

QUEST

Screenplay by
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Final Draft (FOURTH)
2/23/81

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FADE IN

1 EXT. THE PLANET MORGANTHUS 1

A broad, dark, barely discernible landscape. Haunting music with drifting voices. A fragile line of muted light defines the horizon of a barren grey desert world.

2 SEVERAL ANGLES AS TITLES ROLL 2

The camera moves in to an overview of the space debris littering part of the planet's surface, holding on a damaged ship amidst the debris: the REMUS.

3 INT. THE REMUS - CORRIDOR 3

SHOCK CUT AND MUSIC STING

Someone blurs by too close to the camera to be identified. The camera continues gazing down an empty corridor as the rapid footsteps recede.

CUT TO:

A3 INT. REMUS - ANOTHER CORRIDOR A3

As the camera stares down another dark corridor, a panicked CREWMAN, clutching an armful of futuristic weapons, backs nervously into frame and up the corridor, his breathing hard and ragged.

CUT TO:

B3 INT. REMUS DOORWAY B3

An empty doorway. The crewman appears in it, constantly checking behind him. Something rustles off camera. The man races out of frame.

CUT TO:

4 INT. REMUS - STORAGE ROOM 4

The terrified crewman dives into the storage room and slams the door shut. He drops his armful with a clatter, unholsters his heat weapon, and fires at the door, welding the door seams.

A4 WIDER ANGLE A4

The small chamber, like the rest of the ship, is dimly lit. Torn conduits and twisted metal supports dangle from the ceiling, instruments glow faintly along the walls. The crewman finishes sealing the door and steps back, relieved, when his hand presses into something fleshy. He jumps back, horrified at the badly torn corpse he's just stuck his hand into.

B4 ANOTHER ANGLE B4

The crewman backs away from the body, trying to calm himself, and moves towards the control panel at the further end of the room. Suddenly he becomes aware of faint breathing, inside the room. He spins to face the corpse. It is motionless.

C4 CLOSER ANGLE C4

The crewman turns back to the controls, working them feverishly without effect.

D4 WIDER ANGLE D4

The corpse is no longer visible in the room. The crewman works frantically with the controls, unaware.

E4 CLOSER ANGLE ON CREWMAN

The crewman flips the emergency power switch. Nothing happens.

As he reaches for a second switch, he freezes. Reflected in a gauge face is a distorted silhouette.

(CONTINUED)

E4 CONTINUED

E 4

The crewman turns and screams as he is grabbed. His body disappears out of frame before being hurled viciously back against the dials. In a flurry of movement again he is picked up and tossed. He slams into another wall and crumples, bloodied, to the floor.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. THE HOME PLANET - DAY - 2 SHOTS

5

The camera moves in from high over the green, verdant land and cityscape of the Home Planet. It is a radically different world to the one in Scene I.

MITRI (V.O.)

Xerces. A small world on the fringes of occupied space. ~~held~~

CUT TO:

A5 INT. THE PLANET MASTER'S ROOM - HOME PLANET

A5

The room is windowless, the furnishings simple. MITRI, an old wizened woman, sits crosslegged in front of a low table, playing the Game with someone we do not yet see.

The Game board glows from below, its flickering lights creating intricate patterns to which the players respond, sometimes singly, sometimes simultaneously. They do so by touching keyboards marked with a variety of symbols, some occult, some not.

Mitri is lost in intense concentration in the Game. As she plays we hear her voice, steady and almost drone-like.

(CONTINUED)

A5 CONTINUED

A5

MITRI (V.O.)

I am Mitri. ~~I am the knower of secrets;~~ the interpreter of the signs; the oracle of the Game.

Slowly the camera pulls back to reveal the PLANET MASTER sitting opposite Mitri, also concentrating intently on the Game. The Planet Master's body is seen as a shimmering image of intense light, a projection of the pure, concentrated energy state which the Master has attained.

MITRI (V.O.)

I play at the bidding of the all-powerful one, ~~the one whose name may not be spoken,~~ Planet Master of Xerces.

The quiet of their intense concentration is abruptly broken by an ELECTRONIC BUZZER. The Master presses a button on a panel behind him and a screen is activated. On the screen appears the image of COMMANDER ILVAR. He is grey-haired, stiff and punctilious in manner.

ILVAR

Master, we have lost all contact with the Remus. First the hyper-wave and now even the bioscans show nothing.

When the Planet Master speaks, there is a slight distortion effect to his voice.

MASTER

Location?

ILVAR

Morganthus. We don't know why they landed there.

(CONTINUED)

A5 CONTINUED

A5

MASTER
(dismissing)
Thank you.

Ilvar nods and the screen becomes opaque.

MITRI
So! It is as the Game showed.
Now the pattern unfolds.

MASTER
(pleased)
Morganthus!

They play. A brief interchange flashes across the board.

MITRI
I like it not.

MASTER
It is not for you to like
or dislike, but to evoke
the pattern. Play!

MITRI
There is more in a foretelling
than just the pattern.

(CONTINUED)

A5 CONTINUED

A5

MASTER

Yes, and there are half a hundred worlds where you would be burnt for your 'skill' at the Game. Play!

The Master punches his keyboard. A constant flashing circle forms and interweaves with the other patterns on the board.

MITRI

(startled)

You would do that? Such risk!

MASTER

It's been too long. I'm tired of waiting.

They play again. Mitri flinches at what she sees.

MITRI (V.O.)

Aah!

She looks questioningly at the Master, but he continues to play.

MITRI

Yes. I see that it can be successful, but at what cost! Death will surround you.

MASTER

It's the only way.

MITRI

A terrible way.

MASTER

Terrible, but sure.

The Master again presses the button on the panel. The screen lights up, and Commander Ilvar appears on it.

ILVAR

Yes, Master.

(CONTINUED)

A5 CONTINUED

MASTER

Put together a class three ship with the normal exploratory and defense equipment. You will command the rescue mission. I will personally select the crew. They shall not be informed of this.

Ilvar nods. The screen darkens. The Master turns back to Mitri and the Game.

MASTER

Now, old woman, leave me. The waiting is over. I play alone.

CUT TO:

6 INT. SPACESHIP FACILITY - MASTER SHOT

6

The rescue mission ship, the QUEST, is seen in the vast bays of the hangar. It is being serviced by various fuel, supplies and flight systems trucks and personnel.

Amidst the flurry of emergency preparations we see a line of eight space-suited figures collecting field-packs as they hurry through a checkpoint, and run to the ship.

CONTROL (V.O.)

Any personnel not cleared for final systems check must vacate the facility immediately. Repeat, immediately. All launch personnel proceed to delta stations. Confirm alpha status immediately. Repeat, immediately...

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED

6

Control's V.O. continues as the CAMERA MOVES IN on the first of the crew members. BAELON, second in command, a weapons specialist, tense, energetic, aggressive, a man who tries to meet all problems physically. Right behind him, looking rather tired, is ALLUMA, a small, attractive woman, sharp and pragmatic despite the fact that she is extremely sensitive to unseen or unknown life processes, and as such, functions as a human 'biosensor' on exploratory missions.

Catching up to them is CABREN: raw-boned and good-looking, he has the quick reflexes and self-confidence of a natural leader, but rarely presses for advantage.

Cabren pats Alluma familiarly on the bottom and reaches to help her with her heavy field pack.

CABREN

Can I help?

Alluma turns, surprised.

ALLUMA

Cabren! What...

Baelon, too, has turned on hearing Cabren's voice.

BAELON

Wonderful. Just who we need.

CABREN

(grinning at Alluma)

Still the same friendly old Baelon.

BAELON

I don't know why in the Master's name you're back on active duty, but I'm second in command. This time, you take orders from me.

CABREN

(grinning at him)

Nice to see you too, old buddy.

CUT TO:

7 INT. MAIN CONTROL - THE QUEST

7

Commander Ilvar runs final checks on the computer as CAPTAIN TRANTOR bursts into the room. She is a small high-energy, non-stop veteran in her mid-40's.

TRANTOR

Who are you and what are you doing at my station? I'm flying this scrap heap.

ILVAR

Ilvar. Mission Commander. Welcome Captain.

TRANTOR

(nods acknowledgement)
Ancillary systems checked?

ILVAR

Yes, I just...

TRANTOR

Fine. Seconds wasted here could be costing lives on Morganthus.

Trantor punches keys and DAMEIA, a striking woman of Amazon-like proportions, the ship's tech chief, appears on the screen.

TRANTOR

Tech check?

DAMEIA

Tech check complete. Main hatches closed.

TRANTOR

Give me full standby.

DAMEIA

Full standby, Captain.

The screen fills with data again. Trantor opens the communications channel and talks to the ship.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED

7

TRANTOR
 All crew, this is Trantor.
 Lift off in 30 seconds. And...
 (triggering the lift-off alert)
 Mark!
 ILVAR
 (horrified)
 But Captain, no one's prepared.

TRANTOR
 They've got 30 seconds to get
 prepared.

The comstat screens throughout the ship flash warning signals while showing the lift-off countdown which is delivered by a metallic computer voice.

CUT TO:

SCENE 8 OMITTED 8

9 INT. SHIP CORRIDOR 9

Alluma and Cabren secure the doorway from which they emerge, then they brush past RANGER, charging the other way. Ranger is an ace technician. A curious character in the way he perpetually worries over gadgets and theories. He's an old friend of Cabren's and has spent a lot of time in Cabren's shadow.

RANGER
 Cabren!

CABREN
 (not stopping)
 See you later, old buddy!

They race on in different directions.

CUT TO:

10 INT. CORRIDOR TO COMM. ROOM 10

Cabren, Alluma and the others on the crew converge at the comm room entrance.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED

10

The others are: QUUHOD, strong and silent, shaven head - he eschews modern weapons in favor of throwing crystals - a deadly and single-minded combat veteran; COS, the youngest on board, the nervous novice, eager to prove himself in the field; and KORE, the ship's cook, an older man, unassuming in manner and unprepossessing in appearance.

A10 INT. COMM. ROOM

A10

Baelon is first into the room as they all dive for the anti-gravity chairs. The comstat countdown shows twelve seconds left. The crew feverishly lock themselves into their anti-gravity chairs.

COS, nervous on his maiden voyage, has trouble locking himself in.

TIGHT SHOT

A hand reaches over and adroitly does it for him.

WIDER SHOT

Cabren withdraws his hand and easily locks himself in.

QUUHOD

(staring at the screen)

A maniac.

BAELON

Son of a cyborg!

11 INT. CORRIDOR - MAIN CONTROL

11

Ranger races into main control and scrambles for the ladder to tech control.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

5-4-3...

12 INT. TECH CONTROL 12

Ranger stumbles up the ladder to the tech control platform. Dameia is already strapped in.

COMPUTER

2-1-0.

DAMEIA

Quick, here!

The ship shakes as Dameia grabs Ranger, who cannot make it to his own chair. She pulls him over her and holds him tightly with arms and legs through lift-off. He is embarrassed, aroused and delighted.

Trantor's voice bellows over the comm channel.

TRANTOR (V.O.)

We've got a live one! LIFT OFF!

13 EXT. LIFT-OFF SHOTS 13

The ship blazes out of its horizontal chamber and arcs upward.

14 INT. SHIP - VARIOUS SHOTS 14

There is a tremendous racket as unsecured gear goes flying.

15 INT. MAIN CONTROL 15

Ilvar winces as he listens to it.

TRANTOR

Sure gets the gear stowed
in a hurry.

Ilvar's hands shake as he scans the ship interior. The comm room appears on his screen.

ILVAR

Everyone in there okay?

On Viewscreen

ALLUMA

I think so, Commander. All in
one piece.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED

15

BAELON (angrily)
What is going on?!

Main Control

Ilvar quickly punches up tech control.

ILVAR
Dameia, you okay?

On Viewscreen

DAMEIA
A little out of breath, Commander. All systems stable.

Main Control

Ilvar switches back to data and mops his brow, breathing a little heavily.

TRANTOR
(looking at Ilvar)
Bit long in the tooth for this kind of job, aren't you, Commander?

ILVAR
I haven't been on an active mission for some time. But you've been on the go for what, nearly 25 years? Since Hesperus, if I'm not mistaken?

At the mention of 'Hesperus', Trantor's breezy manner fades abruptly.

TRANTOR
Hesperus. Yes. They've all forgotten now. They came in like winged devils, and the sound, the sound was like...

Trantor catches Ilvar's look, and snaps out of it.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED

15

TRANTOR (Cont'g)
 ...yes, if I hadn't kept on the
 move after that, I'd be an ozer
 in a breather bar by now.
 (deliberately changing
 the subject)
 Let me see your hyper-jump coords,
 Commander.

Ilvar punches up the coordinates on their monitors. Trantor
 punches in new ones.

ILVAR
 Captain! Those were pre-sets!

TRANTOR
 If we have to get there at all,
 we might as well get there fast.

The comstat countdown shows 20 secs to jump. Trantor
 flips a switch.

CUT TO:

16 INT. COMM. ROOM

16

The crew react as lights flash and warning sounds
 are emitted signalling the countdown for the hyper-jump.

ALLUMA
 This is insanity!

BAELON
 Who the hell is this Trantor?

COS
 The only survivor of the
 Hesperus massacre. Flew the
 ship back alone.

The ship makes an unexpected lurch, scattering more
 loose gear.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED 16

CABREN

Well, it's good to know we're
in safe hands.

17 INT. MAIN CONTROL 17

The comstat screen shows 2 seconds left. Trantor's hands
are firm on the controls.

TRANTOR

Alright, baby - jump it!

Everything goes red on the panel and Trantor flips the
jump activators.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE 18

As it accelerates into the hyperjump, the ship travels
forward at a speed so tremendous that the stars streak
by in a dizzying stream.

A18 INT. COMM ROOM A18

In the midst of the hyperjump, the intense vibration causes
the figures of the crew to blur.

B18 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE B18

A bright source of light appears up ahead, and appears to
suck the ship into its energy field. The ship streaks
through a tunnel of light.

C18 INT. MAIN CONTROL C18

The figures of Trantor and Ilvar are blurred in the
tremendous vibration, and flashes of light streak across
them.

D18 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE D18

As the ship emerges from the tunnel of light the stars
streak by again, then slow down as the ship rapidly
decelerates.

E18 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE

E18

The ship emerges from the star cluster into a totally different sky, close to a dark, ominous planet - Morganthus.

CUT TO:

19 INT. MAIN CONTROL

19

Morganthus fills the view screens.

TRANTOR

Morganthus!

CUT TO:

20 INT. COMM. ROOM

20

The image of the dark planet sobers the crew.

COS

What was the Remus doing here?

ALLUMA

(tiredly)

What are we doing here?
I'm tired of being flung
across the galaxy into
every dangerous mess that
comes along.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED

20

CABREN

It was on an exploratory mission
to Tau Ceti. We don't know why
it got off course.

Suddenly the ship gives a tremendous lurch.

21 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE

21

The ship veers suddenly, spinning towards the planet.
Alarms sound.

CUT TO:

22 INT. SHIP - MAIN CONTROL

22

Trantor grabs for the controls.

TRANTOR

What!

(she keys in
tech control)

Full manual override.
Quick!

CUT TO:

23 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE

23

Hurtling towards the planet.

CUT TO:

24 INT. COMM-ROOM - CLOSE UPS

24

The crew, their faces tense, hands gripping seats.

CUT TO:

25 INT. MAIN CONTROL

25

TRANTOR

Tech control, when I call it,
I want a five second null on
the gyros and all the reverse
thrust the boosters have. I'm
going to try to spin us out of
this.

She keys off, watching the screens.

TRANTOR

(to Ilvar)

Master knows what's got us but
this is going to be some ride!

Not having the power to overcome the downward pull,
Trantor throws the ship into a hard tight spiral.

26 EXT. SHIP

26

Hurtling towards the dark planet.

CUT TO:

27 INT. COMM. ROOM

27

The crew tenses as the ship gathers speed. Sweat pours
down their faces.

BAELON

Aagh! If I live through this,
I'll kill her.

CABREN

If you live through this, you'll
be kissing her feet.

Only Kore seems undisturbed, leaning back in his anti-
grav. chair.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE

28

The ship continues to hurtle towards the planet,
considerably closer now.

CUT TO:

29 INT. MAIN CONTROL 29

TRANTOR
Gyros! Thruster! Hit 'em!
Now!

CUT TO:

30 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE 30

The ship wavers in its race towards Morganthus.

CUT TO:

30 A INT. TECH CONTROL 30A

Dameia and Ranger at the monitors.

TRANTOR (V.O.)
Come on baby. Give me more!

DAMEIA
That's it, Captain. On full.

CUT TO:

31 INT. MAIN CONTROL 31

TRANTOR
Pox! And we nearly had it, too!

Trantor slams her hand down and spins around in her chair, frustrated. Ilvar watches her, shocked. She meets his eyes.

TRANTOR
(shrugging)
Nothing I can do.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE 32

It hurtles directly towards the surface of the planet.

CUT TO:

33 INT. MAIN CONTROL 33

Suddenly, Trantor and Ilvar are thrown sideways. Trantor hauls herself back to the controls.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. SHIP IN SPACE 34

The ship is now screaming across the sky parallel to the planet's surface.

34A INT. TECH CONTROL 34A

Ranger and Dameia work frantically.

CUT TO:

35 INT. MAIN CONTROL 35

Trantor, back at the controls, reacts to the monitors.

TRANTOR

First it sucks us down, now it spits us out!

ILVAR

What about the landing jets?

TRANTOR

At this speed? Are you crazy?

(she checks monitors, reacts)

Wait a minute. We're going down again, and not as fast.

(she keys tech)

Hey, beautiful! Give me the landing jets...

CUT TO:

36 EXT. SHIP REACHING MORGANTHUS 36

The landing jets flare as the ship skims dizzyingly close to the black planet's surface.

37 INT. SHIP MAIN CONTROL 37

Trantor plays the controls like a pinball wizard.

TRANTOR

Hang onto your shorts. We're going to dump!

CUT TO:

38 INT. TECH CONTROL 38

Dameia and Ranger work their controls intently, disciplined pros in action.

CUT TO:

39 INT. COMM ROOM 39

Various reactions as the crew brace themselves.

CUT TO:

40A INT. SHIP 40A

Various reaction shots as the crew is tossed around and gear breaks loose within the ship.

40B EXT. SHIP LANDING

The ship careens to a halt. As the dust clears, the ship appears partly buried but intact.

CUT TO:

41 INT. TECH CONTROL 41

Dameia and Ranger start shutting systems down. They smile at each other, glad to find themselves alive.

A41 INT. COMM ROOM A41

There is a general sigh of relief.

BAELON

Son of a grylon!

Cabren first checks on Alluma who reassures him that she is okay, then moves quietly to Cos, who is trying to hide his shaking.

(CONTINUED)

A41 CONTINUED

A41

CABREN

Take a deep breath. Now
hold it.

Cos does so briefly, exhaling nervously. He musters
an apologetic smile.

CABREN

My first time out I locked my
head into one of these chairs.
For a year I was known as the
kid who sat on his brains.

Cos nods weakly, appreciative of Cabren's concern.

TRANTOR (V.O.)

Welcome to Morganthus. Sorry
about the bumps.

B41 INT. MAIN CONTROL

B41

Trantor finishes shutting down systems while Ilvar
studies graphic readouts on his viewscreen.

TRANTOR

Well, Commander. I got you
here. The rest is up to you.

Ilvar sighs. He is clearly worried.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. MORGANTHUS. RING OF SPACE DEBRIS - DUSK

42

Bleak and ominous, a pale sun is setting, taking the
planet from its eerie, muted, grey/blue twilight 'day'
to the blackness of its deep night.

The Quest lies partially buried in sand and dirt, looking
like one more junker in the band of space debris curving
across the barren landscape. It is the landscape of the
opening scene.

A floodlight snaps on, illuminating the area around the main
hatch. Five of the crew, Baelon, Cabren, Alluma, Quuhod and
Cos, emerge slowly, warily. They stay in a tight pack.

CUT TO:

42A CLOSER ANGLE

42A

Five of the crew, Baelon, Cabren, Alluma, Quuhod and Cos emerge slowly, warily. They stay in a tight pack.

CUT TO:

43 CLOSER ANGLE

43

Baelon using a small navigation device, orients himself.

Alluma is standing quite still, her head cocked to one side as if listening, her fingers lightly touching her temples.

CABREN

(to Alluma)

Anything?

ALLUMA

Absolutely nothing.

BAELON

If there's anything to find here, Cabren, I'll find it!

Cabren nods easily, refusing to be riled.

ALLUMA

Baelon, I'm psi-sensitive.
The subtle energies do exist.
They even pay me to sense them.
All right?!

Baelon, surprised at the hot response, looks suspiciously at Alluma, then Cabren. Cabren shrugs amiably. Baelon grunts and heads off, leading the group across the hostile terrain.

43A ANOTHER ANGLE

Cos stands still again trying to control his fearful shivering. Quuhod, very much the seasoned warrior, sees this and steps in front of him, placing one large hand on the crewman's shoulder. When Cos looks up, he lifts his throwing crystal between them. Strongly clenched in his fist, it is a symbol of the strength Cos must have.

He urges the lad on and follows, bringing up the rear.

43B ANOTHER ANGLE

It is deathly quiet as the group picks its way through the debris.

44 EXT. REMUS

44

They converge on the Remus. Lying at an odd angle, it is the ship of the opening scene.

The search party fans out, moving cautiously towards the airlock which is badly crumpled. The main hatch is jammed open.

Quuhod covers Baelon as Baelon rushes in.

45 INT. REMUS - AIRLOCK

45

Baelon rushes in, weapon ready. He quickly peers down the faintly lit corridor open to the airlock. Finding no one, he moves back towards the main hatch to signal Quuhod.

But as he turns back, an inverted corpse suddenly swings towards him, staring from sightless eyes.

Baelon blazes at the corpse as he flings himself to the floor. Quuhod's throwing crystals slice through the air. The others charge in after. The ship is deathly silent again.

Quuhod picks his crystals from the dangling remains. Cos turns and vomits. Baelon looks towards him with disdain.

As soon as Quuhod steps away from the body, Baelon "fries" it with a single shot from one of his weapons. This obliterates the body, leaving only an outline of it-- a "death trace" -- on the wall facing the blast.

BAELON

Cabren, Quuhod, main control area. Alluma, with me. Cos, alpha deck and comm room.

Cos is obviously frightened to head off alone. Cabren recognizes this.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED

45

CABREN
I could go with Cos.

BAELON
(snapping)
I'm in command here.

He glares from Cabren to Cos, who looks hesitantly towards the group, then heads into the corridor. The others follow.

46 INT. REMUS - CORRIDOR

46

Cabren and Quuhod, weapons drawn, move cautiously down a heeled over corridor. In a doorway entrance, they discover the 'Death Trace' of another Remus crew member.

CABREN
(indicating marks and speaking low)
Somebody already fried this one. Could be survivors.

CUT TO:

47 INT. ANOTHER REMUS CORRIDOR

47

Cos, talking quietly to himself, barely looks around in his determination to get through this ordeal quickly. As he rounds a bend, he bumps into a set of tall cannisters which clatter across the floor, startling and nearly tumbling him. Somewhat Chaplinesque in his movements, he rights the cannisters, brushing himself off too casually, and hurries off as though it were a brisk afternoon stroll.

CUT TO:

48 INT. REMUS - MAIN CONTROL

48

Cabren and Quuhod, hunched down at the door of the main control, listen for a moment, then burst in.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED

48

They find only a body fallen forward over the control console. Quuhod looks dispassionately at the savagery. When he finishes, Cabren fries it quickly.

As he does, sirens sound and lights begin flashing wildly. Quuhod and Cabren go back to back, ready to protect themselves.

CUT TO:

49 INT. REMUS - WEAPON'S CONTROL

49

Alluma and Baelon react similarly to the warning sirens and lights,

Just as abruptly the sirens and lights die out. Nothing attacks. Cabren's voice echoes over the comstat system.

CABREN (V.O.)

It's all right. No emergency.
Seems the captain's body was
leaning on the warning control...

Alluma and Baelon relax.

CUT TO:

50 INT. REMUS - CORRIDOR

50

An empty corridor. Some conduit that dangles from the ceiling flutters as if in an unheard breeze.

CABREN (V.O.)

...so when I fried him...

CUT TO:

51 INT. REMUS - COMM. ROOM

51

The comm room, its ceiling collapsed, is littered with equipment and ceiling panels.

CABREN (V.O.)

...the system released.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED

51

Slowly, ominously, one of the scattered ceiling panels begins to move. A hand emerges, then a foot, a face: Cos appears, smiling stonily, as he fumbles out of his hiding place.

CABREN (V.O.)

He did not die pleasantly,
so stay alert out there.

Cos, automaton-like, turns to the direction of Cabren's voice, but the comstat clicks off. He stares blankly at the speaker, muttering to himself.

A sudden clattering from a back corner of the room startles him. His glazed eyes focus in fright.

Something scuttles from behind some equipment to another hiding place closer to Cos.

Cos spins around, too late to see it.

CUT TO:

52 INT. ANOTHER REMUS CORRIDOR

52

Baelon and Alluma move to the door that the victim in the opening scene locked himself behind.

Alluma stops, poised, listening.

ALLUMA

Wait, Baelon. There's something...

Baelon ignores her, cuts the door open and rushes in, weapon ready. The remains of the man we saw in the first scene is lying on the floor. There is no sign of the original corpse. Alluma backs away.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED

52

ALLUMA

Aahgh!

Suddenly she spins around facing the door, 'listening.'

ALLUMA

Oh! It's still there!

BAELON

Where?

(barking)

Where is it?!

ALLUMA

(snapping back)

If you'd calm down for a minute,
I might find it.

She puts her hands to her temples.

CUT TO:

53 INT. REMUS - COMM. ROOM

53

Cos turns around mechanically, surveying the shambles of the comm room. All is silent, still. Then, beyond Cos's view, the CREATURE scuttles closer on its many hairy legs. The giant mandibles tremble and the shining eyes swivel, protruding from the strangely luminiscent body.

Again, Cos hears the Creature, but whirls around to see... nothing. Terrified, he edges towards the door. So does the Creature, unseen by Cos. It reaches the door first and waits.

As Cos makes a break for the corridor, the creature tenses to leap. Cos races out. The swivel eyes follow his move, but the creature does not leap.

CUT TO:

54 INT. REMUS - CORRIDOR

54

Cos flies down the tilted corridor. He swings around a corner and runs into Baelon and Alluma. The shock is too much for him. He dissolves into a blubbering mass.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED

54

Baelon grabs him.

BAELON

What is it?

When Cos fails to respond, Baelon slaps him hard. Cos stares at Baelon with tearful eyes.

COS

I...I...it...

Baelon pushes him aside and charges out towards the comm room.

ALLUMA

What was it, Cos?

CUT TO:

55 INT. REMUS - AIRLOCK

55

Quuhod and Cabren are joined by Baelon, Alluma and Cos.

Next to Quuhod lies a sack, the outline of a vaguely human form apparent through its folds. Waiting, Quuhod juggles his crystals.

BAELON

Anything?

Cabren shakes his head. Quuhod pauses in his juggling to study Cos. Baelon notices Quuhod's gaze.

BAELON

Useless.

Cos sits down, disconsolate, his head in his hands.

ALLUMA

(listening)

Now it seems like...

If I didn't know better, I'd say it was coming from Cos.

Baelon shakes his head, trusting only what he can see or shoot. Even Cabren seems disbelieving. Cos could not look less like a threat.

(CONTINUED)

BAELON
There's nothing here.
(gesturing at
the body in the
sack)
Let's get that back for analysis.

Everyone but Cos moves from the airlock.

56 EXT. CLOSE TO REMUS - AIRLOCK

56

Quuhod, the sack swung over his shoulder, steps out to join Baelon, Alluma and Cabren.

BAELON
Cos! Come on!

CUT TO:

57 INT. REMUS - AIRLOCK

57

Cos looks up, startled. He sees that he is on his own again and peers about wildly.

BAELON (V.O.)
Cos!

Cos moves towards the hatch eager to escape what may be behind him. Suddenly the CREATURE, its eerie glow bright against the darkness, leaps at the camera.

The CREATURE takes Cos down. Razor mandibles pierce the flesh. Hairy appendages reach for his eyes.

COS
AAAGHGH!!!

CUT TO:

58 INT. QUEST CORRIDOR

58

Kore, carrying a tray of drink bulbs, and Cabren approach the main control.

CABREN

If it weren't so gruesome, it would be fascinating.

KORE

(smiling ingenuously)

The human mind is still as dark as Morganthus, isn't it, sir?

Cabren, surprised at Kore's strange remark, is about to reply, when Kore holds open a door for him and they enter the main control.

CUT TO:

59 INT. MAIN CONTROL

59

The crew, minus Dameia and Ranger, are gathered. The mood is tense.

ILVAR

What do you mean, it just disappeared? How can a life-scan 'just disappear'?

ALLUMA

It did. I sensed something around Cos, then when he died, it just vanished. Gone.

Baelon shakes his head, skeptical.

ALLUMA

Those are the facts, Baelon. I don't guess.

CABREN

I don't understand how it could disappear so quickly. We were right there.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED

59

TRANTOR

(quiet, but intense)

It was like that on Hesperus.
At first you don't see them,
but soon they're everywhere...

ILVAR

And the other one you brought back--
he'd sealed himself into a room and still
something got him?

Alluma nods. Ilvar spins to his viewscreen and
punches up an image of Dameia and Ranger, their
backs turned.

ILVAR

Dameia? Anything?

CUT TO:

A59 INT. STORAGE ROOM

A59

The room is the equivalent of the Remus storage room
of the opening scene. Dameia and Ranger are performing
an autopsy on Cos, whose body is mainly obscured from
the camera. Dameia turns to the comstat.

DAMEIA

(obviously frustrated)

Sorry. Nothing useful at all so
far. Cos died of a massive hemorrhage
from the puncture wounds. Just at it
looked.

Ranger turns to the comstat and the camera moves
slowly down his bloodied hands to the hidden corpse.

RANGER

Nothing revealing on the other one
either. What's left is such a mess,
even the cause of death's uncertain.

CUT TO:

B59 INT. MAIN CONTROL

B59

Baelon leaps up, impatient.

BAELON

(hotly)

The fact is, we don't know any more than we started with, except that if the Remus wasn't safe, neither are we. We're not even doing the repairs we need.

ILVAR

Let's get our priorities straight. This is a rescue mission, specifically ordered by the Master. We are required to do everything within our means to locate and assist any survivors.

BAELON

There are no survivors.

ILVAR

The hyperscan shows nothing, but Alluma is picking up something. We know of only five certain deaths, so there are still four unaccounted for.

Ilvar switches on a viewscreen which gives an abstracted image of the terrain overlaid with topographical markings and compass grids.

(CONTINUED)

B59 CONTINUED

B59

He touches a control and a scanline starts moving from the center of the grid. The grid coords read digitally on the side.

As the numbers approach the 400's...

ILVAR

Here it comes...

At 419, the moving line stops, the screen starts to buzz and the image goes blank.

Ilvar resets from the 450's. The line scans down. When it reaches 419, the same thing happens.

ILVAR

There's something along 419
that so overloads the instruments
we can't even get a reading on it.

TRANTOR

Whatever sucked us into this
slag-heap pulled from a single
point.

CABREN

And created this ring of space
debris.

ILVAR

Can we assume, then, that there's some
form of intelligence behind this?

TRANTOR

You can bet your shuttle suit,
sweetheart.

There is a moment's pause as they consider this.
Baelon breaks it by leaping up suddenly.

BAELON

So it's 419. Let's...

As he does so, he nearly crashes into Kore who is about to move past him, collecting empty drink bulbs. Only some surprisingly quick footwork on Kore's part avoids it.

(CONTINUED)

B59 CONTINUED

B59

TRANTOR

Ot's balls! A dancing cook!

For a moment everyone looks at Kore. He deferentially acknowledges and leaves the room.

CUT TO:

OMIT 60-65

66 EXT. MORGANTHUS

66

Unnatural sounds haunt the brooding Morganthus landscape. Soon small, bobbing lights appear and move closer. It is the exploratory crew -- Ilvar, Cabren, Alluma, Baelon, Dameia, and Quuhod -- with their shoulder lights lit. Baelon checks his navigational instrument and the group moves on.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Steadily the explorers climb a ridge which obscures the view beyond. As they reach the top, they freeze. The camera rises slowly behind them to reveal what rivets their attention.

Silhouetted against the grey/purple dusk sky looms a gigantic black pyramid. As the camera rises, more and more of its awful presence is revealed.

Heavier and squatter than Cheops, its top partially shrouded in grey mist, its surface pockmarked with tiers of twisty indentations like giant bisected worm tunnels, it is an awesome, bizarre and alien edifice.

There is little said, but the looks exchanged among the crew express their uneasy awe. Alluma listens.

Cabren comes close, slipping an arm around her. The others watch her curiously. She becomes aware of their attention.

(CONTINUED)

ALLUMA

I don't sense life. I feel absolutely nothing at all. I've never felt anything so empty, so dead.

Baelon scans the vast surface of the pyramid with a weapon-linked sighting instrument.

BAELON

No surface movement, but I'm getting a neg density reading in the center, well up.

(lowering his instrument)

Might be an opening. Commander?

Ilvar casts his eyes about the vast outline of the structure, unsure, groping for information.

ILVAR

Uh, yes. I suppose...

He hesitates, threatened by the pyramid.

BAELON

Well...

Ilvar forces himself back to business.

ILVAR

Alright, Baelon. You take Dameia and Quuhod. Alluma, Cabren, come with me.

DAMEIA

(flatly, surprising even herself)

I won't go with Baelon.

Baelon growls and steps towards her.

BAELON

What?

DAMEIA

(backing off)

He...he..scares me.

ILVAR

Dameia!?

(CONTINUED)

DAMEIA

Sorry, Commander. (there is a slight pause, she looks off toward the pyramid) I won't go with him.

ILVAR

(trying to cover his indecision)

Alluma, you go with Quuhod and Baelon. Move to the entrance as directly as possible. We'll check the perimeter before joining you.

Alluma nods.

CABREN

(to Alluma)

Be careful.

ALLUMA

You be careful. That...presence was like...

Cabren puts his fingers gently to Alluma's lips.

CABREN

Don't tell me...not now.

Alluma nods, gives him a squeeze and hurries after Baelon and Quuhod.

Cabren observes his two companions. Dameia is looking puzzledly after Baelon. Ilvar is staring again at the pyramid. Neither seems quite normal.

CABREN

Shall we go, sir?

ILVAR

(reluctantly)

Yes, of course.

Cabren takes the lead when Ilvar fails to do so.

A66 ANOTHER ANGLE

A66

The two parties are dwarfed as they disappear into the shadow of the mammoth structure.

66-B TIGHTER ANGLE ILVAR PARTY

66-B

Ilvar, Dameia and Cabren pause in their walk and look up.

66-C THEIR POV - THE PYRAMID

66-C

Looming above them, gigantic, menacing.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. PYRAMID - SURFACE

67

HIGH ANGLE

Looking almost vertically down on Baelon, Alluma and Quuhod as they climb up the surface. Like ants, they crawl towards the indentation, nestled under the overhanging upper third of the pyramid. The desolate surface of the planet stretches away from them.

CUT TO:

68 ANOTHER PART OF THE PYRAMID SURFACE

68

With Cabren leading, the other trio moves diagonally up the rutted black surface.

DAMEIA

I don't know what came over me, Commander. I was suddenly terrified of Baelon.

Ilvar looks at her for a moment and shrugs.

ILVAR

Why do you suppose the Master put me in command of this mission?

DAMEIA

(following her own thought)

I mean, I've always known what he is...

(she shudders)

ILVAR

(vehemently)

I'm getting old. I'm tired. I'm tired of giving orders and I much prefer home!

DAMEIA

You're not old, Commander.

ILVAR

(with a tired smile)

Not looking at you, I'm not.

His eyes drift down and lock onto her breasts.

(CONTINUED)

ILVAR

(musing)

The grandest mammaries in the galaxy.

DAMEIA

(startled)

Commander??

ILVAR

(startled himself)

Ah...I apologize...I'm not,
uh, myself today. Forgive me.

Shaking his head uncertainly, Ilvar resumes climbing. Nearby, something slithers deep within a dark indentation. Dameia hesitates, concerned by Ilvar's bizarre outburst. Then, she, too, begins to climb.

Suddenly, Ilvar's scream tears through the silence.

He hurtles past Dameia, nearly taking her with him, and hits the ledge, nearly rolling over the edge.

DAMEIA

Commander!

As Dameia dives towards him, Ilvar rolls to his side, the breath knocked out of him. Like a fish out of water he opens and closes his mouth, desperate for air.

DAMEIA

What is it, Commander? What is
it?!

Finally his body releases. Ilvar gulps in the air. Dameia, relieved, spins with her weapon raised to survey the area.

ILVAR

(catching his breath)

Sorry. I must have...must have
lost my grip.

Dameia turns back to Ilvar, concerned.

DAMEIA

Are you all right, Commander?

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED

68

Before Ilvar can reply, a sound above them sends Dameia reeling into a defensive crouch. She aims her weapon upward, searching. Ilvar pushes himself up against the pyramid face.

Above them, Cabren leans out, weapon pointed downward. Dameia's points up.

CABREN

(lightly)

I'll surrender if you will.

CUT TO:

69 ANOTHER PART OF THE PYRAMID SURFACE

69

Baelon, Alluma and Quuhod climb closer to the indentation. A considerable wind has sprung up, whipping close to the pyramid surface. Its velocity appears to increase with altitude.

They pause for a moment, huddled on a small ledge, and look down, a long way down.

Alluma appears to be listening. Baelon is irked to see her at it again. As she 'listens', she sways until Quuhod puts out a protective arm to keep her away from the edge.

ALLUMA

(eyes far away)

There is nothing living here...
Nothing...and yet...there is
something...

She sways closer to the edge. Quuhod gently grabs her by the shoulders. Alluma jerks back, alert but troubled. Baelon shakes his head.

They move off again.

CUT TO:

70 ANOTHER SECTION OF THE PYRAMID SURFACE

70

The wind moans as Ilvar leads Cabren and Dameia along a broad curving ledge at one of the pyramid edges. They reach a narrow crevice which slices through the ledges and wormy indentations. Within its deepest crannies, razor-sharp fragments of rock glisten. Ilvar peers in, losing himself in the gloom below.

ILVAR

(to himself)

Doubt is brother demon to despair.

The wind demands louder voices.

DAMEIA

What was that?

ILVAR

With demon's tail doubt withers
those who dare not dare.

Cabren and Dameia exchange concerned glances.

CABREN

Perhaps we should keep moving.
Commander?

He and Dameia prepare to move away from the crevice. But as Ilvar gazes down the vertical slash he sees some movement at the edge of one of the ledges below.

ILVAR

Wait! There's something here.

Cabren and Dameia hurry back to look.

All is still except the wind.

CABREN

Where, Commander?

ILVAR

I...I don't know. Perhaps it's
my nerves...

Cabren and Dameia start to leave again.

ILVAR

But I must find out.

(CONTINUED)

Ilvar sets his line in a surface crack with a piton device, then lowers himself on a line spooling from a reel attached to his uniform.

ILVAR
(somewhat stiffly)
I will investigate.

Cabren and Dameia exchange looks again.

DAMEIA
Uh, Commander? -- you don't
need to do that. If there
is something down there, we...

CABREN
Why take the chance when we
could...

ILVAR
I'll give the orders, Cabren.
(he tests the line)
You and Dameia cover me.

DAMEIA
I'm a tri-crom rated climber.
Why not let me?

Ilvar silences her with an icy glance, and drops off the edge.

CUT TO:

71 ANOTHER ANGLE

71

As soon as he can, Ilvar ducks his head down to look both ways on the next level of indentations. He is careful not to swing back into the spiky rock fragments. His weapon is drawn, his shoulder beams flare. All is clear.

Above, Ilvar's line anchor moves in its crack.

ILVAR
Nothing so far. I'm continuing down
another four lat.

There is a slithering movement in the darkness. Ilvar lowers himself to the next level and again checks both ways. A reflection from his own light startles him, but nothing is visible but the glistening rock.

Above, Ilvar's line has slipped even further. Just before it goes completely, Dameia notices it.

DAMEIA
Cabren! The line!

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED

71

They grab it in time and quickly belay it around their waists. With the slack, Ilvar jerks downwards.

He tries to swing himself onto another ledge, away from the sharp rock fragments, but when the line jerks taut again, he swings into the rocks. His weapon plummets to the edge of the next tier.

DAMBIA (V.O.)

Your piton slipped, Commander.
We've got you now. How much
more?

Ilvar sighs.

DAMEIA

Commander?

A drop of blood runs from a razor-thin slash in Ilvar's suit and splashes on a ledge below. Something stirs in the darkness. It is not clear where.

ILVAR

Three lat.

As soon as he is lowered three lat, Ilvar swings himself over to his weapon. As he reaches for it, he hears a noise nearby. He grabs his gun, frightened, searching. Nothing. He swings back out on the line, wide-eyed, and narrowly misses the rock fragments.

ILVAR

Four lat.

He is lowered again.

CABREN (V.O.)

Anything down there?

ILVAR

Not yet...

As Ilvar looks up, a tentacle suddenly shoots from the dark, suctioning onto Ilvar's belly with its broad, fleshy tip. He gasps, struggles to pull it off with his free hand. The tentacle mouth undulates with a ghastly sucking sound.

CABREN (V.O.)

Commander?

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED

71

Ilvar manages to sever the tentacle with his weapon, but the mouth of it remains glued to his belly.

ILVAR
(terrified, weak)
Cabren, Dameia.

The severed tentacle splits in two. With frightening swiftness, one half enters the original tentacle mouth and refastens onto his belly while the second lays hold of his forehead. The horrible sucking sounds double.

72 ANGLE ON CABREN AND DAMEIA

72

Above, Cabren and Dameia are suddenly jerked forward. They dig in and struggle against the pull.

CABREN
Commander! What's happening?

73 ANGLE ON ILVAR

73

Ilvar slashes at the tentacles, slicing them off. But even as he does they split and attack, the new ones sucking at his throat and heart. Blood oozes around the tentacle mouths. They pull him inexorably down.

73A ANGLE ON DAMEIA AND CABREN

Dameia and Cabren barely manage to hold their own against the pull on the line.

74 ANGLE ON ILVAR

Ilvar struggles weakly for a moment and then goes limp.

74A ANGLE ABOVE

The line suddenly goes slack.

CABREN
Belay me. I'm going down.

Cabren hops onto the line and hand over hand eases himself down. He reaches Ilvar's spool, dangling free. There is no sign of Ilvar or the tentacles in the blackness below.

(CONTINUED)

Sounding hollow, echoing inside the crevice, Ranger's voice is heard.

RANGER (V.O.)
...Ilvar...Commander Ilvar...

75 INT. QUEST COMM ROOM - DINING ROOM

75

Trantor and Kore are sitting at the table. Trantor is eating.

On the comstat they can hear Ranger trying unsuccessfully to reach Ilvar.

RANGER (V.O.)
...Quest calling Commander Ilvar,
scan please... Quest calling...

Trantor leans over and keys the comstat.

TRANTOR
Ranger. Why don't you get your
butt down here and eat. They're
far too busy being heroes out there
to talk to us.

She doesn't wait for a reply and keys off the comstat.

TRANTOR
(to Kore, waving
her food in the air)

Fame is the food that dead men
eat.

KORE
That's very good, Captain.

Trantor peers curiously at the cook.

TRANTOR
Yes.
(she considers Kore
thoughtfully)
You know what they say, cook: the
Master sends meat, but the devil
sends cooks!! Did the Master send
you to keep an eye on this mission?

Kore smiles deprecatingly and is about to reply when
Ranger boils in. He goes straight to the comstat
and flicks the main key back on, then glares at Kore
sitting at the table.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED

75

RANGER

Joining the crew now, are we, Kore?

Kore quickly gets up from the table.

RANGER

(huffing)

I've been trying to call you, Captain, but you had the key off!

TRANTOR

(blandly)

I know.

RANGER

Oh.

TRANTOR

(booming again)

Sit down and eat, boy. This cook's almost as good as a machine.

Kore serves Ranger, who has spread out a technical diagram to study.

TRANTOR

(as if continuing a story to Kore)

...so there we were, wide open, when they hit us!

So, I've got to move fast - I take her down to 30-15 and scoot her through.

RANGER

This is Hesperus?

TRANTOR

No, it's not Hesperus! Hesperus was...

She looks around fearfully.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED

75

TRANTOR

Yes, they're out there. But
this time I'm ready. I'm ready.

RANGER

Huh?

CUT TO:

76 EXT. PYRAMID - NEAR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

76

Alluma and Quuhod press forward into the howling wind. Quuhod has his crystals in hand, Alluma, her weapon. There is a flash ahead. They exchange glances and rush on.

They find Baelon having just fried off another body, the death trace apparent on the rock. They must yell over the wind.

ALLUMA

What was that?

BAELON

One of the others.

ALLUMA

How?

BAELON

Who knows. It looked like his face
had been torn off.

ALLUMA

Baelon, we're trying to figure this
out. You can't just fry off evidence!

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED

76

Quuhod whirls around suddenly and hurls his crystals past the group. The crystals flicker through the air, lodging in a straight, vertical crack in the pyramid: the seam to a large door which glows faintly. Baelon and Alluma throw themselves to the ground, weapons poised. Quuhod walks past them to examine the door. It appears to be straining to open. The crystals keep it wedged closed.

ALLUMA
(to Quuhod)
Quuhod! Get down!

BAFLON
Get out of the way, dammit!

ALLUMA
(looking off)
Wait. The others are coming.
Will the crystals hold?

QUUHOD
They hold.

Dameia and Cabren scramble into view, weapons ready, and quickly join the others. They huddle close to be heard over the wind.

CABREN
We lost the Commander.

BAELON
He was no fighter. Shouldn't
have been here in the first
place.

ALLUMA
(distressed)
How?

DAMEIA
He was on a line. Something came
out of the rock...

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED

76

CABREN

...by the time I got to him he was dead. There were suction marks on his forehead and throat.

DAMEIA

(agitated and troubled)
There was nothing around! Nothing but these.... these damn...

(she struggles for a description)

...wormholes! I hate worms!

Dameia is interrupted by a chorus of terrible, hair-bristling shrieks. Quuhod's crystals shatter and the mammoth door begins to open.

The whole group hurl themselves into defensive postures except for Quuhod, who stares stunned at his crystals, now powder at the base of the door. Baelon fires continuously into the blackness behind the door. Alluma thumps him hard on the back.

ALLUMA

BAELON! STOP!

He finally does stop, hard-eyed. The great door finishes its slow swing outward.

WIDER ANGLE

As it does, they edge towards the opening, weapons in hand. The only sound now comes from the harsh wind clinging to the heights of the pyramid. Far below, faintly discernible in the darkness, is the mean crust of the planet's surface and, miles away, the ring of space debris which includes their ship.

CLOSER

Cabren pauses by Quuhod.

CABREN

Quuhod, you okay?

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED

76

Quuhod stands silent, staring at the piles of dust that were his crystals, his closest allies.

When nothing appears from within, Baelon and the others move cautiously into the entranceway, weapons ready. Cabren joins them.

CUT TO:

77 INT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE CHAMBER

77

The octagonal entrance chamber is dark and ominously still. The wind can barely be heard inside and each sound they make echoes.

Around three-quarters of the chamber are entrances to a number of corridors, all seemingly identical, all equally dark.

The group cautiously surveys the chamber. Alluma edges her way around, 'listening.'

CABREN

Anything?

ALLUMA

I'm not sure.

Baelon grunts and tosses one of his weapons out to Quuhod.

BAELON

Quuhod. Guard the entrance.

Quuhod's eyes have not left the piles of dust that were his crystals. He holds Baelon's weapon with disdain.

QUUHOD

I live and die with my crystals.
I have no use for this.

BAELON

Use it!

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED

77

Dameia catches Quuhod's eye with Ilvar's comm unit, which she sets near him. But Quuhod stands stolidly, the weapon unaccepted in his hands.

Baelon peers into the entranceways, trying to see.

BAELON

(impatient)

We'll take this one. Each of you follow me at ten second intervals.

He steps into the corridor. It begins to glow faintly. He hesitates a moment, wary, then moves off again. Dameia gives Alluma's hand a squeeze and follows, Alluma and Cabren's hands touch for a moment and she, too, follows. Each time someone enters the corridor, the light increases there.

Quuhod remains motionless.

CABREN

Quuhod.

Quuhod looks up and Cabren raises a clenched fist as a gesture of strength. Quuhod nods acknowledgement and turns away. Cabren hesitates, obviously concerned about him, then follows the others. Quuhod is left in the shadows.

78 INT. PYRAMID - FIRST CORRIDOR

78

Cabren moves quickly through the bending, tapering corridor. He comes around a corner to find Alluma leaning back against the wall, her breath heavy. He stops beside her, recognizing the problem. In the immediate distance the corridor continues to taper down.

CABREN

(looking ahead through the corridor)

A little tight?

Alluma nods.

ALLUMA

I hate it! I must've gotten stuck climbing out of the womb! I'd rather dance on the top of this damned thing than have to squeeze through it.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED

78

Alluma looks around with distaste and gives an uncertain laugh. As they move on, the light level drops once and then twice.

CUT TO:

79 INT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE CHAMBER

79

Quuhod stands motionless, a silhouette among shadows. Beyond him the wind howls outside. A discomfoting sound comes on the wind. Quuhod stirs, looks around quickly as though startled from sleep, and moves towards the doorway. Uncertain as to what to do, he steps outside to darkness.

The deep night and the dark pyramid are as forbidding as ever. Quuhod discovers nothing. He edges back out of the wind into the chamber. His steps echo as he tries to find his place, a spot that will protect him against surprise attack.

A small sound echoes across the chamber. Quuhod is immediately alert. He picks up the weapon which he had abandoned and searches for the source of the sound. It comes again from behind him. He spins, searching. All he finds are a few rock chips on the floor. He peers out the door. Nothing. He tries to settle down again, but is very much on edge.

80 INT. PYRAMID - OCTAGONAL CHAMBER

80

A small mishapen, octagonal room similar to the entrance chamber with as many corridors leading off it. In the center is a small octagonal black box, echoing the shape of the room. It sits in mid-air without attachment to ceiling or floor.

Alluma runs her hands over it, then shakes her head, finding nothing.

BAELON

Stand back.

As Baelon fires several times, the others press themselves into the corridor entranceways. The shots ricochet wildly around. The box is unscathed.

Baelon snarls. He prepares to fire again.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED

80

DAMEIA
 (on edge)
 Enough, Baelon!

Baelon, frustrated and wild-eyed, grabs Dameia and holds her in his vise-like grip.

BAELON
 Enough? What do you know
 of enough? When have you
 ever had enough?

Dameia breaks free and Cabren slides between them. He attempts to shift Baelon's focus.

CABREN
 Which way now, Baelon?

Baelon glares around the chamber, then stalks off into an entranceway.

ALLUMA
 Wait. Wait a minute.

CABREN
 Baelon.

BAELON (V.O.)
 What?

CABREN
 Hold up a minute.

He is answered by an unintelligible grunt.

ALLUMA
 (concentrating)
 There is something.
 It's...it's like when Cos...

Her eyes come wide open and she shakes her head as if trying to clear it.

ALLUMA
 Aagh!

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED

80

CABREN
 (as he holds her)
 We're with you. Try to get
 a fix on it--

Alluma sighs and 'listens' again.

CABREN
 Where is it? Can you place
 it at all?

ALLUMA
 (a distant whisper)
 No. But it's not far away.

DAMEIA
 (looking at Cabren)
 Quuhod?

Cabren nods. Dameia pulls out a comm unit.

DAMEIA
 Quuhod. This is Dameia. Quuhod.
 Come in please.

There is only static.

Alluma seems to have drifted even further into her
 'listening.' She is shaking slightly.

CABREN
 Easy now.

Dameia repeats her call. Again static.

DAMEIA
 Nothing works in this damn place!

BAELON (V.O.)
 (from further off)
 What's going on?!

Dameia edges away from the corridor Baelon has entered.

DAMEIA
 Why don't I go back and check on
 Quuhod?

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED

80

BAELON (V.O.)

Dameia! Cabren!

Alluma slowly returns to full consciousness.

CABREN

(hesitates, then nods
agreement)

When you get there, stay together.

DAMEIA

With pleasure -- I'll do anything
to get out of this place.

Dameia is quickly gone.

ALLUMA

(looking around nervously)

Sometimes I wish I was like Baelon,
see 'em and shoot 'em. (pause)

I am trying, Cabren.

CABREN

I know.

They move off.

81 INT. PYRAMID - ENTRANCE CHAMBER

81

All is quiet. Quuhod, his eyes closed, is trying to rest, upright in a corner of the chamber. A high-pitched sound begins quietly. It is the massive door to the chamber, slowly closing. Quuhod's eyes snap open. He hesitates.

The sound builds. Panicking, he rushes out, rushes back inside, uncertain. He strains against the door, trying to stop it, but has no effect.

Like a trapped animal Quuhod continues to move about the chamber. Then he looks up at the door and stops, mesmerized. There, in the exact spot where he hurled his crystals, something glistens.

As the huge door closes, the crystals fall to the floor, intact. Quuhod stares at them, held between terror and desire. Finally the desire is too great. He walks slowly towards them.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED

81

Quuhod contemplates the inexplicably reformed crystals, then reaches for them, unable to resist. But before he can pick them up the smaller crystal leaps upward and imbeds in his forearm.

Dismayed, Quuhod staggers back, grasping at the hilt of the dagger-like crystal to pull it out. It betrays him again by shattering, leaving a couple of inches of crystal protruding. As he stares in slow dawning horror, the shard burrows further into his arm. He tries to get a grip on it but fails and it disappears into the wound, then moves beneath the skin like a mole under a lawn.

Quuhod screams in pain and terror, clawing at the enemy which he cannot fight because it is inside his body. With a muffled sound of tearing tissue, the shard makes its way upward toward his shoulder, seeking his heart. Desperately, Quuhod seizes the other fighting crystal and quickly slices off his own arm at the shoulder. He flings down the gem and slumps against the wall, trying to staunch the flow of blood with his good hand.

The severed arm lies nearby. Abruptly it comes to life, seizes the fighting crystal, rears up like a cobra, and attacks. The wounded Quuhod falls quickly to the vicious slashes of the arm.

CUT TO:

82 INT. QUEST COMM ROOM

82

Ranger bursts in with his usual worried energy.

RANGER

Kore, have you seen...what's that?

KORE

(calmly)

A book.

RANGER

A real book?

Kore, in reply, holds it out to Ranger, who pulls back, reluctant to take it.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED

82

RANGER

But...but why?

KORE

(smiling)

Pleasure. Reading is a process that stimulates different parts of the mind than comstat or holoscan. It allows one to...participate.

Ranger is stopped for a moment, then remembers why he came.

RANGER

Oh. Have you seen the Captain?

Kore shakes his head 'no'.

RANGER

Funny. She doesn't answer on the comm and I can't find her anywhere. I need her to run some checks.

Kore sniffs around as if trying to sense out Trantor's location.

Ranger turns to look at the bleak image of the planet showing on the viewscreen, then looks away.

RANGER

You know, this place rattles me.

KORE

(crisply)

Don't let it.

RANGER

(surprised at the tone)

Huh?

KORE

I said, don't let it. Come on, we'll locate the good Captain.

Kore moves calmly, purposefully towards the door. Ranger, still surprised, follows.

CUT TO:

83 INT. PYRAMID FIRST CORRIDOR

83

MOVING

Dameia strides through the corridor as it tapers open. As she catches sight of the entrance chamber, she slows abruptly.

DAMEIA

Quuhod?

CUT TO:

84 INT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE CHAMBER

84

Dameia reaches the darkened chamber. As she steps in, the dark corridor goes black behind her. The door is again open, the wind HOWLING through the blackness outside.

DAMEIA

Quuhod...

Dameia reels back in horror as she sights Quuhod's body on the floor. She closes her eyes to gather herself, opens them when she realizes the danger she may be in, and spins around. A single blast from her weapon leaves Quuhod's one-armed outline on the chamber floor.

Just before she reaches it, she trips over something, looks down and SCREAMS.

It is the arm, motionless now except for the ocean of maggots which devour it.

Dameia, hysterical, fries the arm and continues blasting. The chamber blazes with the flaring weapon light. Finally she sinks to the floor.

CUT TO:

85 ANGLE ON CORRIDOR ENTRANCE

85

Behind her on the brink of the black corridor a maggot, already unnaturally large, begins to expand.

CUT TO:

86 INT. PYRAMID CORRIDOR 86

Baelon, Cabren and Alluma turn a corner in the corridor.

CUT TO:

87 INT. OCTAGONAL CHAMBER 87

They step into the octagonal chamber they had thought they left behind. The corridor Baelon chose was a loop.

CABREN

This is the same room.

Baelon bangs his fist angrily on the octagonal box in the center of the room.

Alluma cocks her head and 'listens'.

BAELON

Now, don't start that again!

Alluma gasps in pain and gestures towards the corridor Dameia had taken. Cabren grasps her arm as they race towards the entrance.

Baelon, momentarily indecisive, watches them leave. With a growl he makes the choice to follow and does so.

CUT TO:

88 INT. PYRAMID - ENTRANCE CHAMBER 88

The maggot has become huge, a grotesque creature with many legs. Its body fills and overflows the corridor entrance. It starts to crawl further onto the chamber floor.

CUT TO:

89 EXT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE - NIGHT 89

Dameia, still quite frightened, tries to reach the ship on her comm unit.

(CONTINUED)

89 (CONTINUED)

89

DAMEIA

This is Dameia calling the Quest.
 Dameia calling the Quest. Come in.
 (nothing)
 Captain Trantor.
 This is Dameia. Are you there?
 Oh, please be there.

CUT TO:

90 INT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE - CHAMBER

90

The maggot, now almost completely out of the corridor,
 moves its great bulk slowly, inexorably towards the
 entrance and Dameia.

DAMEIA (VO)

Captain? Ranger? Is anyone there?
 Kore?? ...Dameia calling Quest....

CUT TO:

91 EXT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE

91

Dameia keeps calling the ship. She is growing desperate,
 and casts nervous glances about.

DAMEIA

This is Dameia. Come in, please.
 Are you there? Ranger?

CUT TO:

92 INT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE - CHAMBER

92

With awful certainty the maggot continues to move
 towards the entrance and Dameia, leaving a slimy trail
 behind.

CUT TO:

93 EXT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE

93

Dameia gives up on the comm unit and turns to go back into the chamber out of the wind.

CUT TO:

94 PYRAMID DOORWAY

94

The maggot is waiting close to the entrance and rears expectantly. Dameia walks right into it and with an awful scream is engulfed by the many legs of its slimy underbelly. As she struggles, the maggot creature rips open Dameia's expedition suit, the creature's many legs shredding the material until it hangs from Dameia in tatters.

She fights grimly but is no match for its multiple appendages.

CUT TO:

95 INT. SHIP - MAIN CONTROL

95

Kore and Ranger enter. The comm unit is crackling unintelligibly. Ranger irritably turns it off.

RANGER

Wait a minute. All the overrides are...

As he speaks there is a tremendous explosion and the ship lurches crazily.

KORE

(calmly)

That's one of the retro cannons. I think we've found the Captain.

RANGER

A retro? But you can't fire those cannons planetside. They're a space-only weapon. They'll destroy us.

KORE

Can you override from here?

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED

95

Ranger checks the controls.

RANGER

No! She's got it on emergency manual. It's a last-ditch fail-safe.

By the time Ranger looks up from the console, Kore has gone.

RANGER

Kore? Kore? Hey, wait a minute.

Ranger rushes out of the main control only to be brought down by a swift chop to the neck. Kore catches his victim as he crumples, and drags him back into the main control. He props Ranger up in a seat, then leaves quickly.

CUT TO:

96 INT. QUEST WEAPONS CONTROL

96

Kore slips quietly through the doorway. Trantor works the console, her back to Kore.

On her viewscreen, a large, translucent, blimp-like ship moves slowly but inexorably towards the Quest.

Trantor fires repeatedly, but the attacking ship seems unaffected and continues to approach.

TRANTOR

Yeeeeeah! Come on, you Hesperian bastards. Fry! This time I'm ready. Come on! Come to Mama, and... DIE!

With a maniacal laugh, Trantor fires the retro cannon again. The ship quakes.

TRANTOR

DIE. DIE!

KORE

(commandingly)

Trantor!

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED

96

Trantor spins towards Kore, grabbing a hand weapon. She flickers between triumph and terror.

TRANTOR

Ah, cook! You see 'em, cook?
But I've got 'em this time.
I've got 'em.

Trantor spins back to the weapons board. The translucent blimp moves steadily closer. She fires the retro cannon again.

KORE

Trantor! Stop!

Kore speaks with such authority that Trantor is momentarily distracted from the grip of her obsession. She spins around again towards Kore.

KORE

Flight Officer 2nd Class
Trantor; Second Hesperus
Expeditionary force. Best
holo-shuttle player of the
fleet.

Trantor pulls back as if stung.

TRANTOR

(suspiciously)
How do you know that?

KORE

(quickly)
I am Eremun. Weapons systems
co-ordinator on the Romulus.
Do you remember?

TRANTOR

A cook, huh? A spy! You spy
for them, cook!

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED

96

KORE

You were just a kid, but you were the hero that day, Trantor. You were magnificent. You pulled me out of battle control and threw me into a rescue pod. You saved my life.

TRANTOR

(uncertain)

You lie. I...I was the only one... the only...

She turns from Kore to the viewscreen. The attacking ship has disappeared. She punches the controls frantically.

TRANTOR

What...? Where is it? Where?

Kore steps quickly to the control board.

KORE

The screen does not lie, Trantor. Listen to me.

Trantor searches both the screen and Kore's face, desperate for information.

KORE

The Hesperians can't survive in a perallic system like this one, Trantor. There is no attack.

Kore leans closer, grasping her arm, forcing her to face him rather than the screen.

KORE

Listen to me, Trantor. There is no attack. There is no attack. Trust me. I can save your life.

TRANTOR

Aagh! No!

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED

96

She jerks herself away from Kore. Again she sees the translucent ship fill the screen. Now it fills the entire screen.

TRANTOR

Look! You see? The screen doesn't lie. You see?!

She gives one last jarring blast on the retro cannons before grabbing a hand cannon and rushing out of weapons control. Kore looks after her, saddened.

CUT TO:

97 INT. QUEST CORRIDORS

97

Trantor races down the corridors, clutching the cannon.

CUT TO:

98 INT. MAIN HATCH AREA

98

Trantor races to the main hatch and frantically works its controls. As the hatch starts to open, the blinding light of the Hesperian ship pours in. The ship seems to fill the sky - it is so massive and so close.

Trantor scrambles to set up her cannon.

As she does, a high-pitched whining starts building in intensity and frequency. Suddenly, across the surface of the Hesperian ship, boil-like blisters rise. As the SOUND increases, the blisters themselves appear to heat up, glowing first red, then white-hot.

Trantor pauses in her frenzy, realizing the threat, and dives to close the main hatch again.

As the hatch swings closed, the sound from the blimp reaches its shattering peak, the white-hot blisters detach from the surface of the Hesperian ship, and scream towards the Quest and Trantor.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED

98

The hatch is nearly closed when a single, screaming blister makes it through. Trantor tries to dive away but she is too late. The blister makes contact and fastens onto her leg like a limpet.

Outside, the other blisters explode into the hull like machine gun fire.

Trantor screams as the searing heat burns into her flesh. Too hot to touch, she slashes at it with the nearest weapon, but before she can dislodge it her leg bursts into flames.

Frantically, Trantor hurls herself down to smother the flames. As soon as she does so, she looks up to see that the hatch door is not fully closed. Blisters continue to bombard the hull, and the door glows red-hot. Trantor grabs for the door controls but they, too, are heating fast, and her hands singe.

As she backs away from the door, the hatch area heats to white hot and Trantor bursts into flames.

CUT TO:

99 INT. QUEST - WEAPON CONTROL

99

Kore sits silently in the weapon control room. The sound of hurried footsteps precedes Ranger's entry. Ranger lowers his weapon when he sees Kore.

RANGER

Kore..you OK? Somebody hit me
outside main control.

Kore, again the mild-mannered cook, shrugs. Ranger looks at him suspiciously.

KORE

I haven't seen anyone.

RANGER

Where's the Captain?

A warning light on the console attracts his attention.

RANGER

The main hatch is open!

He races out again.

CUT TO:

100 INT/EXT PYRAMID ENTRANCE - NIGHT

100

Alluma, Cabren and Baelon move cautiously into the night beyond the door. They are visibly shaken. Beyond them the death trace where Dameia lay still smolders.

They step into the harsh wind, surveying the black behemoth they have yet to conquer. Ranger's voice crackles through on the comm units.

RANGER (V.O.)

Commander, Commander Ilvar. Quest calling the Commander. Come in please. This is urgent, come in please...

The others react quickly. In a brief exchange lost in the wind's howl they make their decision and begin back down the pyramid surface.

CUT TO:

101 INT. QUEST - MAIN CONTROL

101

The camera drifts among the small, disconsolate group of survivors holed up in the main control room. Cabren and Alluma huddle down in their chairs. Baelon paces fitfully about flicking a wicked looking knife, open and shut.

Suddenly, in extreme frustration, Baelon hurls his knife across the room. Kore serves beverages.

BAELON

Goddamn them, whatever they are!

Nobody is surprised at Baelon's outburst.

BAELON

(building)

If I could just see one, just once...I'd BLAST that murderous scum-sucking spawn of galactic garbage right into...into...

Baelon can't think of anywhere dreadful enough. He slumps, bitter and depressed, and flicks his knife with barely enough energy to get it across the room.

(CONTINUED)

ALLUMA

They're like snipers. Picking us off one by one. What are they?

(she shudders)

I get a sense -- a brief, twisted, awful sense of something that I suppose could be called life, and then nothing.

CABREN

The way they appear and disappear they may be moving between dimensions. Only there's no sign of dimensional distort.

Alluma just shakes her head. As the group lapses into silence again, Ranger bustles in.

RANGER

It's about as bad as it looks. Trantor burnt off half the stabilizers and destroyed the tracking gear's exterior sensors. We've got enough parts to get both working again, but it'll take a couple of days.

ALLUMA

(encouraged)

It's obvious there are no survivors from the Remus. Let's fix the ship and go home.

Baelon paces frustratedly around the room flicking his knife.

CABREN

You forget the field that pulled us down here. What makes you think we can lift out of it?

ALLUMA

We've got to try it! What are our options? Dying in that damn pyramid or dying in a disabled ship?

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED

101

KORE

Excuse me, but Trantor did say something on this particular subject. "Cook," she said, "You can bet your shuttle suit nobody's leaving this dry hunk of space manure till we pull the plug on that sucker."

RANGER

(suspicious)

When did Trantor talk to you?

CABREN

Trantor was right. We have to get to the source of that field.

BAELON

(discouraged)

I don't walk out on fights.

He flings his knife lifelessly across the room again and moves to pick it up.

ALLUMA

I won't go back into that... thing. Baelon, will you quit that! You're driving me crazy!

Baelon, knife poised, looks coldly at Alluma. Then he shrugs and resumes his pacing.

KORE

When you go back, I'd like to join you.

RANGER

It's no place for a cook!

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED

101

CABREN

Can you handle a weapon,
Kore?

KORE

I can take care of myself.

Cabren nods, accepting.

RANGER

(shaking his head
at Cabren)

Cabren!

Cabren ignores Ranger, who turns away, angry.

CABREN

Baelon?

Baelon shrugs. Cabren looks at Alluma.

ALLUMA

You're a fool, Cabren. But
I'll be damned if I'm staying
here alone.

CUT TO:

102 EXT. PYRAMID

102

The pyramid stands, ominous, in the perennial twilight.

102A CLOSER PYRAMID FACE

102A

It is deathly quiet as ^{SIX?} five dwarfed figures climb
through the darkness towards the pyramid entrance. They
move cautiously, constantly watchful. Surprisingly it
is Kore who moves with the greatest ease.

103 EXT. PYRAMID

P.O.V. as the group looks up towards the pyramid entrance.

104 EXT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE

As they climb onto the entrance ledge, Ranger looks down to the vast expanse below.

104A Ranger's P.O.V. down the pyramid.

CABREN
(calling)
Ranger.

105 CLOSE ON RANGER

105

Ranger snaps out of his reverie and looks around apprehensively. He moves towards the entrance.

CUT TO:

106 REVERSE ANGLE

106

A fleeting figure slips from wormhole to wormhole behind him.

CUT TO:

107 INT. PYRAMID ENTRANCE CHAMBER

107

Inside, all but one of the corridors, including the one they had previously taken, are now now sealed off. Alluma has her back firmly to the wall near the door and isn't moving. She 'listens' unobtrusively. Baelon and Cabren are inspecting the sealed corridors.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED

107

BAELON

I don't like it. It's got to
be a trap.

Cabren looks at Alluma.

ALLUMA

There is something here again.

(she struggles to
describe it)

like whispers, nothing
'formed'.

(quietly to Cabren)

This is beyond anything I know.

Ranger steps in and the light level increases. He
surveys the chamber. Not seeing Kore he scurries
over to Cabren and whispers confidentially.

RANGER

Where's Kore?

CABREN

What? Why are you on to
Kore like this?

RANGER

I don't trust him. On the ship
when Trantor disappeared...

Kore reappears from the one open corridor and looks
curiously at Ranger and Cabren. Ranger hesitates.
Cabren looks at them both.

CABREN

Well?

KORE

The corridor does appear to
remain open for a distance.

Cabren looks questioningly to Ranger.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED

107

RANGER

(backing off)

Do what you want. I don't want
Kore behind me.

For a moment Cabren looks nervously at Kore
who easily meets his eye.

BAELON

(wearily)

Let's go!

Cabren nods.

They move into the open corridor and the
light drops in the entrance chamber. As they
leave, a figure slips into the darkened chamber
from outside. Although difficult to see, it
looks like a crew member.

CUT TO:

108 INT. PYRAMID - MOANING CORRIDOR

108

The narrow corridor slopes downhill, permeated
by a deep, unnatural moaning in the distance.
As the group proceeds, the moaning gets
louder.

As they round a sharp bend, the moaning seems
particularly close. Baelon stops. For the
first time, there is a glimmer of fear in his
eyes.

BAELON

Sounds like the death knell of
Ayrabee.

(CONTINUED)

RANGER

Is it coming towards us?

They pause to listen, motionless.

CABREN

No.

They move on toward the growing sound,
Baelon in the lead.

CUT TO:

Rounding a dark corner, Baelon jerks to a halt just in time to avoid plunging down a vertical shaft that completely slices through the passageway, blocking their way. The moaning, which is coming from the shaft, is as unnerving as it is deafening.

Kore peers into the shaft. He and the others must speak over the loud drone.

KORE

Winds. Across the mouth.

Baelon steps to the edge of the shaft and gazes into it. Alluma looks up from a small opening in the corridor wall which leads into darkness. She gestures to Cabren and takes him back around the corridor bend.

CUT TO:

110 INT. MOANING CORRIDOR

110

ALLUMA

I don't think I can go in there,
Cabren. It's too tight.

Cabren is silently sympathetic.

ALLUMA

The presence is definitely getting
stronger. The way it feels in
here....

CABREN

Like something that's waiting to
happen.

Alluma nods.

ALLUMA

I can't take in any more.

She turns to Cabren, frightened and concerned.

ALLUMA

I'll burn out if I do.
(he nods)
Aren't you afraid?

CABREN

(smiling)
Too scared to be.

A pause.

ALLUMA

What are the odds on us getting
out of here?

CABREN

If we play the odds, we lose.

CUT TO:

111. INT. MOANING SHAFT AND CHUTE

111

Ranger steps over to Baelon, who stands transfixed, like someone drawn to the ledge of a high cliff or building.

RANGER

Baelon?

He waves a hand past Baelon's eyes.

RANGER

Baelon, you ok?

Behind Ranger there is a movement in the dark opening, possibly a human figure.

The movement catches Ranger's eye. He swings around, pulling his weapon. This snaps Baelon out of his reverie. He, too, pivots and starts blasting wildly.

Ranger goes flat on the floor and barely avoids being hit.

RANGER

Baelon! Stop!

Cabren and Alluma come flying back around the corner of the passageway. Baelon stands there, his weapon poised, his eyes a bit vague.

CABREN

What was it?

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED

111

RANGER

(angrily, close to
Cabren)

I don't know! I thought I saw
something. Then this idiot
starts blasting!

Cabren follows Ranger's gesture towards
the dark opening and cautiously peers in.
Seeing nothing, he shakes his head.

Kore steps forward, unfazed by Baelon's
outburst.

KORE

(gesturing to the
opening)

It looks rather narrow. Shall I
go in first?

Cabren is about to reply when Ranger pipes in.

RANGER

None of this bothers him!

Cabren chooses not to respond. He takes off
his pack and shines a lamp into the dark
opening.

CABREN

When I give the ok, follow me.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED

111

He looks specifically to Alluma, then squeezes in.

CABREN (V.O.)

It's going to be tight...but---
it's a chute. There's just room...
some bends...

(the voice becomes more
distant)

...it's going to be tight, Alluma,
but don't wor....

His voice trails off into the distance, leaving
silence.

ALLUMA

Cabren!

RANGER

Cabren!

Far in the distance they hear a faint voice.
They strain to make out the words but
cannot.

There is only a moment's hesitation before
Ranger tears off his pack and jumps into
the chute after Cabren.

Nothing is heard from him.

Alluma, trying to control her terror, lingers
at the mouth of the chute. She looks back to
Baelon and Kore, who wait for her to move.
Reluctantly, she removes her pack, closes
her eyes, and pushes off.

CUT TO:

112 OMIT

OMIT 112

113

113

MOVING

Alluma holds her breath as she plunges down the slippery, steep first section. At the first major curve, she slows down and opens her eyes, seeing the dark walls that surround her so closely.

A sound moves towards her from below: a tearing sound like a bandage being torn off skin. Terrified, she tries to claw her way back up the chute, but it is too slippery. As she does so, her lamps slip from her desperate grip and bounce down the long, twisting chute.

She sits at the curve, trying to contain her fear, when the tearing sounds begin again. They seem almost palpable as they move towards her in short bursts.

Desperately, she scrambles down the tunnel. As she does so, the source of the sounds becomes clear: the wall surfaces are peeling off. They look like translucent skin.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED

113

Gasping for breath, Alluma tries to keep moving, but the walls restrict her more and more. Finally, she cowers, like a beaten child. The skin walls seem to respond to her terror, pulsing and reaching. There is a hint of alien hands pressing from behind.

Suddenly, a dark figure hurtles down through the tunnel, crashing into Alluma. She screams, but the momentum of the other figure is enough to jolt her around a bend where she drops into an even steeper, more slippery section of the chute than the first, and disappears rapidly into the darkness.

CUT TO:

114 INT. INNER PYRAMID - WALKWAY PLATFORM

114

Alluma whooshes out into Cabren's waiting arms. He pulls her out of the way as Kore and Baelon appear after her in quick succession. They have emerged onto a small suspended platform. The chute opening is in a broad, flat, sloping wall.

Cabren cradles Alluma, who lies motionless in his arms, her eyes closed.

ALLUMA

(whispering)

...Nearly got me...too tight...

CABREN

Remember the plains on the moon of Leramar? The open space, the endless sky. Fresh and clear.

He kisses her gently, strokes her forehead.

After a long moment she opens her eyes into Cabren's, full of love and fear.

CUT TO:

All4 ANOTHER ANGLE

All4

Ranger, Kore, and Baelon survey their remarkable surroundings. Before them stands a second giant pyramid, an inner pyramid whose strong glow from within lights its convoluted face.

The walls of this pyramid run close and parallel to the inner walls of the outer pyramid. The peak is lost in the heights of the narrowing slot above them.

The crew is crowded onto a small platform which is attached to a walkway suspended within the broad, sweeping diagonal shaft which continues beyond sight below them. The walkway has no rails and is a precarious path to follow.

Kore gazes at the pyramid with great pleasure.

KORE

What a magnificent piece of work.

Kore's voice echoes through the strangely shaped chamber. Unlike the moaning shaft here each footstep, each whisper fills the space. The crew instinctively speak softly.

Ranger looks with distrust at Kore. Baelon scans the huge inner structure.

BAELON

Heat and light. A generator of some kind? The source of the field?

Ranger pulls out a small meter and aims it at the surface.

RANGER

(puzzled)

No. Nothing. No more charge than an ordinary wall. ~~That's~~
~~odd.~~

Alluma, revived now, is 'listening.' She looks pained and discouraged.

(CONTINUED)

A114 CONTINUED

A114

ALLUMA

(to Cabren quietly)

It's still here. It seems to be coming from more than one place.

She looks up to find Kore watching her.

ALLUMA

Dammit, Kore. Don't look at me like that! What makes you so...placid, Kore? Just what do you know?

KORE

(shrugs deprecatingly)

I know that a pie has no flavor of its own. None. That is what the eater brings to it.

Ranger looks at Kore with scorn; Baelon and Alluma, with disbelief. Cabren chuckles.

CABREN

A philosopher cook. All right, Kore. Try your philosophy on the walkway. Lead off.

Kore smiles.

KORE

Of course.

Kore steps easily and confidently onto the walkway.

BAELON

(apprehensive)

What a set up!

Baelon is about to follow when Alluma, looking behind them, notices Baelon's pack.

ALLUMA

(gesturing)

Baelon. Your pack.

(CONTINUED)

A114 CONTINUED

A114

Baelon heads back while Cabren, Alluma, and Ranger file onto the walkway.

He quickly pulls on the pack, then looks off to the others, who proceed along the walkway. As he watches, his shadow, long across the platform, begins to stir on its own.

With a strange, wavering movement it seems to expand off the floor, breathing with Baelon's own rhythm into three dimensionality. As it lifts up it takes a large, pulsing alien form, leaving Baelon's two-dimensional shadow behind.

Before Baelon can notice it, it lowers itself off the platform out of sight.

Baelon does catch a glimpse of the Shadow Demon's last move, but when he spins and steps to where the demon has been, he finds nothing. Warily Baelon moves after the others.

CUT TO:

115 ANGLE ON WALKWAY

115

The group moves gingerly along the narrow walkway, dwarfed by the ominous grandeur and awesome scale of the structure.

Often Baelon peers over the edge, apprehensive. Cabren looks back,

CABREN

Baelon. We should stay close.

Baelon nods silently.

CABREN

It's easier if you don't keep looking down.

BAELON

(trying to muster
some of the old
truculence)

I can take care of myself, Cabren.

CUT TO:

- 116 OTHER ANGLES 116
- Ahead of the group, set into the inner pyramid face, is what appears to be an entrance. Kore leads the group towards it, seemingly oblivious to the precarious situation of the walkway.
- Baelon trails the group. A pair of claws (the shadow demon's) appears, grasping at either side of the walkway from underneath.
- 117 TIGHT ON CLAWS 117
- The claws move at Baelon's slower pace.
- 118-119 OMIT OMIT 118-119
- 120 ANOTHER ANGLE 120
- Ranger peers through his meter at the surface, puzzled.
- Baelon comes up silently behind Ranger.
- BAELON (V.O)
You see something?
- Ranger jumps, startled at Baelon's voice. Baelon stands by him, weapon still drawn, scanning the inner pyramid face.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED

120

BAELON
(suspicious)
I don't see anything. What
was it?

RANGER
I don't know. I thought I saw
someone. I don't know. I don't
know what I see any more.

CUT TO:

A120 ANGLE ON CABREN AND ALLUMA

A120

Cabren and Alluma continue on. Alluma looks
pained again. Her breathing is becoming
labored.

ALLUMA
It's much stronger. Like choking
on terror.

(CONTINUED)

A120 CONTINUED

A120

Cabren looks to her with concern, then glances back to Ranger and Baelon before continuing on.

120AA ANGLE ON SHADOW DEMON

120AA

The shadow demon, defying gravity, crawls along the under-surface of the walkway, keeping near to the crew.

B120 ANGLE ON RANGER AND BAELO

B120

As both men walk cautiously along, eyeing the pyramid and the chasm, a black claw snags Baelon's foot, tripping him.

Baelon stumbles forward into Ranger. Both men fall to the walkway and barely save themselves from going over the edge. The claw is no longer visible.

BAELON

What was that?!

RANGER

What's wrong with you, Baelon?
That's the second time you've
nearly killed me, you stupid.

He stops as Baelon responds by pulling his weapon on Ranger.

BAELON

You shut up, Ranger! Just shut
up!

Ranger backs away cautiously, arms outspread. Baelon keeps his weapon aimed at him, though he darts glances around, watching for movement. Cabren reaches Ranger.

CABREN

You okay?

RANGER

(muttering)
Crazy son of a caleban bitch.

(CONTINUED)

B120 CONTINUED

B120

Cabren looks questioningly at Ranger, then at Baelon, who stares back, weapon in hand. Cabren deliberately turns back towards the entranceway where Kore and Alluma wait. With an occasional backward glance, Ranger follows.

Baelon lowers his weapon and brings up the rear nervously.

CUT TO:

121 INT. INNER PYRAMID ENTRANCE PLATFORM

121

The entrance to the inner pyramid is dark, in contrast to the bright glow of the outer surface. Kore waits by the entrance until Cabren and Alluma join him. Then he moves easily through the entrance with the others.

CUT TO:

122 INT. INNER PYRAMID ENTRANCE CHAMBER

122

The entrance chamber is tall, and sloped, reminiscent of the underpinnings of a stadium. The inner wall seems to be a continuation of the structural gridding seen on the inner pyramid surface.

There is no sign of another exit. Cabren and Alluma examine the new space, curious and apprehensive.

ALLUMA

(uneasy)

Like fish into a net!

Ranger comes in. As he does there is a movement behind him in the entranceway. Startled, he spins around, weapon drawn. A door panel is sliding closed. It stops midway, then starts and stops again.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED

122

Kore moves his fingers in and out of a handsized indentation in the rock. He smiles ingenuously.

KORE

It seems to be activated by this.

The door slides farther closed.

RANGER

Cabren! Above you!

Cabren turns to the door, ducks and looks up, weapon ready. He sees nothing. He looks questioningly at Ranger.

RANGER

Kore. Move the door again.

Not all the way.

(Kore does)

See.

As the door closes a little more, a small shimmering doorway appears in mid-air.

CABREN

What...

ALLUMA

(fascinated, despite herself)

It's incredible.

CABREN

Maybe if the form were complete...
Kore, close the door all the way.

RANGER

No! Wait!

But Kore has already activated the mechanism and the door closes.

A122 INT. INNER PYRAMID ENTRANCE PLATFORM AREA

A122

As the door closes, the bright light of the inner pyramid dims rapidly from bottom to top, stranding Baelon outside in ominous semi-darkness.

BAELON

HEY! HEY!

B122 INT. INNER PYRAMID ENTRANCE CHAMBER

The hovering entrance remains visible now.

CABREN

That's it.

123 INT. INNER PYRAMID ENTRANCE PLATFORM

123

Baelon stares at the closed door in anger. Then he pivots, surveying the vast darkness. Though his weapon is raised, his confidence is low.

An eerie hiss startles him. He surveys the inner pyramid face without catching sight of the source. The hiss repeats. This time Baelon spots two eyes glowing among the beams parallel to the walkway. He moves warily onto the walkway and heads back towards the eyes.

Once opposite, Baelon can see nothing within the grid of beams. A hiss nearby draws his attention. This time he fires rapidly into the darkness. The flash of his weapon reveals nothing.

From the shadow demon's POV, Baelon looks a lone and vulnerable target as he paces about nervously on the darkened walkway searching for his unseen foe. The demon moves slowly within the surface grid, hissing as he does. Baelon fires more frequently now, but to no avail. Even when he seems aimed directly at the creature, the creature moves undaunted and unseen except for the occasional flash of his eyes.

Finally, Baelon retreats to the inner pyramid entrance platform. At the darkened doorway, he nervously scans the pyramid surface nearest the door, flirting with the idea of stepping onto the gridwork in pursuit of his vanishing pursuer.

As he does the giant ALIEN silhouette of the shadow demon slowly emerges from the doorway. It hisses and Baelon spins. His weapon is slashed from his hands before he can fire.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED

123

Baelon stumbles backwards, nearly going over the edge. He recovers and hesitates but a moment before darting onto the precarious walkway. Behind him the HISS of the Shadow Demon can be heard.

CUT TO:

124 INT. INNER PYRAMID ENTRANCE CHAMBER

124

Cabren manipulates the door control without success.

CABREN

Damn it! Baelon! Baelon!

There is no reply. Alluma discovers another hand-sized indentation at the outer edge of the door.

ALLUMA

Here.

She shoves her hand into it.

CUT TO:

125 INT. INNER PYRAMID WALKWAY

125

Baelon runs for his life along the walkway. Behind him the Shadow Demon pursues, clearly gaining on Baelon.

CUT TO:

A125 INT. INNER PYRAMID ENTRANCE PLATFORM

A125

The door begins to open, tantalizingly slow.

CUT TO:

B125 INT. INNER PYRAMID WALKWAY

B125

The light level begins to grow as Baelon spins to face his pursuer.

BAELON

HELP! HELP!

(CONTINUED)

B125 CONTINUED

B125

The Shadow Demon leaps upon Baelon, who struggles desperately to get away. He just manages to escape the grasp of the creature and stumbles to his feet. The creature attacks again.

C125 PLATFORM

C125

Cabren strains to push through the doorway as it opens too slowly.

D125 WALKWAY

D125

Baelon's brute strength is no match for the Shadow Demon's. He struggles desperately to keep away from the edge but finally the creature, holding tightly, wrenches him over the side and into the chasm.

E125 PLATFORM

E125

The others rush out into the fully lit walkway area in time to hear Baelon's fading scream. Peering over the edge all they can see is a rapidly receding black dot.

After a moment's pause, Ranger speaks.

(CONTINUED)

E125 CONTINUED

E125

RANGER
That damn Kore, he
did this!
(he yells)
Kore!

ALLUMA
(snapping)
It's not Kore. He's just an
old man.

RANGER
Yeah? Well, where is he?

They look and don't find him.

ALLUMA
But there's nowhere to go.
(screams)
I hate this place! I hate it!

CABREN
(sharply)
Alluma!

RANGER
Where's Kore?

CABREN
I don't know, do I? Forget
Kore!

Cabren picks up Baelon's automatic weapon from the walkway,
spins around and heads back in.

ALLUMA
I HATE IT!

She glares around her, then stomps back in.

Ranger pauses, trying to calm himself. As he takes
a deep breath, he looks up the pyramid face to see
what looks like a human figure standing among the
girders. Ranger stares unbelieving as the figure
slips slowly out of sight behind a girder.

(CONTINUED)

E125 CONTINUED

E125

Ranger draws his weapon and steps further out onto the walkway. Alluma leans out of the doorway.

ALLUMA
Ranger.

Ranger glances to Alluma, then back up the inner pyramid. The figure is gone.

Cabren leans out.

CABREN
What is it?

Ranger continues to scan the vastness of the pyramid face. He turns to Cabren and Alluma, thoroughly frustrated.

RANGER
Nothing! I don't know. I keep seeing something... then nothing!

CABREN
(tersely)
Get back here, Ranger. We can't afford to be separated.

Ranger bristles at the command but starts in.

ALLUMA
(to herself)
Damned if you do. Damned if you don't.

CUT TO:

126 OMIT

OMIT 126

127 INT. INNER PYRAMID ENTRANCE CHAMBER

- 127

CLOSE SHOT

Cabren's hand works the door control.

CABREN

Ranger, in the future if you see something, call us before you go off. Okay?

128 OTHER ANGLES

128

The shadow of the closing door eclipses Ranger as he starts to lose control of his anger.

RANGER

Quit lording it over me like you were still the patron saint of the Academy, Cabren. Those days are long past.

The door completes its slide and Cabren turns.

CABREN

What?

RANGER

(losing control)

I said quit playing Master with your friends, Cabren. Old buddy. Because I'm through crawling after you. Did you know that, buddy? 'Cause I'm killing myself, Cabren. I'm shredding myself with my own bloody fingernails. Did you know that, buddy? Do you care?

Whether you like it or not you're gonna pay for this, buddy. You're gonna quit sniping at me. You're gonna... you're gonna...

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED

128

ALLUMA (V.O.)
 (yelling)
 Ranger! Up here!

RANGER
 Uh?

He looks around, disoriented, then whips out his weapon and points it upwards. Alluma stands high on the grid wall, opposite the glowing, hovering entry. She speaks clearly and firmly.

ALLUMA
 Ranger.

RANGER
 (lowering his weapon)
 Oh...I...

He looks at Cabren, bewildered.

RANGER
 Oh, no. I...don't...

Ranger sits down shakily. Cabren breathes deep. He looks up at Alluma and nods his thanks.

Above, Alluma steadies herself, then leaps into the glowing entryway.

Ranger stands and approaches Cabren, who has just begun climbing.

RANGER
 Cabren. I'm sorry. I'm really
 sorry. I don't know what....

Cabren turns and stops him with a gentle gesture and their eyes meet. Finally Ranger relaxes with a deep sigh. He nods silent thanks.

CABREN
 Let's go.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED

128

They climb the wall quickly and leap through the hovering entryway.

Behind them a dark figure climbs up through the dark shadows.

CUT TO:

129 INT. GLOW PANEL CHAMBER

129

Cabren and Ranger join Alluma in a broad low-ceilinged chamber divided by a series of translucent quartz and black onyx panels. At random intervals the quartz panels flash into bright, glowing, blue translucence. The effect is strobe-like.

Alluma has been studying the panels. She seems to be having trouble orienting herself. She approaches one of the quartz panels cautiously. When it flashes to translucence she pokes the end of her weapon through. It changes back almost immediately, instantly shearing off the end of the weapon.

ALLUMA

It seems all right, if we're quick. I'm going to have to get through here fast...this strobe frequency...

She moves towards a panel.

CABREN

Be care...

Before Cabren can finish, the panel flashes into blue translucence and Alluma jumps through it. Immediately, the panel goes solid again.

(CONTINUED)

A129 CONTINUED

A129

Alluma appears at the nearest quartz panel. She speaks, but no sound reaches Cabren and Ranger. Once she realizes this she gestures to them to follow.

Another panel flashes and she moves on.

When the first panel flashes to blue translucence again, Cabren plunges through to the area Alluma has just left.

130 WIDER ANGLE

130

In the strobing electric haze of the chamber, first three and then four figures appear and disappear through the layers of panels.

131 ANOTHER ANGLE

131

Alluma, still in the lead, catches a glimpse of what looks like the final panel in the distance. As the nearest panel flashes she moves towards it.

132 ANOTHER ANGLE

132

Ranger, knowing that both Alluma and Cabren are ahead of him, is startled to catch sight of a figure behind him. He hesitates for a moment, missing the chance to step through a panel.

His stalker does not hesitate, however, and moves closer. Ranger, frightened by this unknown pursuer, waits impatiently for another panel to flash.

CUT TO:

133 ANOTHER ANGLE

133

Alluma and Cabren catch momentary sight of each other. She gestures towards the passageway and he acknowledges.

Cabren in turn, looks back, catching sight of a figure he presumes to be Ranger. He gestures in the direction of the final panel. However, it is the Stalker, not Ranger, that he sees. He is puzzled by the complete lack of response.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED 133

Cabren hesitates, uncertain. As he does, Ranger becomes visible in the vicinity of the stalker. When Ranger spots Cabren, he gestures urgently, indicating something behind him. Before Cabren can respond, Ranger again disappears, leaving Cabren equally puzzled.

134 ANOTHER ANGLE 134

Ranger waits impatiently at another series of panels. Close behind him another panel flashes and the stalker leaps through, still closer.

135 ANOTHER ANGLE 135

Alluma reaches the small, contained, final panel area. A tapering corridor can be seen through the electric haze. Although anxious to be out of the chamber, she hesitates, looking back through the panels for the others.

136 ANOTHER ANGLE 136

Ranger, looking nervously over his shoulder, steps through a glowing panel. The stalker appears immediately in the position Ranger has just left and, with a tremendous leap, catches up with him.

The stalker grabs Ranger by the throat from behind. When Ranger spins, struggling for breath, his eyes bulge as he looks, horrified, into his own malevolent face. The stalker is a vicious double of himself.

CUT TO:

137 ANOTHER ANGLE 137

Cabren, in a brief conjunction of translucent and glowing panels catches a glimpse of Ranger's struggle. He tries to get back to Ranger, but when he hurls himself into a glowing panel, he bounces back. He tries again and fails. The panels are one-way only.

CUT TO:

138 ANOTHER ANGLE

138

Alluma looks about, very jittery. From her point of view, the panels appear to be strobing faster and the walls themselves appear to be starting to bounce. As she watches, the strobing increases in intensity and the walls throb towards her. She decides not to wait any longer. Abruptly, she spins and steps through the final panel.

CUT TO:

139 ANOTHER ANGLE

139

Cabren catches sight of Alluma as she steps through the panel. Blocked from access to Ranger, he moves in her direction.

140 ANOTHER ANGLE

140

Ranger, battling for his life, grabs his weapon, but hesitates to shoot at the reflection of himself. The double lunges again, fearless.

Ranger hesitates no longer. He fires point blank, blasting a gaping hole in his assailant. The double hesitates, then lunges back at Ranger, seemingly unaffected. Ranger falls back, horrified.

CUT TO:

141 INT. TIGHT CORRIDOR

141

Alluma stands just beyond the final panel facing the sharply tapering corridor. Hesitantly she bends low to enter the passage, taking a few cautious steps.

A tearing sound stops her cold. The passageway in front of her pinches closed.

Alluma falls backward in fright. She begins to panic.

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED

141

ALLUMA
Cabren...Cabren!

There is another tearing sound, closer now. She spins around. The corridor behind her pinches down, sealing off her retreat. The light changes. The walls begin to glow, veined and fleshlike.

CUT TO:

142 INT. GLOW PANEL - CHAMBER

142

In the eerie light of the glow panel chamber the bizarre battle rages. Ranger has been badly slashed. His double, still ferociously attacking, is riddled with what should be fatal wounds: gaping holes, deep slashes, a hand dangling by a threat of skin.

Ranger fires again, blowing away part of his double's leg, but the double keeps coming.

A panel near Ranger flashes. He flings himself through it, and the panel goes to solid quartz, affording him temporary safety.

Ranger peers at his assailant as it waits impatiently to reach him.

RANGER
(puzzling to himself)
There's no blood - no guts -
Can't be real!

A panel behind him flashes. He moves through it thoughtfully. The double steps through a panel into the space Ranger has just left. It seems to be moving more slowly and with considerably less vitality than before. It looks around, puzzled.

RANGER
If it's part of me, I'm fighting
myself!

He becomes elated. The next panel flashes and he unhurriedly passes through it. He turns to watch his double. It has not moved and does not make it through the panel before it changes back to solid. As Ranger watches, increasingly confident, the double fades away, disappearing completely

(CONTINUED)

I42 CONTINUED

I42

Ranger lets out an elated yell, delighted with himself and his victory. He looks around for the others.

CUT TO:

I43 INT. TIGHT CORRIDOR

I43

Alluma sits huddled in a tight fetal position. Harsh, rasping, tearing sounds surround her.

She looks with terror as the veined, partially translucent, skin-like surfaces continue to close in around her.

Through the veined walls, small, greedy alien hands press and prod her. Behind the hands, alien eyes watch, unblinking.

Alluma struggles, writhing to find leverage against the skin-like cocoon, but it continues to envelop her, a deadly, shrinking membrane. She redoubles her struggle against the alien hands as they pull at her clothing.

Slime begins oozing from the membrane onto Alluma. With what little freedom of movement she has left she tries to wipe away the offensive liquid.

Tighter the fleshy walls press. Alluma is helpless to the alien hands. She screams.

CUT TO:

I44 INT. GLOW-PANEL CHAMBER

I44

Cabren reaches the final panel where he hears Alluma's desperate, muffled screams.

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED

144

~~CABREN~~
~~Alluma! I'm coming! Alluma!~~

He bangs on the opaque panel in frustration, without effect. There is a last desperate cry from beyond the panel, and a hideous crunching of bones.

144A INT. TIGHT CORRIDOR

144A

Close Angle. Alluma, now considerably physically smaller is completely crunched and smothered by the flesh-like cocoon.

144B INT. GLOW PANEL CHAMBER

144B

The panel glows and Cabren leaps through.

Ranger reaches the final panel, again opaque, in time to hear another muffled cry. It is Cabren's. The panel glows and Ranger rushes through. The camera FOLLOWS him through.

HANDHOLD INTO:

145 INT. TIGHT CORRIDOR

As Ranger steps into the corridor, Cabren stumbles towards him, wild-eyed, in shock. Ranger rushes past him but stops, looking away in sudden horrified pain.

Quickly he pulls his weapon and fires, incinerating the remains.

When he turns toward Cabren, the pain and pity in his eyes meet the anguish in his friend's.

CUT TO:

146 INT. CATHEDRAL CHAMBER

146

Cabren and Ranger climb up, grim and determined, into the middle of a vast chamber. It is cathedral-like, its shiny stone walls rising to a distant vaulted ceiling. It is an exhilaratingly expansive space after the constructions of the tunnels and corridors.

It is, for all that, as bafflingly empty as the rest of the pyramid has been. Again, there is no apparent exit other than the one they have arrived through.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED

146

Ranger, obviously weakened by his wound, eases himself down to a sitting position on the floor to lessen the pain.

Cabren glares about the vast chamber. Hard-faced, he shows no more trace of easy-going sentiment. Now he moves with a deep burning anger.

CABREN

~~Damn this. Damn this place.~~

Ranger, too, has changed. Despite his wounds, he speaks with the new strength born of personal victory-

RANGER

It was my own fear that attacked me, Cabren. Brought to life somehow by this place.

CABREN

(he nods agreement)

I knew as soon as I saw Alluma.

(turning away in pain)

There is no horror here that we don't create ourselves.

There is a pause. He turns back to Ranger.

CABREN

If we know, then it's over, finished.

Thoughts of Alluma flood in on Cabren.

CABREN

But it's too late!

From high above a thin yet strong whisper reaches down to them.

KORE (V.O.)

(cold, mocking)

Finished, Cabren? There has hardly been a beginning.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED

146

RANGER

(hissing)

I knew it! Where is he? What
does he have to do with this?

They spy Kore high above, standing on a narrow ledge.

CABREN

(shouting)

Kore! Damn you! KORE!

There is no answer. Kore can no longer be seen.
Ranger points to the razor-edged beam, angling up
to where Kore appeared.

RANGER

Look.

A single step has appeared at the bottom of the beam.

CABREN

(muttering)

More tricks!

He walks over to the beam and touches it with his foot.
Nothing happens. He steps on to it. Nothing. He
tests the beam edge with his finger. A thin trickle
of blood appears, affirming its sharpness. He steps
off the step, looks at it thoughtfully. Then he
walks directly back onto it and continues climbing.
A second and a third step appear on the beam. Satisfied,
he steps back down and over to Ranger.

CABREN

I'm going up.

RANGER

I don't think I'd make it.

(Cabren nods)

Remember what we know about this
place.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED

146

Cabren acknowledges grimly. He grips Ranger's shoulder in friendship, then heads for the steps. He walks deliberately up and beyond the three visible steps. Each time he puts a foot out into space, another step appears.

RANGER

Be careful of Kore!

Cabren, concentrating on the steps, nods briefly and continues.

As he climbs higher up the beam it becomes more and more obvious what a demanding test of concentration and faith this is. Cabren focuses solely on making the next step appear.

Above him, Cabren catches a flicker of movement. He glances up momentarily and is disconcerted to see Kore again on the ledge, watching. In the moment that he hesitates, the next step doesn't appear.

Cabren nearly falls, barely managing to avoid the razor's edge. He steadies himself, finds his balance, and proceeds again with willed confidence onto a new step.

Kore watches him for another moment, then slips back into the darkness.

When Cabren reaches the small ledge at the top, he stops to catch his breath, and risks a look down. It is a dizzying sight. Ranger lies far below him.

Cabren barely hesitates before plunging into the darkness behind him.

CUT TO:

147 INT. BLACK PASSAGE

147

Weapon in hand, Cabren moves ahead quickly, despite the lack of visibility.

His footsteps ring around him like strokes within a giant bell. Soon the strokes suggest drumming in their staccato rapidity. They stop. Cabren takes a deep breath to steady himself.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED

147

The rich sound of his footsteps resumes at a gentler tempo.

CUT TO:

148 INT. THE MASTER CHAMBER

148

Cabren emerges suddenly into blinding light. As his eyes adjust, he sees that he is in yet another pyramid-shaped chamber. This is the inner of inner chambers, the eye within the eye. The walls shimmer with the same dark, violet light at the entrance chamber of the inner pyramid.

From the 'eye' of this room, shafts of light run to all four corners of the chamber. In an ominous way, it is radiant and spectacular.

The chamber is empty except for Kore, who sits cross-legged on the floor, his back to Cabren. Cabren, wary, stops just inside the doorway, weapon drawn.

CABREN

(menacing)

Kore.

(there is no reply)

Answer, you scum!

Without hurry, Kore stands and turns. As he turns, a shimmering aura springs up around him. Cabren realizes that Kore is the Master.

CABREN

You?

The Master stands calmly.

CABREN

A rescue mission! You know this place?

MASTER

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

148 CONTINUED

148

CABREN

You knew. And we died. Sucked,
torn, crushed, while you watched
and said nothing!

The Master stands calmly, but does not answer.

Cabren's boiling anger bursts. With an awful cry, he
blasts at the Master, weapon flaring.

When Cabren fires, a thin shell of light leaps from
the Master's shimmering aura to deflect the blast
from Cabren's weapon.

Cabren drops his weapon and leaps at the Master, but
as the space between them closes, the thin shell of light
around the Master grows, shunting Cabren across the
chamber. As he hits the floor, he feints, spins into a
crouch and pulls a long, glinting knife, which he hurls
at the Master. As the knife flashes through the air, a
section of the pulsing shell field flares out like an
arm to meet the knife and dissolve it in a swirling
flurry of sparks.

MASTER

(calmly)

Weapons of that nature will
not help you here.

CABREN

I will find a way to kill you
for what you have done.

MASTER

(smiling)

Perhaps you will. But enough,
Cabren.

(he sits again)

Why let your emotions rule now,
after showing such admirable
control of your fear? You've
already won the game.

(CONTINUED)

148 CONTINUED

148

CABREN

Game?

MASTER

A children's game, Cabren. / This pyramid is an ancient toy. / A brilliant toy for the children of a vanished race to see their deepest fears / and learn to control them.

CABREN

How can you know this?

MASTER

This is where I became Master.

There is a pause. Cabren seethes, desperately angry still. The Master watches him quietly.

CABREN

Why did she have to die?! Why did they/all have to die?! / DAMN YOU!! WHY?!!!

MASTER

They could have lived, Cabren. / They could have chosen as you have chosen. Until now.

The Master raises his arm. The thin edge of light around him flares strongly into the colors of the rainbow. This radiant field of light grows rapidly, until it fills the chamber, forcing Cabren back.

The image of the Master recedes rapidly back into the radiance.

Abruptly, the light darkens, thickens, heavy with purples, blues and magentas, like a primordial soup.

Out of this swirling darkness, like an awful, surreal nightmare, come the horrors that have attacked the crew on the planet. Sweeping towards Cabren come the giant maggot, the sucking tentacle. Congealing out of the very darkness itself the shadow demon reaches for him. Burrowing its way out of the floor comes the spidery horror that killed Cos.

(CONTINUED)

3/25/81

ADDITIONAL NOTES

SCENE 148 INT. THE MASTER CHAMBER

The room is dark, quiet. Kore sits on a transparent platform over a central hole, back to camera. He does not respond when Cabren yells at him.

The camera dollies slowly with Cabren as he moves around the room to face Kore. As Kore stands the lights in the room fade up. He wears Scotchlite and glows.

After the initial dialogue Cabren blazes at the Master with Baelon's rifle. He uses the rifle a second time rather than using the knife, as first scripted. The second time the Master's aura response is stronger, forcing Cabren back (a combination of wind and roto).

At the Master's words, "...until now.", the central column of light flares and the bars of lights in the chamber react, spinning (by sequencing) around the room.

Cabren looks to the spinning lights. By the time he looks back towards the Master the central glow is fading. The Master has disappeared. The room is filled with smoke.

The lights in the chamber change color and pattern. A revolving centerpiece appears, its large segments forcing Cabren towards the chamber walls.

Cabren, wary of changes, moves cautiously. As he backs towards a doorway the giant maggot startles him. Cabren barely escapes its slimy grasp when the other horrors appear. In the swirl of light and smoke Cabren meets the monsters and dispatches them.

As the tempo of the lights slows and the chamber stills Cabren finds no horrors or the MASTER. He catches his breath and peers into the glowing center when a chorus of shrieks echoes out.

Cabren spins to face a fellow crewman in each entrance (3 or 4). Each has a frozen look of horror on his face, each the trace of his hideous demise on his body.

Cabren is shocked and uncertain. He tries their names, but they simply move towards him. He falls back, hesitant to shoot, when another of the zombie crew grabs him from behind. The others rush Cabren, disarming him.

Cabren fights well in hand-to-hand combat, but finally is overpowered, thrown to the floor, semiconscious.

ALLUMA (O.S.)
Cabren, Cabren.

Cabren revives to find Alluma kneeling beside him, stroking his head. She looks strangely normal.

Cabren jerks away, but the other zombies limit his retreat. Alluma continues to advance seductively. Cabren hesitates.

Only as Alluma reaches to embrace him does he make his decision and push her away.

Alluma shrinks back, her skin crawling with the veiny markings of the walls that crushed her. Her face, like the others, is now frozen in terror. Cabren fires.

The room reacts by dying to blackness, then flaring with light.

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Momentarily shocked, Cabren leaps into action, vanquishing his attackers with great speed and finesse. But his success is short lived. Out of the remains of these creatures emerges something even more horrible.

As the giant maggot splits apart and the shadow demon crumples, arising from their remains come the zombie-like figures of the people whose fears birthed these monsters.

Their faces frozen in the grotesque, last moment of their dying terror, their bodies mutilated by the ravages of their horrors, the crew of the Quest press towards Cabren.

A mangled Baelon; Dameia, dripping with thick gelatinous slime from the maggot; Quuhod, with one arm, fragments of crystal glowing inside his body; Trantor, badly burnt and still smouldering; a drained Ilvar, with severed ends of tentacles still attached...they come at Cabren with deadly intent.

In the thick, churning maelstrom, Cabren again fights for his life, this time with even more relentless opponents. As they back Cabren towards the wall, the wall itself begins to peel. Through it emerges Alluma, her face frozen in her last, awful moment of agony.

As Cabren's attention rivets to Alluma, the other zombie-like crew fall back, becoming a menacing circle in the background.

Alluma approaches, apparently more normal than the others. With her survival suit in tatters, her movement towards Cabren is gruesomely seductive, leaving him aghast but fascinated.

As she reaches out for Cabren he stumbles back in indecision. She continues forward, the seductiveness of her movement belying the frozen terror of her face. Finally Cabren can take it no more. He swiftly draws his weapon and fires.

With a brilliant flash and an awesome, lightning-like cracking, Alluma's suit and skin fall away, revealing the bloated, veiny, completely cocoonized body of an alien being. Twisted alien hands leap for Cabren's throat.

(CONTINUED)

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The range now too close for his weapon, Cabren is forced to fight a last, gory round at close quarters with the repulsive Alluma/alien.

It is a short, horrible fight from which Cabren emerges successful. As he does a strong, pulsing glow of light surrounds his body.

With the Alluma/alien demise, the swirling darkness clears, and the other crew/zombies melt away.

Surrounded by the white glow of his newly won power, Cabren stands alone. Opposite him, in a thin golden shell of light, sits the Master. His face reveals nothing.

CABREN

Now. Now, it is just you and me.

But his words do not have the vituperative edge they had before. He seems perhaps, uncertain.

MASTER

(quietly)

But now you cannot find the rage that made you want to kill me. Yet, I am the same man I was before.

Slowly the Master allows the light field around himself to fade.

Cabren reacts instinctively, his light field expanding rapidly until it explodes like a thunderbolt at the Master, momentarily obliterating him.

As the flare around the Master dies down, the great charge flows back towards Cabren, changing the color of his field to a strong, clear gold. The Master, who has made no attempt to defend himself, lies dying on the floor of the chamber, his image now pale and ghostly.

He is calm, relaxed.

(CONTINUED)

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MASTER

(nodding)

It is done.

Cabren stares at him.

CABREN

You wanted me to kill you!

The Master says nothing, watching Cabren's understanding dawn.

CABREN

(his voice barely
a whisper)And I have. I have killed you.
I have killed the Master.

MASTER

No. Only an old man. You cannot
kill the power that is a Master.

With an anguished cry, Cabren shrinks back from the dying old man.

CABREN

I will never do what you have
done. ~~Never! I do not want your~~
power!

He writhes in pain, as if he could tear the shimmering light field from himself.

The Master watches, calm.

MASTER

Ah, Cabren, a Master learns
that power cannot be shared or
given away. Power can only be
yielded -- and only to the one
who fights for its mastery.

(CONTINUED)

148 CONTINUED

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CABREN
(anguished)
I WILL NOT BE MASTER!

MASTER
Too late. You acted. You
attacked. And you won. You
are the Master.

Cabren turns away from the Master. There is a long pause. When Cabren speaks again he does so flatly, without great hope in his voice.

CABREN
I can leave. Go elsewhere in
the galaxy.

MASTER
And allow your planet to plunge into
chaos? That, too, would be the
effect of your power. But you
would still be Master. That is who
you are.

Cabren turns slowly back towards the Master. His face is still.

MASTER
You are the Master.

The Old Master and the New Master look steadily at each other. As they do, Cabren pulls out his weapon and, without a flicker of emotion, incinerates the pale image of the Old Master.

For a brief moment, a glowing outline of the body hovers in the room, then vanishes.

Cabren, the new Master, surrounded by a shimmering light field of gold, turns and leaves.

T H E E N D