? Didn't they just win?

A digital clock in the corner reads "11:48." Then it changes, to "11:47." Counting down. Jake stares...

WOMAN'S VOICE

No! No!!!! OH GOD, NO!!!!

Like the man in the subway, a FATHER in the middle of the square has slumped to his knees. He stares straight ahead, slack-jawed and comatose, as his WIFE SCREAMS and his 5-year old DAUGHTER pokes at him.

WIFE

No, Martin! Please get up! No no!!!

Poke. Poke. The little girl pokes at her dad. Why won't he wake up?

CLOSE ON THE MAN'S EYES. They jitter. He's alive in there.

As everywhere, people PRESS ON. Nobody stops. Nobody looks. Heads down, just moving forward.

Jake... SLOWS, also looks away. He winds up staring at another sign: ***"Remember. It takes courage, to walk away."***

He stares at the sign, hating it. Fuck it. He looks over, back at the man and his distraught family.

SCREEECH!!! A MILITARY HUMVEE pulls up. Three MILITARY POLICE get out. Two wear SWAT-like knit MASKS over their faces.

The last MP is a thick-necked, dead-eyed Irish thug who doesn't give a shit. **PAULIE SLAUGHTER** (27). He **LEANS** against the Humvee, watches as his guys start to drag the frozen man towards the vehicle...

The **DAUGHTER** starts to scream. The **WIFE** rushes to stop them -- **OOOF!** Paulie **GRABS** her, pushes her up against the Humvee.

PAULIE

Hey! Hey, Lady! What are you doing?
What do you think you're doing?

WIFE

Please. Please, I --

PAULIE

I'm sorry, but you got a kid. Think about it.

The wife... nods. Devastated. Paulie lets her go and she scoops her kid up and **SLAM!** The Humvee rear doors crash shut on the comatose man and the MP's hustle back inside.

Paulie's lidded eyes scan the crowd... lock with Jake. The only one who's stopped to watch.

Then... Jake looks away again. He starts walking.

RUUUUMMBLE.... RUUUUMMBLEE.... The earth seems to **QUAKE**.

Jake just keeps walking.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - EVENING

Jake uses his keys to enter the lobby.

RUMBLE. Here in this empty space, it's easier to hear the low throb. Like big machines deep below...

He takes in the "**OUT OF SERVICE**" sign on the elevator. Sigh.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jake wearily reaches the top of the stairs. He moves down the windowless hallway -- doors evenly spaced on both sides. He reaches his door. A faded plaque on the door: "*Life takes you to unexpected places. Love brings you home.*"

He leans his head against the door, closes his eyes.

Hears a **WOMAN LAUGHING**.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Closing the door behind him, Jake angles towards the living room where now the woman's laughter is joined by:

MALE VOICE

(gaudy imitation)

"Yes, I heard you, 'mam. We all hear you, cause moving those rocks is so God damned important. Yes, 'mam. Well, honestly I think you need to eat shit, 'mam.

More laughter. The living room revealing itself...

Small, threadbare but cozy. Near a curtained glass door, **GORDY SWAIN** (37) sloppily slurps his beer as he LAUGHS. Soiled jeans, a soiled undershirt over a dirt-infused but handsomely muscled body. Sparkling opportunistic eyes and a wicked grin.

He GLUG GLUG GLUG's his beer as Jake's wife, **CATHERINE PHOBETOR** (35) cracks up, clutching her own beer. She's also wearing dirt-soiled jeans and a lose T-shirt without a bra. A tough face, dusted with dirt, earthy yet beautiful. A pair of workman's gloves in her back pocket and some deep loss she hides with a drink.

Gordy's the first to see Jake. SMILES and lifts his beer.

GORDY

Oh, shit. Hey Jake!

Catherine looks around, sees Jake standing there awkwardly. That makes her LAUGH more. Jake shifts his weight...

CATHERINE

Hey, honey! Gordy walked me home.
How was work?

GORDY

(aside)

If you call that work...

CATHERINE

Shut up! Jake's the only one doing the real work around here. We're just... moving rocks.

GORDY

(toasting with beer)

Moving the fucking rocks.

Jake glances towards a bedroom door across the room, slightly ajar. In the crack... little eyes are watching.

JAKE

Can you watch the language --

CATHERINE

Oh, relax. A few cuss words are the least of his problems.

(calling out)

Love you, Tash!

JAKE

Shouldn't he be asleep --

CATHERINE

Why, Jake? Why should he be asleep?

(to Gordy)

You want another beer?

Gordy tracks Jake, knows he doesn't like him here. So...

GORDY

Sure, why the hell not?

Catherine nods, heads into the kitchen, leaving just the two guys. Gordy nods, finishes his beer, stares back at Jake.

Jake looks away.

Catherine comes out with two more beers. One for her and one for Gordy which she sets down next to him.

CATHERINE

Go ahead, Gordy. Talk to him.

Gordy looks uncertain. Catherine stares: go ahead.

GORDY

... Okay, so the Ark. I mean let's be honest it's the only thing that really matters. Either you're fucking on that thing -- sorry -- or you're not.

JAKE

What do you think you're doing? There's three of us here. That's already too many --

GORDY

Look, I get it. You're scared.

JAKE

Well maybe I have something to be scared for, Gordy.

A glance to the bedroom, door. The small eyes there...

GORDY

You head docs keep us all in line, make sure we don't act up? Makes you important. But everybody knows people like you have access --

JAKE

Stop talking --

CATHERINE

Hear him out, Jake.

GORDY

I don't want to burst your bubble, but Cath and me are out there every day, digging. And let me tell you, it is not going to last. If you think it is, you're dreaming --

JAKE

SHUT THE HELL UP!

The first outburst we've seen from Jake. He glances around the room -- tracks the small eyes still at the bedroom door.

JAKE (CONT'D)

We're fine. Right where we are. We're staying here and it's going to be fine.

CATHERINE

You don't believe that --

GORDY

Listen to her, buddy. Nobody believes that the lottery is for real. So you need to get on the phone, and make some call and see to it that those golden tickets show up like tonight --

Gordy holds up as Jake STEPS TOWARDS HIM, reaching into his breast pocket for what? A weapon?

Jake pulls out the gray envelope. He opens it with hands slightly shaking...

Catherine stops breathing.

Even Gordy's a little taken aback. He takes the letter, glances at it... Shakes his head.

Jake is staring at Catherine, who angrily wipes a tear away.

GORDY (CONT'D)
Ah, hell, sorry. I gotta blitz.

Gordy sets it down. We glimpse: *"We regret to inform you..."*

Gordy walks out of the room. Click. Front door closes.

Catherine imperceptibly shakes her head.

Jake glances to the bedroom door. The small eyes are gone.

INT. TASH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Door pushes gently open and Jake steps in.

It's a child's world of dreams. SUPERHERO images, ripped from magazines, are taped to the walls. A wallpaper of ripped abbs and swelling bosoms racing against evil.

Figurines, miniatures, action figures, are set up in intricate battle around the room. We already love this kid for the attention to detail he puts in:

ON A CHAIR: Galactic soldiers move as a unit against a horde of creepy alien invaders.

ON A DESK: A group of toy army soldiers dive aside as a BOMB blows a few of them into the air. The ones in the air are suspended on thin threads from a lamp.

There's one bare thread with no soldier on it. Jake touches it. It swings back and forth.

Motion catches Jake's attention as a SOCCER BALL rolls towards him from a FORT constructed across the room out of blankets and sheets and pillows. A glow comes from inside.

Jake moves the ball to the side, steps forward, REACTS as he steps on something.

He picks it up. A little army soldier. Its arm in a sling, its head wrapped in bandages.

INT. TASH'S HIDEOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Jake pulls aside a blanket, crawls into the small space. He looks across at

His son. **TASH** (11). Sitting across the small space, knees tucked up. He's got wide dark eyes, dark hair. Olive skin that makes him look almost SouthEast Asian.

Jake presents the broken soldier on a palm.

JAKE
Look what I found.

Tash smiles, takes the figure.

JAKE (CONT'D)
What happened to him?

TASH
He got blown up by an I.E.D.

JAKE
Ouch. That's too bad.

TASH
Improvised Explosive Device.

JAKE
(nods)
Is he going to be okay? He looks
all right to me. I mean, except for
the bandages. You think he's okay?

Tash looks at the little figure, then Jake.

TASH
Did the letter come?

Jake doesn't answer.

The room RUMBLES. Something deep in the basement perhaps.

Tash shivers.

Jake puts his arms out and Tash moves quickly across the space, wraps his arms around his father and nestles in. Jake strokes his hair, gently.

JAKE
Are you scared?

Tash nods quickly. A silent confession.

JAKE (CONT'D)
You don't have to be scared. You
want to know why?
(beat)
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'm going to take care of you, no matter what. I'm always going to be there, and I'm always going to keep you safe. From everything. Okay?

(bet)

Tash?

Jake looks down. Tash is asleep against his chest. Jake gently strokes the boy's hair, closes his eyes...

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Jake and Tash, somewhere on a beach, sand stretching out around them. A simpler time. They LAUGH, kick a soccer ball back and forth.*

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake exits his son's room, presses the door closed behind him. Catherine's nowhere to be seen. But the patio sliding glass door is open, the curtains blowing gently in a breeze.

EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - NIGHT

Jake steps out onto the small 10th floor balcony. Catherine is standing at the railing, looking out over the city. All the fight has gone out of her.

CATHERINE

I'm sorry. I can be a real bitch sometimes. You don't deserve it.

Jake starts to move towards her, and as he does, the view from the balcony opens up...

Drop the mic. Holy shit.

A half mile from their building, A GIANT GLASS DOME has been constructed, rising out of a deep rugged trench bulldozed through the city. The DOME arcs up over their heads.

The poles must have melted, because outside the OCEAN presses against this dome, some 100 feet above the city floor.

We may be adjusting to this new world. But for Catherine and Jake, it's just the world they live in. Catherine sighs.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I used to be so proud, to have people know I was married to you.

She glances at her dirt-encrusted finger nails.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Do you remember? We'd go for walks
by the lake in Grant's Park. People
would stare at us, at me. Lucky
girl...

(beat)

Then everything changed.

JAKE

You think?

She glances up, smiles a little at his humor, glad for it.
Jake's gaze shifts beyond her.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Hey, here comes one.

She looks out.

Beyond the dome, under the water, SHAPES rush towards them.
Caught in the BEAMS of underwater spotlights. Living things.
Huge and grotesque. ALIEN.

From the base of the dome, defensive torpedoes launch, IMPACT
the organic nightmares in BLOOMS OF LIGHT! A fucking war
going on. And through the dome, you can just barely hear it.
Distant hits of sound.

The creatures take MASSIVE DAMAGE. They arc-away, revealing
that they were just the advance wave.

Behind them, NEW CREATURES swim faster. These ones have
METALLIC BODY ARMOR.

Jake and Catherine stare out... They're not phased. It's
their world. It's almost romantic, like watching fireworks.

The NEW CREATURES are HIT over and over by torpedoes. BLOOMS
of fire underwater as they SHIFT, rising to the surface --

They SURGE INTO THE SKY, coming together, forming a solid
mass, their armor INTERLOCKING -- becoming a weapon!

ROCKETS IGNITE at the back of the weapon as it ACCELERATES
straight at the dome as defensive MISSILES fire back --
EXPLODE on the surface of the weapon which takes damage but
KEEPS accelerating.

Jake and Catherine unconsciously take each other's hands.

BA-BOOOOM!!! The WEAPON EXPLODES AGAINST THE OUTSIDE OF THE
DOME!! Ripples of fire and concussion spread out across the
dome's surface.

But in here... it just sounds like a LOW RUMBLE. We suddenly realize what that sound has been.

And now... it's over. Fire washes away. The attack recedes.

Catherine and Jake realize they're holding hands. They let go. Acknowledge the moment of intimacy with small sad smiles.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You see? The dome's strong.

What was nostalgic in Catherine fades. She shakes her head.

CATHERINE

When did you get so afraid?

JAKE

I'm not --

CATHERINE

Some part of you knows what's happening. I just don't know how to get to that part. You need to wake up, Jake.

She turns and leaves. Jake is left staring out at the alien corpses sinking into the inky water outside the dome...

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake pushes in through the curtains. Catherine has fallen asleep on the sofa, her drink nearby. The TV casts flickering light over her, shows other Lottery Winners, plus a countdown: "Time to Ark Launch: 06:23... 06:22... 06:21..."

Jake carefully sets her drink to the side, pulls a light blanket up around her. Tucks it in carefully.

God, he did love her once.

RUMBLE. The sound ripples the alcohol in her glass. Stronger than ever before.

And then, behind Jake, a desk-sized shard of GLASS plummets by. It SHATTERS below.

EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - NIGHT

Jake stares down at the street below. It's covered in shattered glass. One or two confused residents have come out, also taking in the bizarre sight.

Jake stares down. Then he looks UP. A steady determination settles over his features.

INT. TASH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tash STIRS as Jake gently shakes him awake.

TASH
...Dad? What's going on?

Jake puts a finger to his lips. Shhhhhh. He holds up Tash's clothes for him to put on.

JAKE
Hey, you know the Sleepers, right?
(off Tash's nod)
Do you know who made them that way?

TASH
(whisper)
The "*Talis*..."

JAKE
That's right. But if the Talis can do that to us, why haven't they won the war yet? Why don't they just do it to all of us?

TASH
It's hard for them. They have to...
They have to stop.

JAKE
That's right. All the Talis. Those little ones. And the metal ones. And those huge big ones --

TASH
Bogger Droppers.

Tash is dressed. Jake leads him out into:

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Where Tash stops, staring at his mom crashed out on the couch. He's seen this image before.

JAKE
Yeah, they all have to stop, just to put a single one of us to sleep. Which means it's not so easy. So how do you think they pick?

Tash isn't listening anymore. Jake kneels down so his face is close to Tash's. Jake blinks back emotion.

TASH
Is she coming with us?

JAKE
(hard beat)
Why don't you give her a kiss?
She'd like that.

Tash approaches his mother, leans down and kisses her cheek. She smiles in her sleep.

Tash glances to his dad who stares back at him with an unnerving intensity.

RUMBLE.

EXT. CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Tash stand nervously at a dirty bus stop under the El tracks. Across the street, he can see his father in the window of a 24-hour DISCOUNT STORE, buying something.

RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT!! An elevated trains blasts by overhead STARTLES Tash who looks around...

There's his father, with a bag. The train ROARS by overhead.

INT. EL TRAIN - NIGHT

No one else is in the car this late. Just Jake and Tash as the car speeds through the night.

Or almost no one else. The AFFLUENT MAN is still in the car. He's been there a long time now. His lips are DRY. Spittle seeps from the corner of his mouth.

Behind his eyelids, his eyeballs RACE. He's dreaming.

JAKE
Who was the first person the Talis
put to sleep?

TASH
(glancing at the man)
...President Keeler.

JAKE
That's right. And then General
Marshall, then the Vice President.
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
Do you see what all those people
have in common?

TASH
We're not supposed to talk about --

JAKE
It's okay. It's just you and me.
We're just two.

TASH
They were brave. They said people
should keep fighting, against the
Talis. That we couldn't just let
the machines do it for us...

JAKE
Why not?

TASH
(whisper)
Because they'll break. And then
there'll be no one to fix them.

Jake nods. He leans in, take Tash's hands in his.

JAKE
Everyone's scared of the sleep. So
no one wants to be brave. Tonight,
we can use that to our advantage.
(beat)
So tonight, if I ask you to tell a
lie, you have to lie. If I tell you
to walk away from me, you have to
walk away from me. Can you promise
me, that whatever I tell you to do,
you'll do it. No questions.
(beat)
Tash?

TASH
Okay... I promise.

"Ding!" The next stop indicator: "*Elysian Fields*."

EXT. "THE LIFE OF THE MIND" PRINT SHOP - NIGHT

"Briiing!" A BELL sounds inside as Jake presses the buzzer,
standing next to Tash at the door to the shop. A light turns
on inside, the Laura's voice: "Just a moment!"

Jake stares at the number on the door: "#1562"

Door opens and there's Laura, hair mussed, beautiful in a semi-sheer robe she clutches together with one hand.

LAURA
I, um... You're...

Her look: *"You have got to be kidding me."*

Jake's look: *"No, I'm serious."*

She glances to Tash who's watching the two of them, suspicious. She smiles at him.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You must be Tash.

Tash nods, warily. Laura looks back at Jake.

JAKE
You're the only person who can help us. Please.

Slowly, Jake takes out the envelope, the silvery piece of paper. He holds them out to her...

INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Laura's cozy apartment tucked behind the print shop, the other side of the curtain. BOOKS line floor-to-ceiling shelves. Old prints. Strange curios from around the world...

AT A WORKBENCH, Laura has traded the nightgown for a tank top. She carefully uses a LASER PEN, erasing Tash's name off the letter.

"Fly Like an Eagle" by The Steve Miller Band plays on an old BOOM BOX. Tash stares at the disk spinning around. Then up at the WALL OF CD's behind the box.

He pulls down one: The Smiths *"Meat is Murder"* album. The young Vietnam soldier on the cover. He looks at his father, uncomprehending.

JAKE
Don't ask. Here, put these on.

Jake pulls new CLOTHES from the shopping bag. A white shirt. Khaki pants. Tash shakes his head: *"What, right here?"*

LAURA
You can change behind that.

Laura indicates an antique Chinese shade. Tash moves behind it with the clothes.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You know they'll check.

JAKE
That's why we're doing his ID, too.

LAURA
What about you?

Jake levels a look at her. She shuts up, ooops.

Pulling the shirt on behind the shade, Tash tracks that.

Laura finishes engraving the new name: "ISAAC LAMB." She hands Jake the paper. He studies it, nods, then looks over as Tash emerges wearing the white shirt and sweater. Identical to the clothes the boy who won the lottery was wearing...

JAKE
Come over here, Tash.
(showing him the ID)
Look. Isaac Lamb. Can you be Isaac
for a few hours?

Tash nods.

Laura grabs KEYS off a ring next to the door.

LAURA
So gentlemen, shall we?

JAKE
(incredulous)
You still have a car?

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - EARLY MORNING

Brrroooooom! A sweet classic 1973 Dodge Charger growls down the dark and litter-strewn streets, leaving a trail of kicked up debris in its wake which settles...

...over the form of a MAN, another sleeper. It's GENERAL GOODE, now just another sleeper. He's frozen on a bench, staring forward as dirt and dust settle on his face.

INT. 1973 DODGE CHARGER - CONTINUOUS

Jake stares backwards, having recognized Goode. Guilt washes over him, another he couldn't save.

He tightens his arms wrapped around Tash as Laura downshifts in the driver's seat, her skirt bunched high on her bare thighs. She looks over, gives him a little smile as she punches it and we LIFT AWAY. Higher, and higher...

EXT. CHICAGO - EARLY MORNING

Clearing the shadows of the buildings, daylight starting to break, angling through the thick glass of the DOME, glowing off the old surface of the massive SEARS TOWER...

As we ROTATE around the building, an object comes into view:

THE GIANT SALVATION SPACESHIP, "THE ARK."

The Ark is so big, it dwarfs the Sears Tower which through a series of roughly connected struts has been transformed into a support structure for the giant space craft.

Nothing is new, ordered, or shiny. Picture Chicago of today, altered at reckless pace to accommodate a spacecraft built too fast, with no time for the niceties. City blocks knocked down to make way for blast shields, pumps, support stations.

We KEEP RISING, through the thick glass of the dome...

INTO THE AIR OUTSIDE

For a brief moment, the SOUND OF WIND. A vision of clouds. The natural earth...

Suddenly filled with the SCREECH'S OF TALIS warriors, in full-out combat with the automated defense robots of Earth.

It's massive and deafening.

The Talis group up, SURGE towards the dome, only to be BLOWN APART by Earth robots although one gets through and WRAPS itself around a robot and with a SCREECH it detonates!!!

We DRIFT FURTHER BACK, beyond the fray. Far back, near the edge of the atmosphere.

Where a MASSIVE form moves into view. A Talis alien, yes. But this is something new. Maybe a MILE LONG, and as it swims/accelerates towards the DOME below, its underside seems to morph into metal. Like a giant battering ram forming...

Now we TEAR BACK TOWARDS THE SURFACE.

Past the WAR, through the glass, down the surface of the ARK spacecraft, humanity's last, to the tower's base.

Where a 1973 Dodge Charger pulls up...

EXT. DEPARTURE ARENA - BASE OF SEARS TOWER - MORNING

The Charger pulls to a stop. Even as people REACT to the car, Jake, Laura, and Tash get out, angling through the crowd.

Unlike the rest of the city, this place is CROWDED. Think war refugees piling up at a port only there's just one enormous boat leaving...

But no one speaks. No one screams. No one pushes or fights.

They all STARE with inert longing through chain link and concertina wire guarded by SOLDIERS at the unattainable salvation of THE ARK.

Jake keeps Tash tight to his side, angles the three of them towards a GATE. As they approach, the MAIN GUARD holds out his hand for papers...

Jake hands them over, realizes he's staring into the face of PAULIE SLAUGHTER. Paulie squints... recognizing him?

JAKE

Isaac Lamb.

(beat)

It's just him going. We can walk him in, right?

Paulie glances at the paper. Glances at Tash. Notices Laura in a big way... GRINS dumbly, enjoying his power and...

Waves them through.

Jake gently pushes Tash forward and they start to walk down the long chain-link corridor. Headed towards The Ark... Walking... breathing... And then:

A VOICE

No! We gotta stop this! This isn't RIGHT!

A YOUNG MAN has broken away, PLEADING with the crowd...

YOUNG MAN

Are we going to do nothing!? We have to act! We have to do something! Why won't you do anything? They can't stop us all! Come on, what do you have to lose!? If you stay here you're going to die! COME ON PEOPLE!!! COME ON!

No one moves. But a hundred glances shoot back and forth...

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
What are you afraid of?! What can
get worse than that?!!!

He gestures wildly to the sky, where a BLOOM of fire dies on the far side of the glass. And then...

Silence. As if the whole war out beyond the dome stops.

Everyone knows what comes next.

Jake grabs Tash, pulls him in towards him, sheltering his gaze even as the Young Man starts to FEEL IT. He LAUGHS morbidly, tears streaming down his face...

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
Ah, hell. Ah, fuck...

And he drops to his knees. And stays there. Frozen.

His face has gone slack. His eyes dance behind closed lids.

Whatever swell of resistance has grown in the crowd... dies.

LAURA
Jake. Let's go. We should go --

KERWHAAAAAM!!!! A HUGE LOUD NOISE deafens everyone. All look upwards to where the new alien missile has IMPACTED THE DOME!

GLANCES all around. No one has seen anything like this.

And another sound... like a loud CRICK... CRICK... The glass of the dome stressing... cracking...?

JAKE
Yeah. We should go...

INT. EMBARKATION HANGAR - MOMENTS LATER

Jake, Laura, and Tash push into this huge space at the base of The Ark. Dozens of TECHNICIANS move about, worried, many on radios. The sound of helicopters...

A GLIMPSE: A dozen unmanned drone repair helicopters approach the underside of the scarred dome...

Ahead: A line of lottery winners, THE CHOSEN, has formed at the base, an assembly of heart-wrenching farewells. PARENTS say good-bye to chosen CHILDREN. WIVES to chosen HUSBANDS.

One by one, they walk up the ramp into The Ark. Inevitably, they turn and glance back at those they're leaving behind...

Jake leads Tash up to the last hurdle: A counter manned by a TSA-like **GATEKEEPER** (30). He's a scruffy, lanky young man with a goatee. Whatever panic is infusing the room, he's immune to it. And behind the scruff, quick eyes, no dummy.

GATEKEEPER
Who's going?

JAKE
(handing over papers)
Isaac Lamb.
(awkward beat)
Just got his letter last night.

The man's eyes scan the papers...

GATEKEEPER
... Lucky you. You ready for the
trip of a lifetime, Isaac?

Beat. Tash not realizing he's talking to him... The Gatekeeper sensing it...

TASH
Yeah. I guess so.

GATEKEEPER
These your parents?

TASH
... No. My parents didn't want to
come. You understand.

The Gatekeeper stares... Does he understand? His eyes move from Tash to Jake and Laura.

GATEKEEPER
You're his...

LAURA
Guardians.

Almost as an afterthought, Laura takes Jake's hand. The man eyeballs them...

DING! The Gatekeeper squints at the display in front of him:

GATEKEEPER
Says here Isaac Lamb was onboarded
three hours ago.

JAKE
That's impossible. He's right here.

GATEKEEPER
I'm just telling you what the --

JAKE
(firm)
I don't care. He's right here.
There's some mistake.

GATEKEEPER
There can't be a mistake.

JAKE
Yes there can. There's a mistake.
Isaac, go on. I'll deal with this.

ON TASH. Really? Just go, now? No goodbye? His lip starts to tremble.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Just go on. There's a problem, with
the paperwork. But you should --

GATEKEEPER
Hey! He's not going anywhere. Not
until --

KERWHAMMMMM!!!! Huge GIANT SHAKING FORCE. The WHOLE BUILDING TREMBLES. The ARK spacecraft seems to SHIFT in its moorings against the Sears Tower. Dust drifts down.

Jake locks eyes with the Gatekeeper, intense. Pleading.

JAKE
There's no time. He's going. You
and I will sort out the paperwork.

Most of the ARMED GUARDS are eyeing the ceiling, adjusting to the new threat. But one senses the tension between the Gatekeeper and Jake. Sidles over, hand on his weapon...

JAKE (CONT'D)
There's no time.

A LONG BEAT... The Gatekeeper picks up a HEAVY STAMP... and stamps "ADMITTED" onto Tash's counterfeit paper.

Jake SWALLOWS hard, trying not to show his relief.

TASH
... Jake?

Jake looks over. His son is eight feet away. Eight feet down the corridor that leads to the ARK. Eight fucking feet away.

Tash stands there, trembling...

JAKE

Go on, Isaac. Go on.

(hard beat)

I'll tell your father, how brave you were. And that you made it out. Which is all he cares about in the world. He'll be so happy, to know you're going to live. So go on. Go on, now.

Still, Tash STARES BACK.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Go on...

Tash finally, slowly, turns and walks towards the ARK.

Jake WILLs himself to turn away. Laura takes his hand and they start to walk back the way they came.

The Gatekeeper tracks them... Tracks Tash... Looks at the DOCUMENT in front of him.

Where the ink of the "ADMITTED" stamp mixes with the still fresh ink on the document... blurring... running.

His EYES NARROW... he stares at JAKE, who's glanced back.

They meet eyes.

The man knows.

Jake... eyes moving wildly... as the Gatekeeper speaks to the armed guard...

JAKE (CONT'D)

(hoarse)

...Run...

His voice won't work. His body feels leaden, like in a dream.

Tash reaches the bottom of the ramp into the craft, starts up into the craft... but now turning around --

JAKE (CONT'D)

(can't find his voice)

... Tash. Run.

Jake, trembling. Eyes darting as the guard speaks into a radio. Jake can't move, frozen. Eyes find Laura just as:

That weird SILENCE descends like a blanket. The Talis are putting another one to sleep.

Laura stares back at him, terrified...

JAKE (CONT'D)
(barely audible)
No... Laura.

Somewhere huge CRACKING SOUND. Something's wrong out there...
A distant EXPLOSION.

SCREAMS from outside! Jake's vision rifles around: Laura, staring at him, calling out his name -- The ship, where Tash is running back down the ramp, back towards Jake --

JAKE (CONT'D)
(whimpering)
No, don't. Tash, no...

But he's frozen, can't move. And he suddenly realizes: He's the one being put to sleep.

A ROAR fills Jake's ears. He winces. What is that sound!?!?
He forces his head around, looking back to see:

The OCEAN rushing at him. A wall of water a hundred feet tall breaching the entrance...

LOOMING, huge, on top of him. His eyes go wide...

And the water HITS HIM.

UNDERWATER. The water SWIRLING, murky, thick, filling his lungs. Jake's mouth opens, filling with water! Drowning... reaching out for anything, for the surface...

And a hand grabs his! Pulls him...

OUT OF THE WATER! Into...

INT. CRYOGENIC POD BAY - THE ARK - OUTER SPACE - NO TIME

Jake's HAULED from the water onto metal decking. He COUGHS HARD, water spilling from his lungs. Retching...

A WOMAN'S VOICE
Hey! Hey, it's okay. You can breathe.

Jake looks up, confused.

Catherine stands there. Her long black hair is pulled into a tight bun. She's wearing what was once a sleek UNIFORM of space command. But this one's seen a lot of wear. Her face and hands are dirty. She's pit-stained, bandaged from a wound, got a weapon strapped to her side.

CATHERINE

Mr. Pheobator! Hey, Mr. Pheobator!
You have to breathe!

Jake GASPS for air... now hyperventilating... orienting.

He's in a SPACE SHIP. High-tech metal walls on all sides. Digital readouts, duct work, electric grids. The light is blue and fluorescent, the air is thick and HOT with haze.

He's nude, covered in a beige and wet bandage-like gauze and surrounded by SLEEP PODS. The one he just came from, open.

JAKE

Tash! My -- where the hell -- my
son. Tash! TASH! He was here!

CATHERINE

Hey, hey it's okay. Calm down --

JAKE

Where the hell is my son!

Jake slips in the pool of fluids. Catherine steadies him, guides him to another POD. She wipes condensation off the glass surface, revealing...

Tash. Asleep under fluid, also lightly wrapped in gauze. There are tubes in his nose and mouth. At peace. Jake touches the glass...

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Jake, juggling the soccer ball on the sand in the brilliant white light. Tash clapping and LAUGHING...*

Jake stares through the glass at Tash. Tears flow.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Tash...

CATHERINE

You dream about the wave?

He looks up, disoriented --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Everybody does. It's your brain
reminding you you're actually
floating in saline. I know, your
brain's a sneaky little bastard.
Put these on.

She kicks open a cabinet, tosses him clothing. He stares at
it, emotions and memories are ricochetting around his brain.

JAKE
Catherine?

CATHERINE
No, see that's Lieutenant Charles
to you.

JAKE
Your maiden name.

CATHERINE
Dude, no. Look, we left Terra two
years ago, 'cause of the fucking
Talis. You're waking up from a two-
year dream.

As he peels down the gauze bodysuit, she sneaks a peek.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
So you're going to have to adjust,
fast, 'cause we have bigger
problems and I need you functional,
right now. Good?

JAKE
Okay... Okay.

She considers him... nods. She slings a CONTRAPTION, like a
home-wired PC, over a shoulder, heads out.

CATHERINE
We don't have a lot of time. Try to
keep up.

He starts to follow her, passing by another POD which holds
LAURA, asleep like Tash, floating nude in ethereal gauze...

He STARES, dumbstruck. Touches the pod's glass. Eyes go to
the number... POD #1562...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Alright, man. I get it. Take a
second. She's your wife.

JAKE

What?

CATHERINE

You doctors, you like the blonde
pretty ones, dont'cha?

(looking away)

Not that I'm judging...

He stares at Laura. Floating, white gauze hugging her body...

JAKE

(accepting...)

This is my wife.

CATHERINE

Yup. Although like I said...

(off his look)

You got bigger problems.

INT. CORRIDORS - THE ARK - NO TIME

Catherine leads fast through the twists and turns of the corridors. Steam vents from broken pipes, making the air thick and hazy. Jake SWEATS as he follows, still orienting.

CATHERINE

The Ark cleared Terra four hours
before the Talis shattered the
dome. And that was it. Earth, done.
Everything and everyone left, here,
on the Ark.

She ducks under some WRECKAGE into an ENGINEERING BAY. It's been through hell. BLAST DAMAGE, TWISTED METAL. A DEEP RUMBLE shakes the whole ship. Something WRONG with the engines, far below. Jake glances to Catherine.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Twenty-two days after we left, they
started chasing us. Took them seven
months to catch up. Then they
latched on, and boarded us...

(off the damage)

Got ugly. Really ugly.

She ducks through a ragged doorway, into a large

INT. CARGO BAY - THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

Catherine crosses to a HUGE METAL PORTAL in the exterior wall. Rounded leaves of an APERTURE are now closed.

CATHERINE
We fought 'em off, and they
retreated. Regrouped...

JAKE
... Regrouped. What does that mean?

CATHERINE
Jake, don't freak out on me.

JAKE
I won't. I just --

CATHERINE
I can't have you freak out right
now. Clear?

Jake crosses his arms, defiant.

She studies him... sizing him up, then punches a button. The
aperture leaves TWIST OPEN, revealing DEEP SPACE. A force
field keeps them from being sucked into the vacuum. But
that's not what makes Jake REACT.

Maybe 150 kilometers behind them is THE TALIS MOTHERSHIP.

As big as the Ark is, This is forty times bigger. Alien. Not
of any world we know. Evil and huge and closing on them.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Talis mothership. Ugly, right?
They've been closing for months.

JAKE
... How far?

CATHERINE
They'll reach us in about an hour.
(beat)
Like I said. Bigger problems.

She moves off. He stays a moment longer to stare at the
approaching menace...

INT. CORRIDORS - THE ARK - NO TIME

Jake catches up to Catherine.

JAKE
One hour?

CATHERINE
Shit's not fair, I know. Gotta
adjust though.

JAKE
What have you been doing all this
time? I mean, why wait this long to
wake -- where the hell is everyone?

In reply, Catherine SLAPS a control. A door hissssses open.

INT. MED LAB - THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

Jake follows Catherine in --

JAKE
Hey I asked you a question!!

Jake stops short. In the BEDS that line the room are CREW MEMBERS. All COMATOSE. SLEEPERS. Some are intact, others have been through hell. One guy in a corner is half covered in bandages, burned skin visible beneath.

Catherine moves between them, checking the IVs jammed in their arms, rough maintenance...

CATHERINE
The sleep. The Talis can still do
their little bullshit trick, but it
slows their ship down. Costs them
maybe a week so they don't do it
unless they really have to.

She checks a DOCTOR's I.V. bag -- too low. Swaps it out for a new one. Pats some color into the Doctor's face.

JAKE
What about you? You seem --

CATHERINE
Well the Doc here figured it out.
Used that on my head. Ouch.

In the center of the room there are two evenly spaced OPERATING TABLES. One's a mess. Robotic arms with NEEDLES at their tips, inert over blood-coated steel.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
He did something to my brain. So
now... I don't sleep.

JAKE

Wait, you don't sleep at all?
People who don't sleep, they're...

He reaches out, instinctively, but she STEPS BACK. A hard flash in her eyes.

CATHERINE

They go crazy, right Jake?

She shoots him a wink, then opens a cabinet and dry-swallows a few pills.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Amazing what the right meds can do.
Cools me right out. That and my
music...

She touches a small controller on her belt. MUSIC comes on, pushed through speakers everywhere in the station: *"I want to fly like an eagle, 'till I'm free... Fly like an Eagle..."*

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You like The Steve Miller Band? I
can't get enough of them.

JAKE

This song...

CATHERINE

I know, the shit just seeps in.

Jake glances to the doctor, the operating table, an idea forming...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Uh-uh, no. By the time I woke up
from it, they'd got to the Doc. And
I don't know how he fixed me.

JAKE

So then you can't protect me?

CATHERINE

Sorry, man. This way.

INT. CORRIDORS - THE ARK - NO TIME

Catherine strides forward, head bobbing along to the strange soundtrack that echoes through the cavernous ship.

JAKE
Hey! Hey you!
(off the music)
Can you... Please?

She touches the control again. Music stops but she doesn't.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Why'd you wake me up? Why me?

CATHERINE
What's wrong with you?

JAKE
Nothing. I just meant, aren't there
people, more qualified...

Catherine glances at him as they duck under more wreckage.

CATHERINE
Come on. We got a long climb.

They've reached a central hub. At one point ELEVATORS would have stopped here to carry people to different parts of the craft. Now they're out of order, to say the least. WRECKED.

Catherine steps through wreckage, starts to climb a ladder. Jake takes in the broken elevators... sighs.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - THE ARK - MOMENTS LATER

Hundreds of feet of drop beneath them, they work their way up. Here the Ark's GROANS are LOUDER. Somewhere metal TORQUES. The climb is hard work, they're sweating.

CATHERINE
First time the Talis hit us,
screwed up the heat sinks so now
the engines are basically venting
into the compartment, cooking us
alive -- watch out here --

Catherine's reached a place where the ladder's blasted away. She HAULS herself and the DEVICE over a harrowing gap.

Jake stares down at the DROP. She puts a hand out.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Hang in, Jake. Almost there.

He grabs her hand.

INT. BRIDGE - THE ARK - NO TIME

The bridge of the ship is spectacular. A LARGE VIEW WINDOW shows space beyond. Thousands of indicators, hundreds of monitors, technology jammed together.

But as Jake wanders onto the bridge he only notices:

THE CAPTAIN. Frozen in his chair. Glassy eyes staring out. The same man as General Goode in Jake's dream. In another chair, a NAVIGATOR is also frozen in front of his CHARTS. Jake can't see his face, he starts to move around...

... Bumps into ANOTHER FROZEN PERSON! This one dressed in military gear: Paulie Slaughter, the MP.

As in the Med Lab, all the men have IV stands next to them, tubes running into their arms...

JAKE

What happened here?

CATHERINE

What do you think? Talis slept 'em.
No way to get them down the shaft
so I've been hauling fluids up,
keep 'em alive.

KERWHAM! She HAULS the piece of equipment she's been carrying onto a surface, starts to ATTACH it to the mainframe.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Okay, this, is Betty. She's your friend.

(off his blank stare)

The Ark's basically a big dumb cruise liner. And even though it's shot to shit and about to get invaded by motherfucking Talis alien warriors...

She KICKS a panel hard enough to pop it off its hinges.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

The Ark thinks everything is hunky dorry...

She HITS A CONTROL. DEEP IN THE SHIP'S BOWELS, something rumbles to life. A screen reads "FUEL VENT PROCEDURE."

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
My problem is, the Ark was designed for redundancy, needs two command approvals for anything that could have catastrophic consequences.

Near Jake there's a HAND PRINT waiting: "AUTHORIZATION." Ten feet away, she's got the same on a screen next to her.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
On three, put your hand on the screen. It has to happen at the same time.

JAKE
Then what happens?

CATHERINE
Hey Jake! Six minutes, Talis ship attaches, and they board us. We won't stand a chance. They'll slaughter us, kill the rest in their sleep pods. Do you get that?

Jake just stares back. Catherine shakes her head, looks away. But there's no mistaking the fact that she draws the weapon from the holster at her side.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Jake, I need you to man up and put your hand on that screen.

JAKE
Define "catastrophic consequences."

We've never heard that tone from Jake before. A beat...

CATHERINE
It'll shut down the main engines. We'll lose acceleration. The Ark's got enough fuel for a decade of travel. We'll dump a year's worth behind us, start the engines back up just as the Talis ship is coming in, ignite the fuel dump...
(beat)
Blow them back the fuck wherever they came from.

JAKE
You said the Ark was barely holding together already...

CATHERINE
Do you have another idea?

Jake STARES at Catherine.

JAKE
You know, in my dream --

CATHERINE
Yeah I don't really dream anymore,
Jake.

He takes her in. There's that raw panic hiding behind her anger, the uncertainty and fear. She swallows, then:

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Listen, you got a chance here, to
save your kid, your wife. I know
you're scared, but I think you have
it in you --

JAKE
Stop it. You woke me up because I'm
nobody. Because as far as the Talis
are concerned, I'm not a threat and
maybe they'd let me stay conscious
long enough to push your damn
button and that's all.

She stares at him. Blinks. Wow.

CATHERINE
I still can't do this without you.

Jake looks right back at her.

JAKE
In my dream. We were married.

She stares at him: *What?*

There's nothing more to say. He SLAPS his hand onto the reader. It takes a split second for her to realize he's done it. Then she does the same.

The SCAN processes...

EXT. THE ARK - OUTER SPACE

The massive ENGINES of the Ark... flicker out.

INT. BRIDGE - THE ARK - NO TIME

Without the engine's acceleration, GRAVITY DIES. Jake and Catherine FLOAT up from the floor. Catherine's trained for this. Jake's not.

JAKE

What now?

CATHERINE

Wait for it... Wait...

She's pulled herself to the screens, eyes raised, face LIT. An almost girlish LAUGH erupts as SYSTEMS COME ALIVE.

SOUNDS from deep in the ship. Liquid fuel, starting to move.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Come on... Come on you beautiful bitch...

EXT. THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

Liquid fuel POURS from vents, crystallizing in the absolute zero of space, creating a massive CLOUD which drifts back... enveloping the front edge of the Talis Mothership.

INT. BRIDGE - THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

The image plays on the screen of the bridge. Catherine's eyes light up. A timer on her device counts down: "5... 4... 3..."

Without thinking, she takes Jake's hand...

CATHERINE

(whispered)

Here we go...

ALL THE SCREENS SUDDENLY GO BLACK.

A small message scrolls: *"Engine restart: Malfunction."*

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

No no no... NO!!!

She works at the device, frantically -- Can't make progress --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

No, please. PLEASE!!!

She SLAMS HER FISTS DOWN ON the CONSOLE. ONCE, TWICE, drawing blood. Just those words: *"Engine restart: Malfunction."*

Tears flow freely. Catherine... surrenders. She lets go, curls into a ball, floating. Jake PUSHES off after her, catching her. They tumble together, a weightless slow dance.

JAKE

Hey... Hey... What does that mean?

CATHERINE

(whisper)

... It means we lose.

He pulls her in. Forehead to forehead.

JAKE

No, come on. There's got to be another way.

CATHERINE

(shaking her head)

Took three months to get Betty ready.

(morbid smile)

We don't have another three months.

It sinks in. He starts to let go, but she pulls him back.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Just... please.

JAKE

(realizing)

How long have you... When was the last time you woke someone up?

CATHERINE

About a year.

JAKE

You've been alone... keeping them all alive... for a year?

She looks up at Jake. Something passing between them. Intimacy... a spark. A small smile...

CATHERINE

Yeah.

KERRRRRRRANGGG!!!! A GIANT METAL BOOM reverberates through the structure as Jake and Catherine are tossed against a wall. The whole SHIP GROANS...

EXT. THE ARK - OUTER SPACE

The TALIS MOTHERSHIP has impacted the side of the Ark. It's not fast, not at all. But between two objects with MILLIONS OF TONS of mass -- it's like ICEBERGS CRASHING TOGETHER.

DEBRIS sheers. Metal struts BEND even as cables BLAST from the mothership into the Ark's hull, drawing her in TIGHT...

INT. BRIDGE - THE ARK - NO TIME

The Ark GROANS more under the punishment. The room VIBRATES.

JAKE

What've we do? Com'on! You've fought them before, you know how to beat them. What do we do?!

But Catherine's not listening. She shakes her head, fumbles with her controller. MUSIC fills the ship again as Jake pushes off towards the controls. He find a panel: LIFEPODS.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Here. We get off the ship. Where are the lifepods? HEY! How do we get off this thing?!

CATHERINE

They'd just track your pod. And besides... There's nowhere to go.

JAKE

I'm getting my family and I'm leaving. Are you coming with me?

CATHERINE

Sorry, Jake. I just can't fight anymore.

He gives up, pushes away from her, floating back towards...

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - THE ARK - MOMENTS LATER

Jake pushes himself out into the shaft. He hovers weightless over the drop hundreds of feet down into flickering dark. Catherine's music echoes eerily through the space...

His feet find purchase. He KICKS OFF down the shaft. Surreal vertigo as he SOARS DOWNWARDS.

EXT. THE ARK - OUTER SPACE

The Ark actually looks small crushed against the front of the alien Mothership.

And now the Mothership's engines ROAR TO LIFE...

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

Jake's not touching anything, so he doesn't immediately sense the ACCELERATION. But he hears the POPS and MOANS of metal...

He looks around, realizes that while he was gliding a moment ago, now he's FALLING.

He FLAILS, trying to reach something. Falling faster -- GRABS a rung of the ladder. It RIPS OUT OF HIS HANDS -- still falling -- flung across the space -- where he GRABS AGAIN --

SCREAMS as his weight is caught by his shoulder.

INT. CORRIDOR - THE ARK - MOMENTS LATER

Jake staggers into the wrecked corridor, a hand wrapped around his dislocated shoulder. He grits through the pain, eyeballs a piece of wreckage...

DRIVES his shoulder against it, re-setting the joint as he HOWLS in pain!!

Then STOPS, breathing hard. STEAM POURS from vents, the air is thick. Now LIGHT and SOUND come from down the corridor...

Jake peers through haze. Something is CUTTING INTO THE SHIP.

INT. CRYOGENIC POD BAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jake moves quickly into the room, headed straight for Tash's pod. He wipes the condensation off the glass, stares down...

BOOM! Somewhere back in the bowels of the ship, a wall comes down... The music dies. Silence for a moment.

Then new sounds. Movement in the ship. They're not alone in here any longer.

Jake scans the controls... sees a green button. "END STASIS."

JAKE
... It can't be that easy.

He presses... KSHHHHHHH!!! Pressure exhales as fluid DRAINS and the glass case SLIDES BACK.

Tash lies there in wet gauze sleep suit. He seems inert... dead. Jake doesn't know what to do, starting to panic...

PZZZZTTTTT!!! An automatic SHOCK ripples through Tash's body. He RISES UP, coughing, disoriented, into his father's arms.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Hey... Hey, it's okay. Shhhhhh...
(eyes on the corridors)
I'm here. I'm right here. I got you. I got you.

TASH

Dad? Where am I? There was a wave...

JAKE

It's a long story.

TASH

Where's mom...?

INT. CRYOGENIC POD BAY - MOMENTS LATER

PZZZZTTTTTTT!!! The electric shocks ripples through Laura's body. She surges up, COUGHING, in her already open pod.

JAKE

Easy... easy. You're okay.

He takes her in his arms, awkwardly. She's not wearing anything beyond the thin wet gauze of the sleep-clothing.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'm here. I'm right here...

She senses it too -- the weirdness. Touches his face. Smiles.

LAURA

Jake...?

JAKE

Yeah. It's me.

She pulls him in, kisses him. He kisses her back, but his eyes stay open, staring at her. Is this really his wife?

She senses his awkwardness, pulls back.

LAURA

What?

But before he can answer, she sees Tash. Her eyes light up.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Tash...

She pulls him in. Kisses the top of his head.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Where are we?

HOOOOWWWLLLLLLL!!! A single gut-chilling alien cry echoes down the corridors of the ship.

INT. CORRIDOR - THE ARK - MOMENTS LATER

Jake leads his now-dressed family to a junction in the corridors. Ahead, a sign for the "LIFEPOD BAY."

The SHIP GROANS again... Somewhere deep the structure is breaking. Red emergency lighting washes the walls.

Jake PEERS around a corner, to the end of the dark corridor.

Suddenly a TALIS ALIEN moves across the space. Our first view of the aliens, difficult to see clearly in the haze and dark. We get a sense of a LARGE body supported by quick powerful legs. Metallic teeth glint in flickering light...

TASH

(whisper)

What do you see?

Jake puts his finger up. Shhhhh... As the alien senses something... Stops. But after a long moment, it move off into the darkness.

Jake motions his family forward. They cross the intersection, start down the corridor, push through a set of doors.

Laura SCREAMS even as Jake covers her mouth. A human body is caught in twisted wreckage. A remnant of the last attack.

They are all FROZEN. Listening... Thud. Thud thud...

Thud thud thud thud thud!!!!

It's COMING.

JAKE

We have to run.

They TAKE OFF, down the corridors. Twisting, turning, through the maze of the ship as the alien CLOSES, thundering, pushing debris aside as it closes behind them!

They corner, stumble into:

INT. LIFEPOD BAY - CONTINUOUS

An open space with four doorways to LIFEPODS. Jake points to one across the space.

JAKE

That one!

Laura crosses the space, SLAPS a control. The Lifepod POWERS UP with a HUMMMMM.

Jake looks back, can hear the ALIEN COMING. He grabs an AXE, SWINGS as the alien RUSHES out of the dark! It HITS HIM before the swing can connect, sends Jake SPRAWLING Backwards, his forehead bloodied, as --

AT THE POD DOOR, the door HISSES OPEN. Laura PUSHES TASH INSIDE, turns to see.

THE TALIS ALIEN, in full form, standing over Jake.

Eight feet of leathery barnacled skin, beady lit eyes hiding deep in something like a face with metal-laced teeth. At the end of its hands, razor-claws that RISE OVER Jake...

LAURA

Jake!

The CLAWED HAND ARCS DOWN!

BOOM! The BLAST from a weapon PROPELS the alien to the side!

Catherine steps from a shadow! Bad-ass in her tank-top as she JAMS another PLASMA cartridge into the shotgun-like weapon she's holding as she moves past Jake, stares down at the alien who SCREEECHES AT HER!!!

BLAM!! She blasts what it has for a head to bits.

JAKE

Thought you were done fighting.

Catherine nods down the corridor where now the sound of MORE ALIENS closing reaches them, deafening!

CATHERINE

I'll hold them off. You gotta go.

Jake scrambles towards the pod as Catherine draws ANOTHER WEAPON -- A hand-held Plasma pistol -- BLAM BLAM BLAM! She opens up, plasma bolts BLASTING down the corridors.

Jake reaches the pod, sees Laura buckling Tash into a seat. She turns to him. What is he waiting for?

LAURA

Jake? Come on.

He looks back.

NEAR THE BAY ENTRANCE, Catherine BLOWS an alien to bits but PZZZZT!!! An energy bolt clips her leg! She FALLS, CRYING OUT! She tries to level her weapon as MORE SHAPES approach --

Jake stares at Tash, Laura...

TASH

Dad...?

JAKE

I love you, Tash.

Tash senses what's happening, starts to writhe against his restraints, crying out, arms reached out for his father...

TASH

No, dad! NO!

JAKE

I'll find you.

Jake hits a control and the POD SEALS in front of him. A moment later the HEAVY MECHANICAL SOUND as the pod detaches.

Jake presses his forehead against the metal. Loss and pain mixed with relief. Tash is safe, but --

CRACK CRACK CRACK!! Energy bolts CREASE the metal near Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Catherine!

She glances his way -- TOSSES HIM HER WEAPON!

He MOVES catching it with one hand, raising it --

Wait, how does it work, where's the trigger? He doesn't know how this thing is supposed to fire.

He stares over at Catherine. Their gaze connects, holds.

SKERLLLITCH!!!! A bolt of LIVING TISSUE shoots out of the darkness, hitting him in the chest and affixing there. Energy courses through it...

Jake's eyes go distant...

His legs buckle, he falls to his knees, looking forward blankly, already asleep, already gone.

As the alien steps from the darkness...

DIRECTOR'S VOICE

And... CUT!

Jake STARTS, looks around, blinking against BRIGHT LIGHTS which fill the space with a KER-CHUNK!

SOUNDS invade the space. A LOUD BELL RINGS as GAFFERS and FILM TECHS move out from behind the lights towards Jake who finds himself on...

INT. "ALIEN STAR INVADERS" SOUND STAGE - DAY

Jake REACTS, jerking backwards. He can't escape as he's still held by the parasitic alien attachment.

EFFECTS TECH (O.S.)

Hey, woah, easy there... That thing can't take a lot of abuse.

The TECH, a dude in his 20's wearing JEANS and SANDALS, sporting a big mustache, starts to unclip the thing...

... Jake STARES DOWN. It's made of rubber. Everything's STYROFOAM or RUBBER.

JAKE

What the...

DIRECTOR'S VOICE

There's my fucking guy! There he is!

Out from the lights rushes GORDY SWAIN. He's got the tight polyester shirt, the belt buckle. Scorsese, circa 1970's...

GORDY

Holy crap, man! You had me shitting my pants because of aliens. I was feelin' you. Drama-city, baby.

Gordy REACHES for Jake who ducks away from him, wide-eyed. A MAKEUP GIRL tries to touch-up his face, he pushes away, spattering red across her shirt --

Jake's gaze rifle-visions around the set, taking it all in. Orange hues, dust in the air, beards and moustaches, bell bottoms and jean shorts. Transistor radios. People smoking, their hair and skin, sweaty and radiant.

This is a movie set, Los Angeles, circa 1976.

Jake His eyes fall on a director's chair. He reads:

"Alien Star Invaders. Jake Barnes."

Gordy puts an arm around him, full of his aggressive dickish charm and fake concern.

GORDY (CONT'D)
Hey.. Hey hey hey... It's cool,
man. It's cool. You're cool.

Gordy nods to a HOT ASSISTANT in short shorts, a pack of camels in her back pocket, roller-skated and braless in a ZEPLIN t-shirt. She acknowledges, skates off...

JAKE
Gordy...

GORDY
Yeah, it's me. You're cool.

Gordy pulls him in bro-tight, whispers:

GORDY (CONT'D)
Com'on, man. Don't go like this. We
cannot have you go all freaky-deaky
again. The fuckin' suits are
watchin'.

Jake follows his gaze, sees a phalanx of SUNGLASSED AND SUITED STUDIO EXECS watching from the back.

A TALIS ALIEN lumbers into view!! Jake STARTS back --

GORDY (CONT'D)
Woah!! Woah, dude! Take it easy...

The Alien takes off its head, revealing a sweaty STUNT MAN inside. Nearby, another Talis comes apart.

Jake STARES, wide-eyed. More styrofoam and rubber... He turns, sees Catherine, her back to him...

JAKE
Catherine...?

He grabs her shoulder and she turns. It's not Catherine. Just some BRUNETTE ACTRESS who smiles, unsure...

Jake stares. How can this be...?

PAULIE (O.S.)
My maaaaaannn!!!!

PAULIE SLAUGHTER fake-tackles Jake, space-suit costumed for his small part. Big stupid grin, fake pummeling him.

PAULIE (CONT'D)
You are the man!
(imitating Jake's line)
"I'll find you."
(hitting more)
That was so heavy! Pow pow!

Jake tries to defend himself, the punches coming fast -- what the hell -- suddenly Paulie wraps him up in a giant hug.

PAULIE (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Let's blow this joint. Gordy's got
some pure Columbian gonna make all
your dreams come true.
(beat)
Dude, what? What the fuck?

Jake's gaze is locked across the stage where the "ESCAPE POD" door -- a painted flat -- is wheeled away, revealing:

TASH. Sitting timidly alone in his "space suit" costume. He looks a little lost as GRIPS and TECHS move around him...

Jake breaks away from Gordy and Paulie... approaches the boy, trying to hold back the swell of emotion inside him.

JAKE
Hey...

Tash looks up, SMILES. He likes Jake.

TASH
Hi... Was I good?

JAKE
Good?
(realizing)
Yeah, of course. I mean, you were
great. You were perfect.

Tash nods, that means a lot.

TASH

Thanks.
(then, carefully)
Are you okay, Jake?

Jake looks at him, eyes watering. What is he supposed to say?
He takes the boy's hand.

JAKE

Yeah, I'm okay. I just... What do
you think happens? Do you think you
make it?

Jake nods towards the ESCAPE POD set. Tash... shrugs.

MAN'S VOICE

Daniel! DANIEL!

An ARABIC MAN comes swooping in, a big fake SMILE for Jake.
This is **FARIQ AMIR** (50s). Producer and Tash's father.

MR. AMIR

(to Jake, obsequious)
We're so sorry, sir, Mr. Barnes.
Sometimes he's a stupid boy.
(to Tash, in arabic:)
< *You don't talk to him, you
understand!?* >

JAKE

Hey... take a chill pill.
(did he just say that?)
I mean, it's fine. We were just --

MR. AMIR

Mr. Barnes. We've been so pleased
with the way the movie is
progressing. It's such an
opportunity for Daniel, to be able
to work with a great actor such as
yourself.

JAKE

Yeah, thanks. Look --

Mr. Amir pulls Tash up by his shirt roughly --

MR. AMIR (ARABIC)

< *Come now! You have to work on
your lines. Right now!* >

He PUSHES Tash away towards a trailer.

JAKE

Hey! What the hell is your damage?!

Jake has GRABBED Mr. Amir by the shirt, spun him around. The man is wide-eyed, confused. No one touches him like this.

A beat, a stand off...

... Which is broken as Gordy and Paulie swoop in, physically pulling Jake away, Gordy hanging back --

GORDY

Sorry, Mr. Amir, sorry. It's looking great, right? My man here, he's making you money. He's fucking printing you money...

Gordy leads Mr. Amir the one way, keeps Jake at arm's length.

JAKE

Tash!

Gordy SPINS into Jake's line of sight who doesn't want to look at him, keeps trying to keep Tash in view...

GORDY

(harsh whisper)

Dude, the kid is not your problem. He's going to be fine. And the guy may be a douchebag, but he's writing the checks... JAKE!

Jake finally focuses on Gordy.

GORDY (CONT'D)

I love that you care, man. But that kid is not your problem. Do you get that?

Jake watches, helpless as Tash disappears into a trailer. Finally Jake nods, allows Gordy to steer him away as Paulie picks up the other flank.

The HOT ASSISTANT Roller girls by, hands Gordy a paper bag.

GORDY (CONT'D)

Thanks, gorgeous.

(to Jake)

Man, things I'd like to do to her. Oh, right, I forgot. You already did them.

He LAUGHS, Paulie laughs too as they arrive at another trailer. Gordy and Paulie bust inside.

Jake holds up. He looks back to where across the set the actor who played Captain Goode (also General Goode) sits absolutely still on a small bench. He looks defeated, silly in his space suit costume.

Jake stares at the man who's utterly frozen, just staring outwards. Is he...?

Suddenly the man raises an apple to his lips, bites, chews. His eyes find Jake and he smiles wanly...

INT. JAKE'S TRAILER - DAY

Jake comes in, spooked. Gordy and Paulie are sprawled on Naugahyde couches. The paper bag is open and a swarm of pills covers the coffee table. Gordy's cutting a line of coke.

PAULIE

And there he is. Man, take these.
Sort your shit out.

He tosses Jake two red Seconals, hands him a bottle of Jack.

Jake sets the pills back down on the table, instead moves to the walls, touches them... Is this real? Is this possible?

Gordy and Paulie exchange looks.

GORDY

(some edge)
So, you all better, brother? You
were fucking losin' it out there.

JAKE

Yeah... sorry. Listen --

GORDY

Fuckin Mr. Fariq Amir. What an
asshole. I mean, welcome to the
U.S. of fuckin' A, dude.

Gordy snorts a line, kicks back. Wow!

PAULIE

Gimme gimmme...

Paulie snorts a line.

JAKE

Hey, where's my um...

(beat)

Where's my script? I mean...

(fuckit, launching in)

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

Look at the situation: I send my kid and my wife out into space in a pod, out into... just space. And these aliens have taken out Catherine and me with those organic -- whatever the hell they are. And I just don't see... Where we're going with this?

GORDY

Wow, Jake. Never thought of it that way. I mean, you're right. That's a problem.

JAKE

That's what I'm saying.

Beat. Gordy and Paulie CRACK UP, LAUGHING. Funniest thing on the planet. Jake gets a little angry.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'm serious. I don't have my -- script. What? What's so funny!?

GORDY

(tapping his head)

Dude, you are way too up in here.
Kill the aliens. Kiss the girl.
Bing bang boom. Done.

Before Jake can reply, the door opens and LAURA walks in. She's changed out of her costume, wears a slinky diaphanous one-piece dress with insane heels. Gorgeous.

Paulie and Gordy start pushing the drugs back in the bag.

GORDY (CONT'D)

Ah, shit, speak of the devil. Hello your highness, we were just leaving. We're not even here.
(offering her a line)
I mean, before we vanish --

Laura does a line, tosses her bag down. Stands there, waiting, as Gordy and Paulie scurry out of the trailer.

Slam. Suddenly it's just Jake and Laura.

JAKE

Hi. Um...

She smiles.

JAKE (CONT'D)
You know what? I lost my script. Do
you know, what happens, to the
Escape Pod?

In answer, she comes over to Jake, wraps her arms around his neck and kisses him deeply. Finally she backs off a little, her arms still around his neck.

LAURA
I think me and the kid figure out
how to turn the thing around, come
back for you.
(beat)
But they're changing everything.

JAKE
Okay.

She steps back, kicks off her shoes.

LAURA
Last I heard they have the writer
hidden away in some cave turning
out pages...

She lights a stick of incense. Smoke WAFTS into the air...

LAURA (CONT'D)
Only Fariq's gotta approve them all
and he hates everything...

She kills the lights. Sunlight streams in through the drawn blinds, striates in the incense smoke. Wow.

She reaches into a side table where there are pre-rolled joints. Sparks one, inhales and blows smoke into the air where it plumes slowly...

LAURA (CONT'D)
So who knows, right?

She pushes an 8-track into a player. Steve Miller's song rolls out into the hazy air. *"Time keeps on slippin' slippin'... into the future..."*

Laura comes over, straddles Jake, leans down. Smokes passes from her lips to his. He instinctively inhales.

He stares at her. She's beautiful.

She pulls her dress up over her head. She's wearing an elegant bra and panties underneath. Stares down at him.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You know you really scared some
people out there.

JAKE
I'm sorry. I'm okay.

LAURA
(nods)
It's so amazing, watching you. You
just become the guy, don't you?
What's it like, to believe it like
you do? It's real to you, isn't it?

JAKE
The kid...

LAURA
Don't get me started. What a
nightmare. You going to the party
later?

JAKE
(shaking his head)
I don't know.

LAURA
Maybe we should just...
(unclasping bra)
Stay here... And never leave.

She rises, holds out her bra and drops it on the shag rug.

JAKE
So this is what we do?

LAURA
(amused, mischievous)
You better believe it, baby. And we
do it better than anyone else.

She rises, pushes open the bedroom door. Leans down, pushing
her panties down long legs... Holds them up. For a moment,
she seems vulnerable.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You slay me, you know that?
(beat)
Jake fucking Barnes. Everybody
warned me. But I didn't really
stand a chance, did I?

She turns, walks a perfect ass to the bed.

Jake stands. Maybe a lot of things to process, but really only one need at the moment.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Oh, by the way, your wife called my place 'cause you were supposed to do something with your kid. Can you ask her not to do that?

Jake STOPS. Blinks against that news. Looks at his hand. His wedding ring.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Come on, baby. I'm getting cold in here.

(beat)

Baby...? Jake?

But the trailer is now empty.

INT. "ALIEN STAR INVADES" SOUND STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jake hurries away from his trailer, trying to orient. The older actor is still sitting on his bench, almost frozen.

And beyond him... a tunnel, part of the set. The tunnel from Jake's first dream. Jake stares...

Honk! Honk! VRROOOOM!!! The sweet 1973 Dodge Charger pulls up, almost hitting Jake. Gordy's at the wheel. Paulie's in the back seat.

EXT. LOS ANGELES, 1976 - AFTERNOON

The '73 Charger cruises down Sunset Boulevard of 1976. Cruises is wrong. It weaves down the road as

INT. 1973 DODGE CHARGER - CONTINUOUS

Gordy course-corrects, tries to stay in his lane while rummaging through the bag, comes out with a Quaalude and dry-swallows it.

Paulie's half asleep in the back.

Jake lets his head rest on the open window, watches the world go by. The clothes, the hippies on the streets, The Band playing out of an apartment window. He feels the sun on his face, wind in his hair...

A few tourists notice him, freak out at having spotted such a huge movie star, even as the car moves on by. Everything is vivid and warm and freaked out and dusty and unpredictable.

It feels good. Really good. His eyes close...

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Playing with the soccer ball with Tash. Tash juggles the ball with headers. Jake smiles. Around them, a few sheet-metal structures. This vacation was abroad...*

INT. 1973 DODGE CHARGER - HOLLYWOOD HILLS - LATER

Gordy pulls the car up into the massive circular driveway of JAKE'S MANSION nestled in the hills. Other tricked-out cars parked in the drive. Motorcycles, vintage race cars, Porches.

GORDY

Ah, hell... Your old lady. And
looks like she's on a tear.

Through the windscreen, CATHERINE comes into view, waiting on the hood of her cheap Pinto. Bell bottom jeans, a simple blouse. No makeup. A hippie life has ridden her a bit hard.

Jake fumbles with the car door as Gordy pulls to a stop.

EXT. JAKE'S MANSION - HOLLYWOOD HILLS - CONTINUOUS

Jake spills out onto the gravel driveway. From the mansion, the sound of MUSIC, LAUGHTER. Water SPLASHING.

JAKE

Catherine...?

CATHERINE

Technically, I still live here. So
don't start with me, Jake.

JAKE

No, I --

PAULIE

(emerging)

Hey Cat! Where the hell have you
been?

CATHERINE

It's called a divorce, Paulie.
Sometimes that means things change.

(giving up)

Bummer, I know. Don't let me screw
up your buzz.

PAULIE
Um... thanks?

GORDY
Yeah, we'll see you inside, Jake.

Jake's wingmen beat a retreat into the house, leaving Catherine and Jake alone.

CATHERINE
You know, I don't get any pleasure trying to track you down. You don't want him to come over, just say as much. But do me a favor, don't make me have to call the bitch you're screwing just to see if you want to spend time with your son.

Off Jake, swallowing. Holy shit.

JAKE
I'm sorry. Today on set, there was -
- wait what?

CATHERINE
You're always sorry, Jake...

She stops, shakes her head. Jake tracks the red around her eyes, the fatigue...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I don't know what I'm doing. I
don't want to be this person.

JAKE
Catherine... I've been, a little
lost. I'm lost. And if you could
just help me --

CATHERINE
No, man. No. I can't always be the
one to save you. Not anymore. I got
my own shit to deal with, you know?
(beat, then calling out)
Isaac! Come on, I gotta go.

The door of the Pinto opens and ISAAC BARNES (13) comes out. He's lanky and blonde, looks at the ground a lot. He's used to these fights, used to being disappointed.

ISAAC
Hey, dad.

Jake stares at the boy. Trying to feel the right emotions...

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Can a couple of my friends come over?

JAKE
Um... Yeah, sure. Whatever.

Isaac nods, grabs his backpack and heads towards the house. Jake stares after him, deeply uncomfortable...

CATHERINE
"Yeah. Sure. Whatever??" You know his "friends" just want to get close to you. He doesn't have any real friends. He needs a father,

She turns to go but Jake grabs her arm --

JAKE
Cathy --

She WINCES, tries to pull her arm away. It takes a moment to track the marks on the inside of her arm. She's an addict.

CATHERINE
Don't you even judge me --

JAKE
Ah, hell, Cathy --

Catherine pulls free, gets behind the wheel of the shitty Pinto, starts up the 4-cylinder engine.

CATHERINE
You're the coward. You don't have the balls to be a father, or a husband --

JAKE
You're not giving me a chance --

CATHERINE
(laughing)
A chance?! I gave you my whole fucking life, Jake.

Catherine throws the car into gear, speeds off down the driveway. Jake watches her go. Jesus.

EXT. JAKE'S MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Jake wanders into his own back yard. A terrace overlooking the LA skyline. Women and men romp and enjoy.

Music plays through speakers dragged out from the main house which is a rambling 70's affair -- huge glass walls face a view. Tiny bikinis, drugs and alcohol, original hipsters jiving and grooving. Paulie in the pool, snogging a chick.

On a patch of grass further on, his son's FRIENDS, a group of entitled 70's youth, kick a soccer ball back n' forth. Jake moves forward, trying to maybe catch a glimpse of Isaac...

But as he wanders into view, EVERYONE notices him. The raise fists into the air!

EVERYONE
JAKE'S HERE!!!!

And they cheer!! They LOVE Jake.

Jake nods, puts up a small wave... and just like that the party keeps rolling. Jake takes it in. The visceral memory of being on the Ark fighting with the tangible quality of the world in front of him.

He looks back towards the lawn. The kids have moved on, but on a remote patio Gordy is huddled with THE STUDIO EXECS and a DOCTOR, the same man as the Doctor on the Ark. They talk, serious, looking around to make sure they're not watched.

Then Gordy sees Jake watching them. Jake waves. Gordy says something to the group which DISPERSES, guilty.

Jake nods... what the hell was that? He turns and walks into:

INT. JAKE'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

All marble and shag and primary color leather furniture. Modern art on the walls, mixed with MOVIE POSTERS: Jake, holding a huge gun, DEATHWISH-styled. Jake, running in spandex, circa LOGAN'S RUN.

A few party-goers push by, laughing, as Jake heads upstairs.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jake stands at the entrance to his super killer sexy bedroom.

A CIRCULAR BED in a glass alcove looking out over the view.

The whole rear wall of the room is an ART PHOTOGRAPH of a nude Jake. He SITS HARD on the bed, unconsciously reaches down and opens a drawer in the bed frame. Pulls out a joint and a lighter and SPARKS the joint, INHALES...

Opens his eyes on the exhale, noticing there's a REVOLVER in the drawer as well. On impulse, he grabs it, feels the weight. Hits the joint again.

As he exhales, his eyes focus on a part of the wall featuring his manly chest...

... There's an opening, right in the middle of his chest.

INT. HIDE-AWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jake pushes open the concealed door and makes his way cautiously into a room of memories...

The walls are covered with hundreds of CLIPPINGS, reviews. Headshots. Still images from sets. And amidst these:

Pictures of Catherine and him. Young and in love. Her head nestled in the crook of his neck. Another picture on a beach. Both of them cradling their newborn son.

Jake stares, unconsciously hits the joint again...

His eyes lose focus, return. He notices another MOVIE POSTER behind some junk. He pushes the stuff aside to reveal a FADED POSTER for "*THE GUARDIAN*." A Vietnam film, clearly more gritty than the others we've seen. A young JAKE screams back from the poster with hollow eyes, a face covered in mud.

At the bottom: Awards, Festivals. This was a great film.

A caption: "*All it takes, is one brave man.*"

Tacked around the poster are stills from the set. Jake and Paulie in costume. A Young Gordy directing.

And next to all this, a 16mm FILM PROJECTOR, film already spooled. Jake reaches forward, turns it on.

Click-click-click-click... film ratchets through, projecting across the room onto a sheet hung as a screen. The film-stock colors are washed, the images warm and scratched:

PROJECTED ON THE SHEET: Jake, in a hospital bed, bandages around his head. Gordy leans in, directing. This is on-set footage, think *Hearts of Darkness*.

PROJECTED ON THE SHEET: A TROUPE OF SOLDIERS trudge through a dusty sunset. Exhausted, dirty. Camera finds Jake, Paulie...

Jake STARES... hits the joint again, his eyelids drooping. He reaches out, touches the projector's beam of light...

INT. THE ARK - NO TIME

Jake GASPS as his eyes BLAST OPEN... he tries to orient.

It's dark... LIGHTS pass by overhead. He tries to sit up -- can't. He's strapped to some kind of GURNEY, being wheeled backwards through the corridors of The Ark by the hulking shape of a Talis alien.

Jake clamps his jaw down on his own panicked breathing, trying to stay silent as the gurney BANGS into

INT. MED LAB - THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

He looks to his right as his gurney is parked next to Catherine, strapped to another gurney. Nothing in her open eyes that gaze numbly upwards. Gone. A sleeper.

Affixed to her chest: A parasitic alien creature.

He looks down. Affixed to his own chest: Another creature!

Somewhere a WHINE BUILDS. One of the Talis Aliens has what looks like a BONE SAW in his hand, the blade spinning.

Jake glances to that, back to the parasite on his chest -- And now one of its eyes blinks open!

INT. JAKE'S HIDE-AWAY - 1976 - NIGHT

Jake RECOILS, pulling his hand out of the beam.

It takes him a moment to adjust, to realize he's back in his hide-away. The projector still clicking...

PROJECTED ON THE SHEET: The troupe of soldiers is now SPRAWLED and BLOODY. Must have been hit by an ambush. Makeup artists move around, making sure the blood looks real.

And there's a gap in the projection. A hand-shaped gap.

Jake stares at his own hand where, even though he's recoiled out of the way, the projection still plays on his hand, like it stuck there. The soldiers... bloody and burnt...

GORDY'S VOICE
JAAAAAAAAAAAAAKE!!!

Jake looks up, startled, as Gordy and Paulie and OTHERS rush into the room, grabbing Jake is a flurry of party-oriented fun and madness --

INT. 1973 DODGE CHARGER - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

SLAM! SLAM! Car doors close as Jake's tossed in the backseat into the lap of a gorgeous African American beauty who leans down and kisses him --

INT. "ALIEN STAR INVADES" SOUND STAGE - NIGHT

WHAM! Sound stage doors BLAST OPEN as Gordy and Paulie rush Jake onto the set where an impromptu PARTY is raging.

Music plays through speakers. Women in bikinis dance around a filled STUNT TANK serving as a pool. As Gordy and Paulie SHOVE Jake forward, everyone notices the STAR has arrived. They CHEER!! Everyone LOVES Jake.

Jake just stands there, almost numb. It's all practically the same as back at his house.

JAKE
(under his breath)
I'm asleep. I'm dreaming...
(and then:)
Why am I dreaming this?

His gaze tracks BEYOND THE CROWD, to where Tash stands near the bottom step of a trailer, staring back at Jake.

Jake starts to smile but stops as Mr. Amir comes out of the trailer. He YELLS something at Tash who shakes his head no and SLAP! Mr. Amir backhands the boy! Jake surges forward --

OOOF! Gordy hits him from the side, pinning his arms.

GORDY
Dude! Dude, what are you doing?!
Think about it, man! What are you
doing? He's writing the checks!

Jake tracks around: The EXECs, looking over. The DOCTOR is with them, taking a note...

Jake backs away from Gordy, from the sneering Mr. Amir. Sees Laura standing in the doorway to Mr. Amir's trailer, tying the sash of a robe! Mr. Amir smiles...

Jake sees Tash stumbling away around the trailer.

JAKE
Fuck off, Gordy.

Jake takes off after Tash. Gordy's gaze moves to the Execs, the Doctor. He nods: "This guy is out of control."

INT. "ALIEN STAR INVADES" SOUND STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jake comes around the trailer... catches site of Tash disappearing beyond some flats. He follows around a corner, catches sight of Tash disappearing into:

THE TUNNEL. Jake holds up -- fighting visceral fear.

JAKE

Tash...?

He moves into the tunnel which looks weirdly more real with every step. And now A SOUND... from behind, like the Talis growl... Something's back there, closing.

And Jake starts to RUN, through the tunnel, towards a light --

INT. MED LAB - "ALIEN STAR INVADERS" SET - NIGHT

Jake stumbles by a black drape onto the Med Lab Set. The place looks shadowy, frightening in the dull light of the ghost-light in its center. He stares at the TWO STEEL GURNEYS in the center of the room... approaches.

He stares down at the one Catherine was just strapped to, then apprehensively touches the one he was strapped to...

VOICE (O.S.)

I know, it's weird, huh? It's all fake.

Out of the shadows steps a lanky young man, scruffy beard. Jake's met this guy before in Chicago, The Gatekeeper. In this world, his name is WARREN DRISCOLE (25).

He moves closer, awkward. A little cowed by Jake's fame.

WARREN

Hey. I'm Warren. I um... wrote it.

JAKE

(squinting)

You... wrote it?

WARREN

Yeah. I mean, I'm writing it.

(beat)

I should say thank you. I mean it never would have happened without you coming on board. You've really brought it to life.

Jake just STARES. Somewhere else, over the distant THUMP of the music, someone's calling "Jake! Jake?!"

WARREN (CONT'D)

(blushing)

You know, when I was a kid, I saw you in everything. I wanted to be you. I snuck outta school to stand in line to see "The Guardian." You're actually the reason I wanted to write... I mean, not this, but --

Jake's not listening. He hears NOISES, PEERS beyond a drape, sees GORDY and PAULIE with EXECS and THE DOCTOR. They've got flashlights, searching for him.

JAKE

(quietly)

How do we win? How do we beat them?

WARREN

... What?

Jake pulls him in, dead serious.

JAKE

My kid's on a pod. The whole ship's been taken over by the Talis and I'm strapped to this God-damned table so... how do I win?

WARREN

Are you serious?

Warren tries to pull away -- but WHAM! Jake slams Warren against a flat. It SHAKES.

JAKE

You wrote it, Warren. How do I get my god damn son back!?

WARREN

Read the script why don't you?! He's not even gone. There's a malfunction -- he's trapped in the pod and the air is running out --
(losing it)
You really don't have any idea what it's like, do you?

Jake stares at Warren, who's getting really upset.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I write this little movie about
bravery and becoming a man and then
WOW! Jake Barnes is going to be the
star and I'm so damn happy you have
no idea!

Warren pulls away.

WARREN (CONT'D)

But then suddenly it's "Jake wants
a scene with his shirt off." "Jake
wants to kiss the blonde." "Jake
wants it to be set in fucking
space."

Warren is LOSING IT. KICKS at a piece of equipment.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I mean FUCKING SPACE!?

JAKE

Where was it set before?

WARREN

(defeated)

It was... This little Vietnam
piece... I didn't think... I didn't
think it would be anything.

Jake has closed on the place Warren kicked. What looked like
strong metal has BROKEN. Plaster and dust... Jake's hands
play over surfaces, he's getting an idea...

JAKE

In the movie, how do I wake up,
Warren?

Jake's found a knife and is now sawing halfway through the
wrist restraints on his gurney. Warren STARES, fumbles...

WARREN

I... guess -- A shock -- like a
reset. I mean, that's what I was
thinking.

JAKE

Yeah, that's good. Makes sense.

Jake's pulled a high-voltage CABLE from a piece of equipment -
- he JAMS the ends up under the metal gurney.

WARREN

What are you doing?

JAKE

The sleepers, they dream, right? So if I'm asleep, what am I dreaming?

WARREN

I don't know... Something good. Something you wouldn't want to wake up from.

Jake's found a cart of weapons. Elaborate plastic space-blasters. Exotic laser pistols. But there, at the back of the cart: a SHOTGUN prop? That'll do nicely...

JAKE

Like... being a movie star?

Jake grabs the shotgun, stashes it under the gurney.

WARREN

(sees where this is going)
No... no. People say this happened before with you.

JAKE

Think about it, Warren. Sex, drugs, fame... You even said it yourself. You wanted to be me. Look around you. We're on the set of the movie. But what if the movie is real, and you and me now, here, this is the dream...

WARREN

You're sick, man. You need help.

A NOISE CLOSE BY. Something low and guttural and not of this world. Something MOVING outside the pool of work light.

Jake GRABS Warren, hauling him through a drape, onto

INT. BRIDGE - "ALIEN STAR INVADERS" SET - NIGHT

The bridge is just as spooky and deserted. All the command chairs are empty -- the actors aren't here.

Jake LISTENS, holding up a finger to silence Warren.

JAKE

(whisper)
If the Talis have the Ark, where do we go next? Come on, Warren, think!

WARREN

Okay. There's another planet.
(pointing to a chart)
The idea was that the navigator
found a class-M planet, close
enough to re-start the species.
(beat, whispered)
What are we doing?

Jake PEERS UP over a flat. The FLASHLIGHT BEAMS are closing.

JAKE

Why didn't Catherine's plan work?
Why didn't the engines restart?

WARREN

This is surreal. I'm sorry, man.
It's cool... to hang out with you
and all. But I can't do this. I
quit. I fucking quit!

Warren turns to go... Click! Jake's got the real handgun
trained on Warren.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Oh, God. That's real. Is that real?

JAKE

Well, that's the \$10,000 question,
isn't it?
(hard)
Why didn't Catherine's plan work?

WARREN

... There's a traitor.

Off Jake. Fierce focus. He NODS.

INT. WARREN'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Door BURSTS open. Jake pushing Warren in front of him. The
place is a WRECK. Cigarette butts, empty beer cans, laundry
on the floor and... yes! A typewriter.

Jake pushes Warren in front of the typewriter. Points the gun
at him even as he checks the door, paranoid.

WARREN

I really don't know what you want.

JAKE

You're the writer. So what you
type, that's what happens, right?
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
(off Warren's scared nod)
So type...

EXT. "ALIEN STAR INVADES" SOUND STAGE - NIGHT (LATER)

The lights are on in Warren's trailer.

FIGURES approach. Gordy. Paulie. The EXECS. The Doctor and ARMED SECURITY. Gordy and Paulie glance at each other.

GORDY
Hey... Jake? You in there, buddy?
Everybody's getting a little
worried. Maybe you need to take a
little rest. Jake...?

BANG! Door flies open and Jake descends with six typed pages.
In his other hand, he's still got the gun.

JAKE
Gordy -- really glad you're here,
man. This, this is what we've been
waiting for.

Jake hands the pages off, looks at the EXECS.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Yeah, I see you motherfuckers! So
you get on your phones and you call
the head of the studio who I've
personally made rich and you tell
him we're shooting this, now.

Paulie approaches with the Doc.

PAULIE
Hey, Jakie man. Calm down --

Jake RAISES THE GUN at Paulie and the Doc.

PAULIE (CONT'D)
Woah woah! Calm down! Just -- where
did you get that --

JAKE
(off the Doc)
That guy comes near me, I swear to
god.

MR. AMIR (O.S.)
Jake...

Jake's attention SNAPS OVER. Mr. Amir has appeared, concerned. Behind him, Tash hovers in the background.

MR. AMIR (CONT'D)

Jake... You have been working on this film so hard. We all owe you a great debt of gratitude.

Insincere nods around. Jake ignores Mr. Amir, locks on Tash.

JAKE

Tash? You okay? Tash?

Tash... nods. Jake smiles, relieved.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Good. We're going to get out of this, okay? I'm going to get you out of this. You remember what I promised you?

WTF glances from the adults, but Tash nods again.

Jake SWITCHES his aim as two security guards close.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Back off! You do not want to mess with me right now.

A COMMOTION as Catherine pushes to the front, just arriving. She stares at Jake, sympathetic. Old love never dies.

CATHERINE

Jake? What are you doing?

JAKE

Cathy... You have to believe me. I'm doing this for you, too.

MR. AMIR

Jake... My son, is not your son. And your reputation, cannot survive any more of these demonstrations.

Jake eyeballs Mr. Amir, strong.

JAKE

You hit him again, I swear to God I'll fucking kill you.

MR. AMIR

(beat)

Somebody call the police.

Catherine shakes her head, heartbroken, and bails.

JAKE
Cathy? Hold on --

GORDY
No, you hold on...

Gordy rises from where he's been reading the pages. Now he approaches Jake... He GRABS his head, gives him a big KISS.

GORDY (CONT'D)
You brilliant S.O.B.
(off the pages)
Unreal, dude. Un-fucking-real.

Gordy turns away, shouting:

GORDY (CONT'D)
Prep stage 6! We're going in 30!

INT. MED LAB - "ALIEN STAR INVADES" SOUND STAGE - NIGHT

Jake lies on the metal gurney, back in his charred space-suit costume. On the gurney next to him, others prepare the Brunette Actress. She smiles, he gives her nothing.

Around him, the crew readies the shot. Someone paints the wound back on his forehead. BRIGHT LIGHTS shine on him, he can barely make out the people behind the camera:

Gordy, behind the CAMERA OP. Paulie, back in costume, sullen.

Laura, the light shining through her thin camisole, silhouetting her perfect body. And Mr. Amir behind her. One of his hands snaking onto her hip...

Jake tracks faces, there's one he can't find...

INT. PROPS STORAGE - "ALIEN STAR INVADERS" SET

Catherine, alone amidst piles of sci-fi scenery. Cryo-chamber and warp engines, etc... She's sitting on an extra med lab gurney. Her eyes are red and watery from crying.

She opens a small purse, pulls out a leather kit. A needle, a spoon, a lighter...

INT. MED LAB - "ALIEN STAR INVADERS" SET - CONTINUOUS

Jake gives up looking for Catherine. His eyes find Tash, also in costume, on the edge of the light. A costume woman is brushing up his face. Painting on a bruise... or hiding one.

JAKE
Hey... You ready?
(off his nod)
Do you trust me?

Tash smiles, nods. Jake puts out a hand --

A PAIR OF FIGURES blocks Jake's view. Two HUGE TALIS ALIENS.

One's fully costumed. The other still has his head-piece off. But still the STUNT MAN wearing the costume seems to STARE at Jake with unnatural hatred...

And the other one... CLOSE to Jake. Seems more real. Like on this sound stage of fake blinking lights, or cardboard and tin foil... there's something organic, and large...

Its breath clouds in front of Jake. Low and guttural.

From somewhere behind the lights, authoritative VOICES:
"Camera... set. Sound... speed..."

INT. PROPS STORAGE - "ALIEN STAR INVADERS" SET - INTERCUT

Catherine gazes upwards, leather tourniquet around her arm. Out of frame, she injects the drug. Her eyes go far...

INT. MED LAB - "ALIEN STAR INVADERS" SET - INTERCUT

Jake stares past the alien, locking eyes with Tash while Gordy's voice drifts from behind the lights.

GORDY (O.S.)
(low, intimate)
Alright, Jake. Just you and that
fucking alien. That fucking alien's
got your son. Your child. Give me
that magic I know you got...

Jake readies himself, still staring at Tash, as his hands wrap around the metal edges of the table... which are connected to the power cable he wedged underneath!

JAKE
Here comes the magic...

GORDY (O.S.)

ACTION!

LIGHTS SURGE as PZZZAAAATTTTTTT!!!! Electricity SURGES THROUGH JAKE! His body ARCHES UP IN AGONY AS --

INT. MED LAB - THE ARK - NO TIME

Jake's BODY arches up as electricity surges through him.

Gone is the artifice. We're back on the real ARK spacecraft.

And things don't look good for Jake.

A 1st TALIS ALIEN mans the device that just ripped electricity through Jake's body. There's a PARASITE ALIEN attached to his chest and a 2nd TALIS ALIEN has what looks like a BONE SAW which WHINES, its blade closing --

Jake SCREAMS, pulls with all his strength against his arm restraint, which BREAKS at the point it's been sawed through.

He REACHES FORWARD, grabs the saw out of the surprised Alien's arms. PULLS IT BACK so that it sinks into the Parasite Alien on his CHEST. Green blood SPATTERS!

2nd Alien MOVES IN and Jake KICKS him back, even as Jake FLIPS, landing on his feet next to the second operating table, reaching underneath.

1st Alien SURGES FORWARD and --

BOOM! Jake PASTES the Alien back with a BLAST from the shotgun he's pulled free. Alien flies back!

2nd Alien makes its move -- CHERCHUNK! Jake works the action of the shotgun with one arm -- LEVELS IT.

2nd Alien finds itself staring into the barrel of the shotgun. A moment, the Alien staring at Jake...

KABOOM! Jake blows the Alien away. Even as its body crumples, Jake's moves to

Catherine, lying on the second operating table, inert. The parasite Alien attached to her chest. Eyes far away. Gone.

Jake GRABS the Parasite, rips it free. He tosses it down. It STARES UP AT HIM... SQUISH! He grinds it under a boot as he moves over Catherine, holding her face.

JAKE

Catherine! Come on! Catherine...

She's gone. Nothing in her eyes. She's NOT BREATHING.

JAKE (CONT'D)

No no no... I need you back here. I
can't do this without you --

He starts compressions on her chest, breathes into her mouth.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Come on! Come on, Cathy! Wake up!
Wake up! COME ON!

Compressions, desperate. Breathing for her.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Please... Please don't be gone.
You're the strong one, remember?
Come on!

Compressions. His mouth on hers, breathing...

JAKE (CONT'D)

I can't do this without you.

He breathes into her mouth again -- She COUGHS TO LIFE!!!
Looking around, terrified, confused.

CATHERINE

What the hell were you just doing!?

JAKE

I was... Um...
(laughing, with tears)
"You're welcome"?

Catherine takes in the room. The two dead Talis.

CATHERINE

You did that?

Jake nods, playing it cool. But come on, pretty bad ass.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

So you gonna untie me?

Jake reaches over her to untie her. Their bodies are close.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I was... having the strangest
dream.

JAKE

I know.

Silence. He works on her other arm.

CATHERINE

We were...

JAKE

I know.

Hands free, she leans forward to undo her legs.

CATHERINE

So that's what happens, when they
put us to sleep? We dream like
that?

JAKE

Yeah, I think so.

CATHERINE

How'd you wake up?

JAKE

Electrocuted myself.

CATHERINE

(pleased)

No shit.

(but then:)

So is it just a dream, or...
Something else?

JAKE

We're going to find out...

He picks up her Blaster, feels the weight.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Does this have a non-lethal
setting? Like... stun?

CATHERINE

Against the Talis, you're gonna
want all the power you can get --

JAKE

It's not for the Talis.

She squints, unsure... but flicks a switch on the weapon.

INT. ESCAPE POD BAY - NO TIME

Jake and Catherine move cautiously into the bay. Around them, the ship continues to GROAN and CRACK... Catherine glances around, nervously. Jake's purposeful, undaunted.

JAKE

The Talis don't know if the Ark can hold together. So they're on their ship, waiting to see...

CATHERINE

How do you know all this?

JAKE

I have a guy... on the inside. It's complicated.

He approaches a pod door, and there it is, a sound: "Tap... tap tap..." Catherine checks a readout.

CATHERINE

According to this, pod's gone. There's nothing but space behind that door... Um, Jake?

Jake's already found a long piece of scrap metal. He wedges it into the door...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You're wrong about this, we die.

JAKE

Like I said. I have a guy.

He LEANS on the bar. Psssssssssss... Door cracks open.

Inside, Tash and Laura. Weak, coughing, but alive.

Tash puts a hand out and Jake GRABS HIM, pulls him in to him. A moment when it's just the two of them, reunited...

Then Laura stumbles out of the pod, draping her arms around Tash and Jake. The three hold each other as Catherine... looks away. Hurt to be left out. Not entirely sure why.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(to Tash)

Hey, buddy, you okay?

He nods yes, but then:

TASH

What about the Talis?

INT. BRIDGE - THE ARK - NO TIME

Jake leads the group onto the bridge. Tash and Laura take in the eerie sight of sleeping forms of THE CAPTAIN and LT. PAULIE SLAUGHTER, asleep in their chairs.

Jake moves towards the heretofore unseen NAVIGATOR. Coming around him to reveal that it's the goatee'd young man, the Gate Keeper, or Warren Driscole.

Jake checks the Navigator's screen where a location is highlighted on A CHART.

JAKE
(sotto, to the Navigator)
Nice job, Warren.
(calling out)
Here. He found something, before
they slept him. A planet, somewhere
we can start over...

CATHERINE
Jake, the ship's dead. We can't
move, much less make it there.

Jake nods, instead moves to Laura. They meet eyes. He gently places the Blaster in her arms.

JAKE
(quietly)
Hold this for me. Just in case.

Jake, now with only his shotgun, reverses. Crosses the space until he's standing across from Catherine.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Your device would have worked. Only
someone didn't want it to.

CATHERINE
... What are you talking about?

Beat. Tension thick...

Jake suddenly reverses the shotgun he's holding, grabbing it by the barrel and swings the stock into Paulie's leg!

CRACK! Bone breaks as Paulie HOWLS!!! Falling out of his chair, clutching his leg!

PAULIE
What the hell? Ah, Christ you broke
my damn leg! What the...

CHER-CHUNK! Jake loads a round, levels the shotgun on Paulie who shuts up. Eyes frantic, looking around --

JAKE

He wasn't a sleeper. He's been faking this whole time.

CATHERINE

That's impossible. Why would --

JAKE

Check his station.

Catherine moves forward, types some commands... Finds the routine that was blocking her device.

CATHERINE

He disabled the engines...
(drawing her weapon)
You sonofabitch!!!

She levels the weapon at Paulie!

JAKE

Wait! WAIT! WAIT!
(to Paulie)
... Why?

Paulie, looking around. Somewhere deeply ashamed.

PAULIE

... We're out here, in the middle of nowhere. We got nowhere to go. And they're gonna keep coming, they ain't gonna stop. You know they're not...

(hard beat)

I always wanted to be a cook. Not a fancy one, just, you know... make people breakfast. I didn't want to be a soldier. Just make eggs n' shit. Have my own place...

Laura hears the pain, shakes her head, tears welling.

PAULIE (CONT'D)

They came to me, in my dream. Told me I could have that. Could have whatever I wanted. I just had to, you know... help them.

Paulie looks around, sees Tash, half hiding behind Laura.

PAULIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

CATHERINE

Screw this piece of garbage. We can still dump fuel, blow that piece of crap right off our backs. It can still work.

Jake smiles...

PAULIE

No, you can't...

JAKE

Why not?

PAULIE

Because... I'm not the only one.

A second for Jake to take that in, glance to Catherine.

BLAM! Catherine's BLASTED! ELECTRICITY crackles over her and she lands unconscious. Jake SWINGS HIS GAZE OVER.

To find LAURA, holding the BLASTER in fierce trembling hands, pointed right at Jake.

LAURA

I'm sorry, Jake.

JAKE

No --

BLAM! The BLAST hits him, right in the chest --

INT. MILITARY HUMVEE - CHICAGO - DAY

WHAM! Jake hits the floor of the Humvee. His eyes blink open, stare back through the open Humvee rear door:

There's The Ark, vapor trailing off its warming engines. There's the CROWD of hopeful refugees lined against chain-link, inertly watching another sleeper (him) get swept up by the military MPs. He groans, crawls towards the light --

JAKE

Hey, wait...

SLAM! The rear door is SLAMMED SHUT. Jake Rises, tries to --

VROOOM! The Humvee peels off, slamming Jake back against the far wall along with a half-dozen COMATOSE SLEEPERS.

This is a vehicle filled with bodies: The AFFLUENT GUY from the train, the FATHER from the square, and GENERAL GOODE. All so much meat packed in the back of a Humvee.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Hey! Hey! What are you doing?! I'm
back here!? I'm awake.

Jake lurches to a small plexiglass window connecting to the front driving compartment, PEERS THROUGH.

MP Paulie Slaughter is at the wheel, driving like a lunatic.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Stop the vehicle! I'm right here!
Get me the hell out of here!

HUMVEE ROCKS FORWARD as Paulie STANDS ON THE BRAKES.

A long SLIDE. Jake is tossed forward along with the sleeping bodies. Paulie reaches up, slams the divider shut.

Jake can't see Paulie anymore, can JUST GLIMPSE him through a crack. Can barely hear the MUTED VOICES from up front:

PAULIE
You think he can hear us?

GORDY'S VOICE
I give a fuck. He's meat.

Jake CRANES around, spies Gordy in the passenger seat!

JAKE
Gordy! You sonofabitch let me out!
You fucking traitor, LET ME OUT!!!

GORDY
I told you, he was breaking the
law. Now you gotta get me on that
ship...

Jake hears a METALLIC RATTLE coming from outside. Moves to another wall where light seeps through a crack. PEERS OUT.

JAKE'S POV -- They're outside some kind of farm -- concertina-wired fences. A CHAIN-LINK gate rolls back, LIGHTS pop on revealing hundreds of BODIES, stacked in the dirt. SOLDIERS patrol the perimeter.

This is some kind of concentration camp for the Sleepers.

JAKE
Oh, God...

And standing in the middle of the carnage staring back: A man half-wrapped in bandages. His SKIN BURNT UNDERNEATH.

Click. The gate finishes rolling back. Paulie takes his foot off the brake and the Humvee begins rolling in..

JAKE (CONT'D)
No no no no... !

KER-WHAM!!! A GIANT EARTH-MOVING TRUCK barrels out of nowhere, IMPACTS the Humvee which SPINS, tearing in half!

Jake is tossed, spun, everything is chaos until CRUNCH. What's left of the Humvee settles against a brick wall.

A moment, then a DOOR is pulled aside. Light streams in. A woman's hand reaches down...

He grasps it, and is pulled into the light by Catherine.

He's stunned, bleeding... He tracks around him -- the bodies in the camp -- no bandaged figure there now...

CATHERINE
Jake. Jake! We gotta go.

Jake looks at her, doesn't know what to think or feel.

Then his gaze moves beyond her, to the figure who's just stepped down from the enormous truck: Tash. The boy stands there, dwarfed by the trucks' six-foot tires, scared. It's hard to see your father so injured.

Jake looks back at him. Uncertain...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Jake! I'm serious. Let's go.

INT. EARTH MOVING TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Jake's curled miserably in the passenger seat. His back pressed against the door, he painfully tears a strip from an old shirt, ties it around his head covering a wound as Catherine down-shifts the big monster.

CATHERINE
You shoulda told me what you were doing, Jake. You don't think I would have helped you?

Jake just stares, wipes blood from his face. His eyes dart to Tash, seated in the back, unnaturally focused on the small army man he's got. Every so often he glances towards Jake.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
What did you think it felt like,
when they brought him back? You
don't think Tash means the world to
me, too?

Tash walks the Army man across his lap, dying for a sign from
Jake that's not coming.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Is this about Gordy? Sonofabitch
turned you in, thought it might get
him to the front of the line.
(losing patience)
You gotta talk to me, Jake. Say
something, anything.

JAKE
I don't know... If you're real.

CATHERINE
(laughs, shaking her head)
We're not real, then what is?

Jake stares at the streets, the garbage, the dirt...

JAKE
There was... water.

CATHERINE
You bet your ass. Soon enough
there's gonna be a lot of water.

HIGH AND TO THE SIDE, Water POURS through a crack in the
dome. Somewhere, the city is flooding.

Jake stares at the WATER, flowing in the gutters.

At Tash, playing the Army Man across his lap.

Suddenly, Jake GRABS at the handle of the truck door --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Hey! What are you doing?!

She leans on the brakes as Jake opens the door and --

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - CONTINUOUS

OOOF!! Jake lands hard and ROLLS to a stop. Even as the truck
SCREECHES to a halt beyond him, he stumbles over to the small
river in the gutter.

Jake leans down, splashes water into his face. It drips off his eyelashes, soaks his clothing. Drips off his fingers.

CATHERINE

What are you doing, Jake?

She's reached him. The truck idles in the street beyond.

JAKE

When they put me... When I went under. I dreamed.

(beat)

You were there. And Tash. And...

He stops, realizing she doesn't know about Laura.

CATHERINE

What were we doing?

JAKE

Trying to save Tash.

CATHERINE

Okay. Did we?

He stares at her, at Tash who's watching them from the truck. He slowly shakes his head no.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Well, then that's a shitty dream.

RUMBLE. Jake looks up, sees the BLOOM of an explosion impacting the dome far above them.

JAKE

This can't be real. This isn't --

CATHERINE

Hey... hey, look at me.

She reaches into her jacket, pulls out a worn picture.

It's of the three of them. Catherine, Jake, and a younger Tash, maybe 6 years old. They're in Grant Park, near the lake, the Chicago skyline behind them. Beautiful. Normal.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You remember this?

JAKE

Yes. But...

CATHERINE

But then the Talis showed up, and everything changed. But that doesn't make it less real.

JAKE

When I slept... I dreamt I was on the Ark, and then...

(beat)

In each dream, it's like a puzzle, if I can just figure out all the pieces. Everything means something. There's numbers, and doors, and the same people. It's like a map I have to memorize...

(breaking)

And every time I try to save Tash...

CATHERINE

Hey. Hey...

She grabs his hand, holds it in hers...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

For the longest time, I thought it was just some nightmare, that I would wake up from. I mean... Invading aliens? The sleepers? I thought I'd just... wake up.

She looks around her, gestures out.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

But it's not. Because if this were a dream, it would add up, wouldn't it? It would mean something.

(beat)

But it doesn't.

She reaches out, carefully, gently... touches his face.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

If this were a dream, wouldn't the two of us be... Better than this? I mean, the world's ending, and we can't even believe in each other.

(beat)

That's about as real as it gets I'd say.

He meets her eyes.

RUMBLE. The sky LIGHTS UP with a giant bloom of an explosion on the outside of the dome, lighting their faces.

Jake glances to Tash, staring back at them from the truck.

JAKE

Tash.

CATHERINE

Yeah. We get Tash onto the Ark.
That's about the only thing that
matters now.

Jake stares at her... nods.

Another EXPLOSION rocks the surface of the dome.

EXT. EMBARKATION HANGAR - CHICAGO - DAY

RUMBLE... The same scene we've been to before, but now everyone is nervous. Long-practiced order is holding, but everyone knows in their guts that the dome will not hold.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

... There's a cargo hatch that
opens onto an internal elevator for
supplies. They'll be loading right
up until 5 minutes before liftoff.

We track the hatch. Yes, open, as forklifts load PALETTES into the craft...

CATHERINE (V.O.)

The hatch is guarded. But I'll make
sure they're busy.

A SCREECHING SOUND makes all look over as THE EARTH-MOVER comes careening into the space, BLASTING THROUGH one barrier before its front CRUSHES against a second concrete structure.

POLICE and MILITARY descend on it, weapons raised, as Catherine drops to the pavement from the driver's side. She goes to her knees, hands raised as COPS close in. But...

ACROSS THE PLAZA

Jake and Tash slide out from an alcove, move towards the hatch. Tash glances back at his mom.

JAKE

Just look ahead Tash. She's okay.

Even as Catherine is pushed against the side of the truck by Paulie she sees Jake and Tash heading for the hatch.

Jake looks back, meets her eyes, smiles thanks. Suddenly her smile starts to fade...

With a soft "chirp," the hatch in front of Jake and Tash spirals CLOSED! Tash reaches it, his hands running over its surface, panicking...

TASH

No please! Let us in! Please! Let us in!! HEY!

Tash pounds uselessly on the metal. Jake STARES. Some part of him knowing...

JAKE

Laura...

A FIGURE moves out from some crates behind him. He turns.

Laura looks beautiful. She always does. Her face is filled with concern, fear, care...

But she has a hand behind her back.

LAURA

Jake, what are you doing? Were you just going to leave without me?

Jake looks at her... cold. The truth about her coming clear.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I saw you sleep. How did you make it back?

JAKE

Something in my dreams...
Disappointed me.

(beat)

What did they promise you?

LAURA

Jake, we have to get out of here --

JAKE

What's behind your back, Laura?

A beat. Laura's features... settle. It's not that an evil side in her comes out. More like... someone resigned.

Her hand comes around. She's holding a small TAZER GUN.

LAURA

In my dreams, Jake... You and I are together. Running the bookstore every day. And at night....

(eyes sparkle)

We're together. And there's nothing else in the world except you and me. You can have that, too. They can give it to you.

JAKE

What about Tash?

LAURA

(beat)

It's my dream.

Jake stares at her. Then he turns, kneels down to Tash.

JAKE

Tash, don't be afraid.

(he's trembling)

Look at me. Don't be afraid. I'm going to be right back. And we're going through that hatch.

(he nods)

Do you believe me?

Tash nods again.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Then I'll see you, really soon.

He leans down, kisses Tash on the forehead. Then he starts WALKING STRAIGHT AT LAURA.

LAURA

Jake, stop there. Jake, I'm warning you. Jake --

She raises the weapon, PZZZZZITTTTT!!!! Shoots Jake right in the chest! 10,000 VOLTS WRACKS HIS BODY --

INT. BRIDGE - THE ARK - NO TIME

Jake STAGGERS back, the ELECTRICAL CHARGE of the Blaster's stun setting rippling over him as he falls to his knees.

Laura steps forward, points the weapon down at him...

Jake reaches up and catches the barrel! Her eyes go wide as he pulls it out of her hands, aims it and --

LAURA

Jake...

PZZZZZITTTTT!!!! He BLASTS Paulie, who was coming at him from the side. Paulie lands in an awkward heap.

Laura sinks to her knees, hyperventilating in guilt.

Jake moves down to Catherine, gently touches her cheek...

Catherine's eyes flutter... flicker open. A moment to orient, then she RISES FAST, scared, trying to get her bearings --

CATHERINE

What the hell happened? Where --

Jake KISSES HER. It's sudden and unexpected and she's completely unready for it. But she doesn't pull away.

Laura STARES. Tash STARES.

Finally, Jake breaks the kiss.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

(Wow)

What the hell was that?

JAKE

I have to go --

CATHERINE

Wait, no, I need you. I mean, to --

JAKE

(gesturing to her device)
Paulie's sabotaged your thing,
maybe you can get it back online.
The Talis ship's straddling the
main thruster. Get that going, blow
the MotherShip to hell.

CATHERINE

(stunned)

You can't know any of this.

Jake just shoulders the blaster, starts to head out.

TASH

... Dad?

Jake turns, looks back at Tash who's staring at him. Not understanding any of it. Jake shakes his head, most painful thing he's had to do.

JAKE

I know it doesn't feel like it, but
I'm coming for you, Tash. You have
to trust me.

TASH

I don't understand.

JAKE

I know.

And Jake turns and leaves.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - THE ARK - MOMENTS LATER

Jake SLIDES fast down the ladder, the HUGE drop under him.
He's filled with a preternatural confidence.

INT. LOWER LEVELS - THE ARK - MOMENTS LATER

Jake comes off the ladder fast. Down here, SUPPLY CRATES line
the walls. Jake starts moving FAST --

Behind him, a circle of FIRE erupts from the wall. BOOM! The
wall comes down. Seamlessly, Jake swings his Blaster around,
unleashes a VOLLEY OF SHOTS. The Talis are BLOWN BACK.

INT. CARGO HANGAR - THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

Jake sprints into this room where CRATES of supplies are
stacked everywhere. He moves forward...

The whole room SHIFTS SIDEWAYS, tossing Jake against a wall!

EXT. SPACE - NO TIME

The Talis mothership SHUDDERS as the Ark's engines ignite,
point blank into the mothership. Millions of pounds of fiery
thrust chew into the alien structure.

INT. CARGO HANGAR - THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

Jake picks himself up just as GRAVITY DIES. He floats free.
Glances one way down a dark corridor where the Talis aliens
are clawing their way along the corridor towards him!

He pushes off, SAILS across the room to the EXTERIOR HATCH.
He brings the panel next to it to life, fingers flying.

JAKE
Com'on... Come on...

Finds the icon he's looking for: "EMERGENCY OVER-RIDE CODE."

EXT. SPACE - NO TIME

The Talis ship is breaking up, exploding, pushed away from the Ark. EXPLOSION after EXPLOSION rip through it --

-- then transfer to the Ark. An EXPLOSION shatters a portion of the Ark!

INT. CARGO HANGAR - THE ARK - CONTINUOUS

Jake feels the ship shudder under him, mortally wounded. He doesn't turn back, he STARES at the numbers as THE HUGE FORM OF A TALIS ALIEN RISES BEHIND HIM!

The screen flickers, numbers coming up: "1562" He knows that number, he's seen that number before. He laughs.

JAKE
... One five six two.

SHLICHT!!! The alien drives its claws through Jake's back.

Jake's eyes go wide in shock and pain as the Alien raises Jake up off the floor, skewered on its claws.

Jake's body convulses, trembles... goes limp. Jake dies.

The world around him disintegrates into white explosion as:

EXT. EMBARKATION HANGAR - CHICAGO - DAY

BOOM! Tash looks up in fear as a wash of fire blooms across the dome above. There's that CRACKING sound...

Laura stands above him, Jake's inert form behind them.

She holds the Tazer weapon loosely in her hand. She stares down at the boy, morbidly resigned.

LAURA
Tash... right? Don't be afraid. You
just go to sleep. That's not so
bad, is it?

BEHIND LAURA. Jake's eyes open. He silently rises.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Everything will be better soon.

She lines the weapon on Tash.

Jake comes around from the side, grabs the Tazer and JAMS it into Laura's side. PZZZVVVT!!! She CONVULSES, collapses.

Tash smiles at his father.

Jake scoops him up and KABOOOM!!! Another SHOCK WAVE hits the dome. The SHARP SOUNDS OF CRACKING pierce the air.

Huge pieces of glass FALL, SMASH ON THE GROUND.

Further off, people start to loose it. The crowd RUSHES the barricade. POLICE back away... CRACK! CRACK! They're firing into the crowd. Innocents drop!

TASH
Mom...

Tash starts back towards his mother, but Jake CATCHES his arm as a KLAXON GOES OFF. RAMPS PULL BACK. STEAM STARTS TO POUR OFF ENGINES. The Ark is launching, ahead of schedule.

JAKE
There's no time, Tash! Come on!

Jake pulls Tash with him, reaches the panel. He takes a breath, trusting the impossible, and punches: "1562."

A horrible beat... and then Pssssssss. Pressure seal breaks as the hatch OPENS. Victory!!

Jake pulls Tash inside, slaps the control to close the doors!

Just as everything goes QUIET again. The Talis are using their power.

Jake turns around. The doors have not closed.

And now a RUMBLE... Jake looks out into the city, where THE WAVE is rushing through the streets, destroying everything.

Jake SLAMS his fist on the controls again. It comes off in his hand. It's made of styrofoam and cheap painted plastic...

JAKE (CONT'D)
No... I did everything right...

The WAVE surges into the Embarkation Hangar. Thousands are swept up into its violence. Somewhere the ARK's ENGINES FIRE! It doesn't matter, it won't be soon enough.

JAKE (CONT'D)
No GOD DAMMIT! It's not fair, IT'S
NOT FAIR!

TASH
Dad...?

Tash is looking up at him, trembling. Jake drops to his knees, pulling Tash to him, tears in his eyes.

JAKE
I'm not letting you go --

Jake closes his eyes as the WAVE REACHES THEM! HITTING THEM! Surrounding them with water!!!!

Just the LOUD SOUND OF RUSHING WATER.

GORDY (O.S.)
And... CUT!!

INT. WATER TANK - "ALIEN STAR INVADERS" SET - DAY

Jake's eyes blink open. Gasping for air. Eyes wild as STAGE HANDS come forward as the last water from FIRE HOSES drains away. The ARK HATCH set has been built down in this water tank for this scene.

EFFECTS TECH
Woah, easy there... We're clear,
you can let go of the kid.

Jake's still clutching TASH close to his chest. A CREW DUDE starts to pull him away -- Jake PUNCHES the guy --

JAKE
No! NO! Not here. I shouldn't be
here. Why am I here again!!!!?

The whole crew STARES. No one knows what to do...

WOMAN'S VOICE
Hey... Jake. Why don't you let the
kid go?

Jake WHEELS ABOUT. The BRUNETTE ACTRESS who plays Catherine is there. Gently holding out a hand. Nervous.

BRUNETTE ACTRESS
... We should probably just go over
some lines. That's all.

Jake bites down. He knows how crazy he looks. And then:

TASH

Dad?

Jake looks down at Tash. Did he just...?

TASH (CONT'D)

I mean, Jake. How do you think we're going to...?

(awkward)

I mean, with the wave, how do you think we survive?

JAKE

(shaking his head)

I don't know. I'm trying to...

(almost breaking)

I'm trying to figure that out, too.

(small smile)

I'll let you know if I do. And you tell me, if you have any ideas.

TASH

Okay.

Jake lets go as the Brunette Actress gently pulls Tash away. Everywhere people are whispering, shooting glances. And then:

GORDY

There he is! Fucking amazing, man.
You are fucking amazing!

GORDY descends from the sky, in a sling attached to a crane.

Further above, the EXECS and MISTER AMIR glare down.

GORDY (CONT'D)

Come on, why the long face, buddy?

This is the dream, man!

(poking Jake in the chest)

And you're living it!

EXT. JAKE'S MANSION - AFTERNOON

SLAM! SLAM! Car doors to the 1973 Charger close. Jake's home.

IN HIS BACK YARD, Women and men romp and enjoy. Music plays through speakers dragged out from the main house. Jake's kid, Isaac, is hanging in a corner with entitled FRIENDS...

EVERYONE

JAKE'S HERE!!!!

And they cheer!! They LOVE Jake. He comes to the edge of the pool, eyes playing over all the semi-nude party-goers.

He raises his arms. The crowd goes wild.

And he let's himself fall forward, into...

INT. UNDERWATER, JAKE'S POOL - CONTINUOUS

MUFFLED UNDERWATER SOUNDS fill Jake's ears, he opens his eyes to see bodies, moving, closing on him... HANDS grab him...

EXT. POOL - JAKE'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

The same PARTY-GOERS haul Jake to the surface with a CHEER! A chant starts "*Jake! Jake! Jake!...*" Jake looks around in despair, realizing that nothing has changed.

A WOMAN pours alcohol straight into his mouth, another breathes pot smoke across his face, moves to the side as

Laura approaches through the water. Nude below the water, only her head and bare shoulders above the surface.

JAKE

You...

LAURA

Hey, baby...

She slides two red pills onto her tongue. Her eyes flare as they kiss, the pills moving from her mouth to his.

She backs away, smiling. But Jake's eyes drift up to where there's a light on in a high window of the mansion.

A woman's silhouette in the window.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Come on, Jake. You're always
leaving me. What do you think
you're gonna find?
(another kiss)
Stay here with me. Just... Stay.

INT. JAKE'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Jake sloshes into his house, soaking wet. In the living room his DEATHWISH and LOGAN'S RUN styled posters are hanging.

He ignores them, turns towards the stairs, STOPS.

There's a poster he didn't see before. A poster for a movie called "MR. NOBODY." The poster is of his face, but broken up, TILED. In each tile, he's a different person.

The caption: *"Do you know who you are?"*

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jake steps into the darkened room. Drawers and closets are open. Women's clothing stuffed messily into two opened suitcases on the bed. She's packing to leave.

The door to the hide-away is open. A light on inside.

INT. JAKE'S HIDE-AWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jake pushes the door open carefully, makes his way through the shadowy arcade of memories.

The balcony door is open. Curtains blowing...

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Beyond the balcony railing, Catherine stands on the slanted roof near the edge, the tiles moist with the night air.

JAKE
Catherine...?

She glances back. She's been crying, doesn't care if he knows.

As Jake climbs over the railing onto the slippery roof, the pool two stories below comes into view. The groovy scene down below always grooving. Above them, the HOLLYWOOD sign glows.

CATHERINE
You gonna talk me down, Jake?
That'd be a first.

Jake doesn't respond, just sits next to her.

Below them, they watch as a few of their son Isaac's friends kick a soccer ball between them, laughing. Isaac sits to the side, alone.

JAKE
In the... movie I'm doing. I can't
save my son.
(she shakes her head)
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

These aliens -- they're called the Talis. They're attacking and the only thing holding them back is this massive dome, built before all the courageous people were... imprisoned. In their dreams.

(beat)

And I keep trying to save him. And I keep failing. And I don't know what I'm doing wrong.

Beat. Catherine laughs, shakes her head.

CATHERINE

Christ, Jake. Are you even hearing yourself?

(beat, sobering)

Before he was born, you used to spend hours in his room, getting it ready. Being a father, that was your dream.

He glances at her.

JAKE

Why do we have them?

(off her look)

Dreams.

CATHERINE

I don't know, you go crazy if you don't dream.

Jake nods, peers down to yard below...

JAKE

They say if you die in a dream...

CATHERINE

(shaking her head)

No, I know what they say. But you don't die, the dream does. You just move on to another dream. Trust me, baby. I've killed a lot of dreams.

Jake nods at the morbid truth of that...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You know what's the scary part?

(off his look)

You kill the dream, you gotta wake up, and find out who you really are. You gotta look in the mirror and realize: Oh shit...

She looks down, ashamed.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I'm a drug addict. And the ex-wife
of a movie star. I'm not important.
I'm nothing.

JAKE
I'm sorry.

She looks over, but not angry this time. She nods.

CATHERINE
Jake...

JAKE
I have to take a trip. I'm not
sure... I'm not sure if I'll be
back anytime soon.

CATHERINE
Where?

JAKE
Chicago, I think. And then... I
don't know.

He stands, moves closer to the edge, turns back to her.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I want you to know, I would have
liked to stay here with you. I hope
I see you again.

She puts out a hand to him.

CATHERINE
Let's just go back inside.

JAKE
I'd like that... But I have to stop
dreaming now.

He lets himself FALL BACKWARDS...

CATHERINE
JAAAAAKE!!!!

We FALL WITH HIM, down, towards the concrete below which
RUSHES UP at him and with a sickening CRUNCH he --

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

JAKE PLUNGES INTO WATER, TUMBLING.

He's MOVING, fast. Through debris, bodies, street signs, dragged through Chicago streets by the wave.

DEEPER IN THE MURK, he sees TASH. Inert, seemingly lifeless.

Jake KICKS DOWN, grabs Tash as the CURRENT GRABS them, SLAMS THEM into a railing. Jake HOLDS ON as water and debris RIP at them... and finally a glimpse, far behind them:

The back of the wave. Salvation, if he can hold his breath long enough...

Jake GRITS HIS TEETH, HANGS ON as the silvery back edge of the wave reaches them!

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - DAY

Jake GASPS AIR as they break the surface. The wave moves on, leaving the world soaked, water draining all around them.

Jake HAULS on Tash, pulling him up a set of marble stairs.

Tash is COUGHING, coming back to life. His eyes open.

TASH

... Dad?

JAKE

Hey... Hey, you're okay. You're here.

BOOM! An explosion high above them, washing over the surface of the dome makes them look up... and then out.

Chicago is broken, flooding. FIRES are breaking out. And PIECES of the dome are cracking off, falling hundreds of feet where they SHATTER in the street.

It's terrible, and gorgeous.

TASH

Dad, we have to go. We have to --

JAKE

No.

TASH

... What?!

Jake takes a few steps, out towards the chaos. A thin rain of water comes from above.

JAKE
What's the dome for, Tash?

TASH
Dad, we can't...

JAKE
You know this better than anyone. I taught it to you.
(beat)
"If you see something, just pretend you didn't."
(beat)
"It takes courage, to walk away."
(beat)
"The Dome..."

TASH
The dome will protect us.

JAKE
From what?

Jake looks up as another BOOM! And BLOOM of smoke and fire hit the dome's exterior.

JAKE (CONT'D)
From what? The Talis?

TASH
(getting scared)
Dad...

Jake takes Tash's hand. They shiver as a cold gust hits them. Around them, the light rain turns to snow...

JAKE
Tash. I love you so much. But I have to wake up.

Tash looks at him and

**A FLASH -- SOMETHING WE'VE NEVER SEEN
BEFORE -- THE REAL WORLD BREAKING IN --**

A GLIMPSE OF A STRANGE ROOM SEEN THROUGH GAUZE...

THE SOUND OF A MAN'S LABORED BREATHING.

CRACK! CRACK! The dome shudders above. HUGE chunks plunge from up high, SHATTER like bombs going off in the streets.

SCREECH!!!! The Earth-Mover Truck barrels into the square, 8-wheel slide. The driver's door pops open and there's Catherine. Bad-ass and tough, putting a hand out...

CATHERINE

Jake! Come on! I found a way out!
Both of you, come on!

Tash instinctively takes a step towards his mom, but Jake pulls him back tight, shaking his head no.

TASH

Dad, we have to go. We can still
get to the Ark!

JAKE

No, Tash. No. It's okay. I know
you're scared. I'm scared, too.

LAURA (O.S.)

Jake...

Jake follows the voice, finds Laura right there, so close, at the entrance to The Ark which is suddenly really close. She looks amazing, blond hair flowing, space suit half unzipped down the front...

LAURA (CONT'D)

Come on, Jake! Come with me!

A HUGE CRACKING SOUND FILLS THE AIR. The dome is failing. Giant, building-sized pieces break off, start to FALL.

TASH

Dad!

Jake pulls Tash closer. The snow whirling around them...

He blinks against fear. Knows he has to let this happen, but it breaks his heart, because he doesn't know what's coming.

JAKE

It's okay. Remember what I've
always told you: I'm going to take
care of you, no matter what. I'm
always going to be there, and I'm
always going to keep you safe. From
everything. Okay?

TASH

I don't want to die.

JAKE
You won't. Because wherever we're
going. I'll find you.

The entire dome breaks, collapsing down.

Jake pulls Tash in, looks up as the mountain of glass
collapses downwards onto them...

INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - NIGHT

A small glass object hits a rough wood floor and cracks. It
settles...

We move slowly towards it. SLOOOWLY... Nothing has taken this
long so far. Finally, revealing... A SNOW GLOBE of Chicago.

Close. The snow inside the globe RAGES.

But here, on the outside, everything is different. Colors are
more muted. The only sound a low rhythmic ticking of a fan
and A MAN'S LABORED BREATH as we RISE from the floor, into:

INT. MEDICAL TENT - AFGHANISTAN - 2017 - NIGHT

We find JAKE in a hospital bed. His arms and body half-
wrapped in gauzy bandages. The bandage around his forehead
covers one eye. His skin underneath is reddened, burned.

His one good eye is open, taking in the world.

Jake just woke up.

The quiet hum of the world is maddening. No noise beyond the
fan (No soundtrack). Small night-lights illuminate several
other beds, most unoccupied.

A door opens... MUSIC seeps through from a radio in the next
room: *"Time keeps on slippin' slippin'... into the future..."*

(From this moment on, details will echo forward from the
previous worlds. Bandages, music, numbers, globes, people...)

Footsteps... a silhouette of a woman approaching. Her shape
catching light as she draws near, resolves into:

LAURA. She wears light camo, field hospital dressed. A nurse.
She approaches, peers down, surprised to see him awake.

LAURA
Private Barnes?

Jake stares at her. She's beautiful, but more real here. Her hair unwashed, strands out of place, eyes more tired. Seeing her like this, it becomes clear how much has been fantasy...

LAURA (CONT'D)
Can you hear me, private?

Jake stares at her. His one eye blinks, waters. He takes in his body, bandaged and burned, starting to panic.

She touches him, calming him.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Hey, hey... You're going to be okay. Do you know where you are?
(nothing)
Are you in pain?

A long moment... Jake barely... nods.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm going to give you something, to make you more comfortable...

She leans out of his vision, inserts something into his I.V., then returns. Smiles at him.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Welcome back, private.

He watches her turn and hurry out of the room.

RUMBLE. The room SHAKES just a little.

Now his exposed eye tracks the room beyond himself. He sees a photograph tucked on the small stand near his bed:

A happy family, in Grants Park Chicago. Jake, his arms around the blond boy we know as Isaac. His wife, who we know as the Brunette Actress leaning her head on his shoulder...

Jake STARES, his eye blinking against tears. Choking on emotion. This is his family, but these people have barely mattered to him. It doesn't make sense... He keeps BLINKING, growing tired... the drug Laura gave him doing its work...

FLASH OF MEMORY: An EXPLOSION. White hot, searing, enveloping his body...

The world RUMBLES again, into...

EXT. CITY OF MARJAH, AFGHANISTAN - SUNSET (MEMORY)

A SILENT MEMORY. PRIVATE JAKE BARNES rides in a Humvee through dusty streets. Color washed and warm, like celluloid documentary footage. He leans his head out the window, feels the hot air on his face...

JUMP FORWARD. A squad of soldiers moves down a road bordered by low buildings, pock-marked by gunfire. AFGHANI LOCALS keep their distance.

In their combat kits, it's hard to at first make out faces, but there's GORDY SWAIN, Squad Leader, silently joking with PFC PAULIE SLAUGHTER. There's the uptight WARREN DRISCOLE...

And there's Jake. Not the sort to talk much. The shy guy who keeps to himself, just putting one foot in front of the other as Paulie points at some Afghani women in burkas, makes a crude gesture and LAUGHS. Jake smiles a little, mainly 'cause Paulie wants him to.

At the edge of the road, A YOUNG SOLDIER (The YOUNG MAN who was put to sleep in Chicago) has noticed something, leans down towards a soccer ball, left by the side of the road.

Jake squints -- the soccer ball --

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Tash's construction of army soldiers, hanging on threads, blown into the air...*

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Tash's soccer ball, rolling towards Jake...*

INT. MEDICAL TENT - AFGHANISTAN - DAY

Jake's one good eye blinks open.

Tick tick tick... The ceiling fan spins. Daylight seeps through venetian blinds. Outside, the sound of TRUCKS...

Jake orients... finds A LARGE FORM now sitting across from him. General, or Captain, Goode. This man is a COLONEL.

COLONEL GOODE

Private Barnes. It's good to see
you awake. You know you're lucky to
be alive, young man.

The Colonel won't meet his eye. There's something broken in this man, lost the ability to lead. Beyond him, Nurse Laura and a DOCTOR (the same as from his dreams) look on.

COLONEL GOODE (CONT'D)
 You're going home, son. Suppose
 that's one I get to... count in the
 win column I guess.

Colonel smiles tight. Jake's eye blinks, processing --

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Boom! In the Marjah streets, the rigged soccer ball EXPLODES! DEAFENING!*

FLASH OF MEMORY: *A MASH-style mobile operating room, Jake is dumped on a table. BLOOD SPURTS! Spatters the uniform of the nurse, LAURA. At the tent entrance, his SQUAD looks on.*

FLASH. FLASH. The faces of his squad. Filled with NUMB ANGER, and a burning need for REVENGE.

And Jake on the table, processing that fury, as an oxygen mask is placed over his face and he slides into dreams...

INT. MEDICAL TENT - AFGHANISTAN - AFTERNOON

Jake's eye blinks open again, the whole room a BLUR filled with warm afternoon light revealing as he focuses:

Catherine, sitting across from him.

She wears the soiled kit of a combat soldier. As his good eye finds her, she smiles. Or tries to, the smile forces its way through raw layers of exhaustion and pain...

CATHERINE
 Hey, you... You're awake. That's
 good. It's good to see you, Sci-fi.

Jake blinks, what?

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
 Guess you know... Wallace got it on
 the spot. They got Bill Crane on a
 C17... But he didn't make it.

She drums her fingers on her thigh...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
 I got messed up some, too. Got this
 ringing in my ears...
 (hard beat)
 Glad you made it, though.

Beyond Catherine other members of his squad keep their distance. There's DRISCOLE, PAULIE. At the very back, GORDY, the squad leader. He glances over, before looking away again.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
 (hard, bitter)
 The fucking Tali, man.

ON JAKE. Hearing that word. He pulls his dry lips apart...

JAKE
 (rasp)
 Ta...lis...

CATHERINE
 Yeah, and nobody's doin' shit about
 it. Colonel's all hearts n' minds
 give 'em a cookie doesn't give a
 shit... We got blown up.

Jake tries reaching for her, but she PULLS away. Eyes flash almost angry. Too much raw hurt under the skin.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
 Nah, don't man. I mean, just...
 Glad you're alive.

JAKE
 (rasp)
 Tsh...

She glances back at him for a moment, confused.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 (more voice)
 Ta --- sh.

CATHERINE
 You get better, Sci-Fi...

A darkness settles behind her eyes. She turns and leaves, folding into the group. Gordy whispers in Paulie's ear, shoots a glance back as he goes. Jake's one eye stares.

FLASH OF MEMORY: *A soccer ball bounces across the dusty roads of a village, comes to rest at Jake's feet who looks at it, tracks its path back the way it came...*

INT. MEDICAL TENT - AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT (LATER)

Jake's eye blinks open. He's alone in the room. Jake's hand moves over his body... finds his arm. Slowly, he PULLS OUT the I.V.. He winces as it comes free.

Painfully, he turns his body. His bare feet touch the floor.

EXT. ARMY BASE - HELMAND PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT

Jake lurches out of a back door, into the black night. The base is kept DARK at night to prevent sniper attacks and Jake stumbles through the dark twenty feet... stops. Looking out.

IN THE FAR DISTANCE: Big 4,000 pound JDAM bombs explode, lighting the sky like fireworks. They rumble the earth.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Jake stumbles into the barracks, squinting against the LIGHT. There's motion and life here. SOLDIERS move about but luckily almost all are crowded at the front around a small TV showing "FAST AND THE FURIOUS." They HOOT and HOLLER as Jake keeps his face low, pushes into...

INT. BATHROOM - BARRACK - NIGHT

A few soldiers are showering. A toilet flushes.

Jake is staring at himself in the mirror. The bandaged man. Really him. Wounded. Burned. Unshaven. 15 pounds less muscle. No certainty of purpose or self confidence. Just a lost young man taking in the scarred mess of a human he's become.

He pushes off the bandages, WINCING as burned skin is exposed. His second eye stares back at him. Whole again.

INT. BUNKS - BARRACKS - NIGHT

Jake exits the bathroom, heads back along the bunks, fingers trailing over names, numbers. He finds a sticker taped to the front of a bunk:

"Life takes you to unexpected places. Love brings you home."

He kneels down at his bunk. Tightly made. He runs his hands over the blanket, the pillow...

And then he looks up.

The underside of the bunk above, his bunk's ceiling, is COVERED IN CLIPPINGS. It's a world of nostalgia... all dedicated to classic science fiction movies.

His eyes move over the collage. There's STAR TREK and STAR WARS, Ripley from ALIENS in her tank top. Also older movies: FLASH GORDON, the original PLANET OF THE APES and LOGAN'S RUN. And there are behind-the-scenes pictures. Actors on set.

Directors goofing around with stunt men. A famous 70's Hollywood photo: Men and Women party around a pool...

JAKE
(realizing)
... Sci fi.

Jake lies back on the bed, staring up, but something crinkles under his pillow. He pulls free a grey envelope. Addressed in a woman's handwriting to "Pvt. Jake Barnes..."

The letter has been opened, read. He stares at it, not knowing what's inside, but filled with dread. He starts to pull the paper free...

MAN'S VOICE
Hey, Sci-Fi? That you?

Jake looks over to find the lanky PFC Warren Driscoll. Eyes shifting, as if caught...

WARREN
They let you out? Man, I thought
you were... They let you out, dude?
(seeing Jake's face)
Ah, shit man. You sure you're okay?

Jake doesn't answer. Tucked amidst the dozens of classic Sci-Fi pictures, there are a couple of snaps of Jake's Squad:

There's Gordy, and Paulie, and Warren. Next to that, there's a shot of Catherine and Jake, handing out treats for the locals. They're close, clearly like each other's company. Jake's arm disappears where the picture is tucked in.

Jake pulls the picture free revealing the rest of the photo. A young Afghani boy smiles back, holding Jake's hand.

Tash.

EXT. CITY OF MARJAH, AFGHANISTAN - SUNSET (MEMORY)

Jake and Catherine, dressed in full kit for patrol, move down the familiar war-torn road. AFGHANI LOCALS keep their distance. A soccer ball bounces to Jake's feet...

Jake stops it, looks up. There's Tash, standing in local garb, waiting to see what Jake will do, unsure. Jake kicks the ball back to him and he stops it. Smiles...

INT. BUNKS - BARRACKS - NIGHT (RESUME PRESENT)

Warren's already retreating away from the bunks, towards the group at the front when Jake catches up to him.

WARREN

Ah, com'on, man, no. I mean, I'm fuckin' happy you're okay, man. But I'm gonna -- you know -- just watch a fuckin' movie.

JAKE

Who is this?

Jake holds out the picture. Warren looks away but Jake stays on him.

WARREN

What!? You know, it's that little fucker. That 'tali kid, Baktash.

(quiet, intense)

It was his family, man. That hit us... I gotta. I just gotta watch the movie, man.

Jake blinks back tears that come with understanding.

JAKE

Baktash. Tash...

Jake SCANS with renewed purpose. The bunks. Most are messed up, but three bunks are clean.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(whispered to himself)

Where's the squad...?

Warren's already ducked away beyond a group of soldiers who take in Jake, starting to realize something's wrong here.

Jake's gaze tracks to the wall where MAPS and SCHEDULES are tacked up on the wall...

FLASH OF MEMORY: *On the bridge of the Ark. The Navigator's screen, the salvation planet flashing...*

A MAP on the wall. It's the same map. He reaches out, touches the place that flashed in his dream...

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Jake juggles the soccer ball, smiling, passes it to Tash who laughs and passes it back again. Catherine is watching them, enjoying.*

And around them, sand. Not a beach, not a vacation, the sandy forever of the Afghan countryside...

FLASH OF MEMORY: Jake and Tash, now exhausted, plopped down next to a broken wall. Tash next to him. Jake reaches into his pocket, brings out a plastic army man, hands it to Tash who studies it... smiles.

Jake stares at his young friend. His touchstone of innocence in this violent land.

And then something makes Jake look up. Dozens of turbaned men are tracking the boy sitting with the American Soldier. Dozens of hard eyes. Jake blinks, suddenly chilled...

FLASH OF MEMORY: The faces of his squad in the OR, after the bombing. Filled with NUMB ANGER.

Jake turns searching the room, filling with dread.

JAKE (CONT'D)
(forcing his voice, rough)
Warren?! Where's the squad?

LAURA (O.S.)
Private Barnes.

Jake spins to find Nurse Laura across from him. She's backed up by the Doctor and two MP's. No one is happy.

INT. MEDICAL TENT - AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT

Jake is back in bed, staring up as Laura works at re-attaching his I.V.. She SMILES down.

LAURA
You're okay. Just gave us a scare.
Don't go wandering off like that
again, okay?

Jake stares back. Nods. A beat, then Laura gestures to the two MP's at the door who back out, leaving them alone.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Where did you think you were going?

JAKE
(trying to rise)
I need to speak -- to the Colonel.

LAURA
What you need, is some rest.

She firmly pushes him back down. Then returns to preparing something, just out of his line of vision.

JAKE

Please... I think something
terrible, is going to happen.
Please, I just need to...

Now she sits on the bed next to him, gently touches his face.

LAURA

I know, it's hard. You want to
believe everything can be like it
was. But your fight's over,
soldier. Sometimes, it takes
courage, just to walk away.

On Jake, hearing that. Staring at her...

LAURA (CONT'D)

Let me help you...

Her arm, half concealed behind her back, comes around with a syringe filled with a cloudy liquid.

Just Jake and Laura, eye to eye. He WINCES. She BLINKS, furiously, PUSHING DOWN on Jake. He STRAINS UPWARDS.

Her eyes go wide, she starts to CRY OUT -- but he pulls her down towards him, wraps a hand around her mouth.

WIDER. She's next to him in the bed, fighting. One of his hands is over her mouth. The syringe is planted in her side with his other hand.

It takes a long time until her eyelids finally... close.

Jake stares at the woman unconscious in the bed next to him. The room. A low RUMBLE from outside.

Awkwardly, he rolls off the bed and slides the plastic container from underneath. Inside: His tattered uniform.

EXT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

Jake limps away from the medical tent, now wearing the remains of his uniform. He angles through the dark, ducks down behind a palette of supplies as the two MP's pull back up in their JEEP and hurry back into the hospital tent.

Jake lurches over to the Jeep, rests against its side, catching his breath. One of the MP's has left his WEAPON on the seat. Jake picks it up, turns and FREEZES.

Across from him, is THE ENEMY COMBATANT HOLDING AREA. Behind concertina wire and heavy chain-link fencing, faces stare back. Angry and lost. Dozens of them...

A SIREN SOUNDS. LIGHTS thud on. Jake scrambles, slides painfully down into a ditch as VOICES rise and the sound of the search for Jake builds.

In front of Jake: THE TUNNEL, covered in heavy IRON BARS.

Jake approaches what is by now a familiar nemesis. His hands come to rest on IRON BARS, locked with a heavy-duty tumbler.

Jake blinks against wonder because he knows what to do.

Hands shaking, he dials the number he learned in his dreams.

JAKE

One.. five... six two.

The lock clicks open. Jake exhales. Amazed... He steps into the tunnel, starts to jog faster, leaving the lights and noise of the base behind.

EXT. HILLS OUTSIDE ARMY BASE - MOMENTS LATER

As the base begins to TEEM with activity, Jake stumbles up over a rise and into the night.

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - HELMAND PROVINCE - NIGHT

The stars are a canopy. The horizon is a glowing spectacle of carnage as distant GUNFIRE and EXPLOSIONS light up the sky.

Only the rumble of the big bombs reaches this far out.

A rusted out Toyota Truck rattles through the night... pulls to a stop, headlights illuminating Jake, standing in the middle of the road, his weapon raised at the driver.

The driver gets out, stares back at Jake.

EXT. VILLAGE - HELMAND PROVINCE - NIGHT

The pickup pulls to a stop on this dusty village road and Jake steps out. Parked up ahead is a U.S. Army HUMVEE.

It's DARK, and the wind is picking up, blustering clouds of dust. Jake approaches, stares at the dusty street. This is where it all happened...

FLASH OF MEMORY: *The soccer ball bounces through the dirt, comes to rest next to Jake. He smiles back at Tash.*

A MAN appears at the door to the house, the man we know as Mr. Amir. He BARKS at Tash, gesturing him back inside. As Tash hangs his head and moves inside, the man stares back darkly at Jake...

INT. AFGHANI HOUSE - NIGHT (RESUME PRESENT)

Jake pushes into the dark space lit only by a few smoky petrol lanterns and flickering low-watt bulbs.

Cornering... to walk into a scene of insanity.

The room has been TRASHED. In the center, SERGEANT GORDY SWAIN has a man in front of him on his knees, the man we know as MR. AMIR. He's been BEATEN BADLY, his blood-shot eyes full of hatred.

GORDY

You know you're making me do this!
I know you speak English you
sonofabitch! I know you know what
I'm saying! WHO GAVE YOU THE BOMB!

Gordy PRESSES the barrel of his M4 against the man's chest.

ACROSS THE ROOM, an AFGHANI WOMAN cries out! She presses a young AFGHANI BOY to her chest, even as she's pushed back by PFC PAULIE SLAUGHTER and CATHERINE who's got her weapon trained on an older AFGHANI TEENAGER.

GORDY (CONT'D)

Okay, Ahmed -- whatever the fuck
your name is. You want to see what
I can do?

In response, the Arab man SPITS at Gordy.

Gordy's had enough. He PULLS THE CHILD free from the Afghani woman's arms. It's TASH.

GORDY (CONT'D)

You don't think I'll do this!!? Who
gave you the damn bomb?!

CATHERINE

Sergeant! What are you -- Oh my
god... Sci-fi?

Catherine is staring across the room to where Jake stands in the doorway, trying to hold his balance.

PAULIE
Fuck me sideways...

GORDY
Hol-ly... shit. Sci-Fi? What the
hell are you doing here?

CATHERINE
Jake...? How did you --

JAKE
Please. Just let him go.

Gordy STARES. What? Then he shakes his head.

GORDY
Oh, hey, Sci-Fi. You know, you're
right, we don't have to do this. We
can just forget all about
Wallace... and Crane. We just
forget our guys, 'cause 'fuckin Sci-
Fi who's never done shit except get
himself blown up, because Sci-Fi
says so.

(hard beat)
You know it was these fuckers. You
saw it. You saw the ball.

JAKE
Everybody saw the ball. The Taliban
saw the ball. It could have been
anyone.

Jake looks to the boy, who's watching him. Recognition. He
kneels down to the boy's level.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Hey... You okay? You know it's
gonna be okay.
(then:)
Did you put a bomb in that ball?

Tash... shakes his head no.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I believe you.

GORDY
You believe him.

JAKE
Yes.

GORDY

Got it.

Gordy raises his weapon and BANG! He shoots Tash's brother, the Afghani Teenager!

Jake STARES as the Mother SCREAMS, tries to get to the young man but Paulie SHOVES her back even as --

CATHERINE

NO!!! WHAT DID YOU DO!!!? WHY DID YOU DO THAT!?

Catherine falls to her knees, rips the young man's shirt open, looking for the wound.

Jake starts forward but Gordy presses his sidearm against Tash and Jake raises his weapon, lines it on Gordy!

GORDY

Chill! Everybody CHILL THE FUCK OUT!!

CATHERINE

This is not why we came here! What the hell are you thinking!!

PAULIE

Oh, shit. Um... Shit. Gordy...?

They all track the fear in Paulie's voice, realize that the WOMAN has bolted out the back in the chaos. They hear her high-pitched scream trailing away into the night...

Jake stares over his trembling weapon at Gordy.

JAKE

... Why?

GORDY

Dude, have you seen your face? Then you look at this guy and tell me he didn't do that to you.

Jake takes in Tash's Father, on his knees, staring back, eyes filled with hate.

PAULIE

Um, guys? That woman's gonna go get help.

GORDY

Yes she will. Which means we do not have all day. So lower your weapon, private.

Jake shakes his head no.

GORDY (CONT'D)

I don't get it, Sci-Fi. Who do you think you are? You play with your little toys, lost in your little movies and now you're gonna point a weapon at me!?!?

(bearing in)

You know this kid is going to grow up to be some mini Tali. Three weeks, he'll be planting bombs with his daddy. You think this makes you a hero!?

Catherine glances up, meets eyes with Jake who stares back at her, trying to stay strong.

JAKE

No, I'm not. I'm not important. I'm nothing.

The words seem to calm him, give him strength.

Gordy looks around for backup: Catherine, working to keep the teenager alive, arms covered in blood. Paulie, nervously switching his aim between the man and Jake...

GORDY

All right. Jesus. Take him.

(off Paulie's protest)

SHUT UP!!

(back on Jake)

Take the kid, and feel real good about yourself, big hero..

Gordy shoves Tash towards Jake. The boy stumbles halfway, picks himself up, looking at Jake...

Jake puts out a hand.

JAKE

Tash...

(correcting himself)

Baktash. Come on. Let's go.

Tash looks at Jake. Jake smiles... hand out for the boy...

But Tash suddenly RUNS to his father! Gordy lines his weapon and the man pulls Tash in and protects him, hiding him behind his back, arms raised!

CATHERINE

No!!! No, don't!!

Gordy's gun is lined on the man who shelters the boy. Tash has his arms wrapped around his father from behind, even as the man shifts to keep his body in front of Gordy.

TASH'S FATHER (ARABIC)

< No! Please don't. Please... >

ON JAKE. He stares at the two of them, Tash and his father. The unmistakable love of this father for his son, willing to die to protect him.

Jake closes his eyes.

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Tash, fast asleep against Jake's chest in his room.*

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Tash, calling out for his father from the escape pod.*

FLASH OF MEMORY: *Tash and Jake, hand in hand, as the dome comes down.*

STILL ON JAKE. Realizing he's not the father in this story. Accepting that...

JAKE

I'm sorry... Sergeant. You're going walk out of here with me.

GORDY

Fuck off, you don't tell me --

JAKE

(exploding)

Maybe you didn't hear me. You are going to holster your weapon and we are going to leave these people alone!

Gordy stares back at Jake, shocked into an almost numb stare. His 9mm loose in his hand by his side. Is he going to shoot?

Tick. Tick. Tick... Gordy looks down, suddenly ineffably sad.

GORDY

I don't get it, Sci-fi. Where did you get the balls?

Jake just stares back.

The SOUND OF CARS pulling up outside. VOICES, shouting, coming closer. BANGING on the front door. LOUD. BANG. BANG.

BOOM! Door caves in and U.S. MARINES FLOOD THE ROOM! Fully kitted for battle, M4's leading.

MARINES

Down! Everybody get down! Down now!! GET DOWN!!

Oooof! a MARINE plants a foot in Jake's back and brings him down. His face pressed in the dirt, Jake watches the forms of Gordy, Paulie, and Catherine as they're also forced down.

From his father's arms, Tash stares back at him. It's over.

EXT. VILLAGE - HELMAND PROVINCE - EARLY MORNING

Hours later.

A small army of Humvees and support vehicles have assembled around the house. Army snipers have taken up positions. US MILITARY and AFGHANI SECURITY FORCES intermingle.

The first rays of sunlight crest the blue snow-tipped far-away mountains, refract orange through the morning haze...

Jake sits wearily on the back of a Humvee as a YOUNG MEDIC changes the dressing on the burns on his legs. Jake's too tired to wince from the pain.

Further on, the Afghani Teenager is loaded into a field ambulance as nearby, SGT. GORDY SWAIN and PFC SLAUGHTER sit in the dirt further off, hands zip-tied behind their backs.

In a COMMAND VEHICLE, the silhouette of COLONEL GOODE sits stoic and sunglassed. He stares at Jake... nods.

Jake just looks back down at the letter in his hands.

The seal was long ago broken. He pulls the paper free from inside. His eyes scan. We catch GLIMPSES:

"I'm tired of waiting... we're both tired... ...I'm sorry. I can't fight anymore..."

"I won't be here for you when you get back."

"He needs a father."

Jake scans the words. He notices something in the envelope, shakes out a small picture: The blond young boy, his actual son. Squinting at the camera, smiling awkwardly...

CATHERINE (O.S.)

Jake...?

Catherine, her hands also zip-tied, has paused as she is being escorted by a FEMALE MARINE towards a waiting Humvee.

JAKE

Cat. I'm sorry...

CATHERINE

Don't.

Catherine looks to her guard who gives her a moment's sympathy, allows her to draw close to Jake.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I... I lost myself for a moment,
you know?

JAKE

Yeah. I do.

CATHERINE

We're just out here, like it's
going to be forever. Everything
else just becomes... When that
I.E.D. hit and I just... lost
myself.

(beat)

But you saved me.

She's tired, and under arrest. But it's like a weight has left her.

She leans in, haltingly, awkwardly, kisses his cheek. Then sneaks the smallest kiss to his lips before pulling away.

He stares back as she's led away and a low THUMPING SOUND fills the air.

YOUNG MEDIC

That's your ride, man.

Jake looks up as a HELICOPTER descends into a clearing nearby. Jake stands up, takes one more look around himself, and then limps towards the chopper.

The rotor-wash kicks up dust, blowing the discarded letter across the desert.

Ahead, Jake reaches the chopper and starts to climb on board.

VOICE
RUNNER!!

Jake TURNS even as Marines go stiff with tension, raise their weapons to track a blur of someone running, weaving through the vehicles...

... Bursting into the open it's TASH, moving fast, running towards Jake and the chopper.

Marines fingers tighten on their weapons.

Tash reaches Jake, GRABS him around the waist. Jake is half-pushed back against the chopper. Steadies himself.

Tash lets go. Looks embarrassed for what he did. Looks at the ground, then at Jake. Smiles.

JAKE
Baktash.

Tash points at the helicopter, speaks in broken English.

TASH
You're... going home?

JAKE
Yes.
(off his injuries)
I'm um... I'm a mess.

Tash nods. He puts out a hand, opens it fast making a little "ka-boom" sound.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Yeah. Ka-boom.

Tash nods. Squints at Jake, like he's never seen anything like him before.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I have a... family, back where I come from. Or, at least... I have a son. I don't know him very well, not anymore. I haven't been there for him.
(beat)
But I'm his father. And I'm going back to him now.

Jake wants to hug the kid to him. But instead he puts out a hand... rest it on Tash's shoulder.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You take care of yourself here. And
your family.

Tash nods. He reaches in his pocket, puts something in Jake's
hand. The small plastic army soldier.

Jake nods. Tash places his open hand on Jake's chest.

TASH

Tashakur.

(Then, in English:)

Thank you.

Jake stares at the boy, eyes wet.

JAKE

You're welcome.

(beat)

Bye, Tash.

PILOT

(shouting back)

Private! Get on, we're leaving!

Tash backs away from the helicopter as the engines start to
whine, rotors start to turn...

Jake pulls himself onto the chopper, takes a seat. He puts a
hand up to Tash who also raises a hand, looks up as the
chopper LIFTS OFF, curving low over the village.

Jake looks down at the Army Man in his hand, tucks it in a
pocket.

Below Jake, the village recedes. The details of the roads and
villages fade away into one landscape as the helicopter rises
into the sky.

END.