

VAP
//

Philip K. Dick's

SECOND VARIETY

Adapted for the Screen by

Dan O'Bannon

The living will envy the dead.

--Nikita Khrushchev
during the Cuban
missile crisis, 1962

FADE IN:

EXTERIOR - OUTER SPACE

THE EARTH hangs motionless in the void.
Fantastically, it has a RING, like Saturn.

Through restless cloud envelope, the Western Hemisphere land masses are gray...gangrenous gray like meat gone bad... Maybe we notice that some details of coastline are wrong.

A man-made satellite orbits toward us.
As it draws near, we can see that it is a cremated wreck. Fragments of debris follow gracefully in its wake, circumnavigating the globe with it; and pursuing it with the relentless futility of a creditor is the burned and blackened corpse of a space suited man, his teeth gleaming like pearls imbedded in asphalt...

Silence . . .

EXTERIOR - EARTH - DAY

A landscape of utter devastation.

Gray dust and shattered debris from horizon to horizon, under a hot, blue sun.
A twisted flagpole, and on it
a shredded American flag flaps like an old shirt in the wind.
Flakes of gray ash shower down from the sky.

Apart from the flag and the ash, nothing moves.
No life.
The wind moans.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR - BUNKER PILLBOX - DAY

Gunsight on a rifle.
A SOLDIER peering through it.
Nasty slimy hand-rolled cigarette dangling from his lips.

HE SEES (THROUGH HIS ELECTRONIC GUNSIGHT): the ragged crest of a ridge, and standing warily on it, a SOLDIER IN FOREIGN UNIFORM. Holding his gun ready in gloved hands, the foreign infantryman studies the terrain carefully and uneasily.

RIFLEMAN IN PILLBOX

Do you want him? Or can I have him?

This little favor is being asked of his BUDDY in the pillbox who also--through a pair of high-powered field glasses--is eyeballing the hapless enemy soldier.

SOLDIER W/FIELD GLASSES

Be my guest. He's all yours.

As they continue their prurient surveillance, the FOREIGN SOLDIER starts down the hill. He begins to hurry, sliding in the grey ash, trying to keep his gun up.

Our rifleman (CORPORAL LEONE) keeps the advancing footsoldier square in his crosshairs; but holds his fire. His companion with the binoculars (SERGEANT ERIC) is getting edgy.

ERIC

What are you waiting for?

LEONE

How far do you think he'll get?

ERIC

Maybe another ten yards, if you let him. Why?

LEONE

Think he'll make it to the bottom of the hill?

ERIC

Probably not. No. Why?

LEONE

I'll bet he makes it to the barbed wire.

ERIC

He won't.

LEONE

Want to put fifty on that?

ERIC

Just get it over with, for Christ's sake! He's about to get to the bad part!

LEONE

You can close your eyes if you want to.

Now the foreign soldier is only a few yards from the bottom of the slope. He stops for a moment, raises binoculars of his own.

LEONE

That bastard is looking right at me.

It is eerie: each man peering into the other's magnified face. He knows that I know that he knows that I see him seeing me . . .

The soldier's binoculars, black & glassy & huge, conceal his eyes from Leone's fascinated ogle. His mouth, though, is expressively tight and determined behind twin plumes of steam squirting from cold-reddened nostrils. He needs a shave. On one bony cheek is a square of tape. His gloves and coat are torn and mud-caked.

ERIC

(a moan)

Oh God here it comes.

A DREADFUL MECHANICAL SCREECH and across the ground comes something small and metallic. Flashing in the dull sunlight. Treads flying, screaming like a banshee, it races up the hill toward the foreign soldier. CLAWS spring out: two razor projections spinning in a blur of white steel.

The foreign soldier HEARS it. Turns instantly, FIRING. The little machine EXPLODES, hurling lethal pieces of honed blade for yards.

But already a SECOND SHRIEKING MACHINE has made its appearance. The soldier squeezes off two quick rounds. Too fast--both shots miss. The mobile buzz saw keeps coming. This man though is not easily panicked: he steadies himself, aims carefully, and BLOWS it into shards of glitter.

It is an exercise in heroic futility. Reinforcements--squalling steel lobsters--are arriving in force.

He knows it is the end -- TURNS toward the men in the bunker and throws his arm high like a salute of defiance-- --in his hand something glints, catching the light from the sun.

He SHOUTS, just as a device leaps onto the tail of his coat, screaming like a sawmill and shredding his clothes on its way up to his head.

It hops to his shoulder.

The whirling blades disappear into his neck, cutting off his shout.

Spraying blood like a headless chicken, he goes down.

One by one the little machines shut off their noisemakers, leaving a ringing silence.

LEONE

You should have taken the bet.

ERIC
(angry)
You could have taken him out with one shot!

LEONE
(shrugs)
So could you.

Sgt. Eric is well aware of his own lack of decisiveness. Grumbling, he slides off the point.

ERIC
Those goddamn things give me the creeps.

LEONE
If we hadn't invented them, they would have.

ERIC
Why does everybody keep saying that?

Eric lights a cigarette with shaking hands. ~~Everybody is smoking a cigarette at all times in this film.~~

LEONE
I wonder why a Commie would come all this way alone?

Up from a concrete tunnel into the pillbox comes CAPTAIN SCOTT, the bunker's Executive Officer. An affable sort. Well liked.

CAPT. SCOTT
What was that?

ERIC
A Commie.

CAPT. SCOTT
Just one?

Sgt. Eric hands him the field glasses. Scott peers through them, and sees:

THROUGH THE BINOCs: a swarm of little gleaming machines crawl over the prostrate body of the Russian soldier. Clicking and whirring contentedly, they saw him into small bits which they carry away.

Christ
~~What a lot of commies.~~
Look at those commies go

LEONE
Not much ~~gun~~ for them anymore.

left

~~They shake their heads.~~
A larger device has joined the smaller ones: an industrial looking thing with better articulated grasping organs. ~~Apparently, it is directing operations.~~

Scott pushes the sight away, disgusted.

~~SCOTT~~
SCOTT

What a place for a Commie to take a walk. Was he trying to infiltrate us? Or did he just get lost?

~~(shakes his head in amazement)~~

~~Jesus, how'd he make it that far?~~

LEONE

He didn't look lost to me.

ERIC

Did you see that thing he had in his hand?

~~SCOTT~~
SCOTT

What thing?

LEONE

I thought it was a grenade. But he didn't throw it.

ERIC

But he did shout something at us.

LEONE

Yeah, when he saw the sawblades were going to ~~kill~~ him.

~~get~~ SCOTT

Shouted what?

~~They shake their heads.~~

ERIC

Couldn't make it out.

~~SCOTT~~
SCOTT

Wonderful. The two sentries.

DAMN LEONE

Hey, come on, Captain. You know you can't hear a ~~blatant~~ thing when the ~~screamers~~ are serenading.

~~Shouts~~
What remains of the Russian is being brought down the hillside by the host of "screamers", marching in a little line like ants.

LEONE
 (peering through his
 telescopic sight)
 He sure had a lot of guts.

- A.P.I.
 SCOTT
 I guess I'd better go see what I can
 find.

Scott goes to the door, throws the bolt.

ERIC
 Got your jammer on, Captain?

Scott holds up his hand; on his wrist is a bulky metal bracelet.

- P.T.
 SCOTT
 (nervous grin)
 What do you think, birdbrain? I keep it
 in a box so it won't dirty? I eat, ~~shit~~
 and sleep with this thing on, just like
 you do.

With that, he steps out of the bunker.

LEONE
 (calls after him)
 Watch yourself, Captain. It's probably
 a bomb.

EXTERIOR - BUNKER - DAY

Scott steps carefully out into the grimy sunlight.
 Makes his way between blocks of concrete and steel prongs,
 twisted and bent.
 The air is biting cold.
 He leaves puffs of his breath behind him as he walks.

He strides across the soft ash to the rapidly dwindling
 Russian.
 The now-silent "screamers" retreat as he approaches, some of
 them stiffening into immobility.
 Unconsciously, his hand steals to his bracelet.

He crouches by what remains of the Russian.
 A wind blows around the dead man, swirling grey particles
 up into Scott's face.
 After a moment he finds what he is looking for: a metal
 cylinder about the size of a cigar tube.
 It is clenched in the fingers of a glove.
 He picks up the glove; it is heavy and the fingers tight, and
 a sharp tug is required to separate the cylinder, before he
 hurls the glove away.

Printed along the side of the tube, in eye-seizing atomic red,
 is the following pulse-quickener:

CRUCIAL TO U.N. FORWARD COMMANDER CRUCIAL

INTERIOR - COLONEL HENDRICKS'S OFFICE - DAY

No windows. A lot of concrete. Gloomy.

Capt. Scott stands before LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOSEPH HENDRICKS, Commanding Officer, U.N. Forward Command West. He is young for his job -- maybe 30 or 40. Battlefield promotions have thrust him into command in spite of his relative youth.

Suspiciously, he is eyeballing the cylinder Scott holds out to him.

HENDRICKS

He had that?

SCOTT

In his hand.

Cautiously, Hendricks takes it from Scott.

HENDRICKS

I hate surprises.

SCOTT

It's okay. No boobytraps. We already opened it. Here.

Scott opens the tube for the reluctant Colonel Hendricks and dumps out the contents: a single sheet of flimsy-but-tough metallic paper, carefully rolled.

SCOTT

Nick, I think this is what we've been waiting for.

Hendricks reads it with no change of expression; you wouldn't want to play poker with him.

HENDRICKS

Now what are they up to?

SCOTT

Are we going along with them on this?

HENDRICKS

I don't know. Not before I talk to the Sanctuary.

INTERIOR - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - DAY

A HISSING TV SCREEN...

Spec 5 Officer tuning the dials...
Teasing from the airwaves one signal out of a million.

Hendricks and Scott stand watching. The image clears and becomes an I.D. pattern.

VOICE FROM SCREEN

Hello Fort Apache, this is FLEETSATCOM ready to refeed & decode you to CINCSANC. Over.

SPEC 5 OFFICER

Roger, FLEETSATCOM, this is FORCOMWEST Fort Apache, reading you loudest and standing by to transceive. Go ahead. Over.

Hendricks steps closer to the screen. The image of 60-year-old GENERAL PHILIP K. THOMPSON, Commander-in-Chief of combined U.N. forces at the "Sanctuary" (whatever & wherever that is) materializes on the TV monitor. His cleanliness, alertness and crispness of uniform are almost obscene by comparison with the weary, mildewed zombies in the bunker. Yet, there is not a trace of arrogance nor self-serving about him.

GEN. THOMPSON

Yes, Joe.

HENDRICKS

(can't waste precious
air time)

General, the screamers retired a single Russian runner who penetrated our lines. He was carrying a message from my opposite number -- the C.O. at their forward command post.

GEN. THOMPSON

What message?

HENDRICKS

(reads:)

"FROM MARSHAL SERGEI MOSKALENKO,
ADVANCE FIELD COMMANDER,
SOVIET GROUND FORCES,
5TH AMERICAN ARMY,
TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOSEF HENDRICKS,
COMMANDING OFFICER,
U.N. FORWARD COMMAND,
WESTERN ARMY GROUP,
GREETINGS!

MATTERS OF GRAVEST COMPELLING URGENCY
DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION AND REQUIRE
THE NECESSITY FOR IMMEDIATE DISCUSSIONS
OF MUTUAL INTEREST BEING INITIATED IMMEDIATELY
BETWEEN RANKING REPRESENTATIVES
OF U.N. FORCES AND OURSELVES WITH NO OP-

(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

(reading) - X -

TION FOR DELAY WHATSOEVER. PLEASE SEND OFFICERS AT POLICY LEVEL. SAFE PASSAGE GUARANTEED. YOUR ADVENT SHALL ARRIVE EXPECTANTLY.

SALUTATIONS!"

GEN. THOMPSON

That's all? They don't say what these discussions are supposed to be about?

HENDRICKS

"Matters of gravest compelling urgency, and mutual interest."

GEN. THOMPSON

That could be anything from an internal revolution to a marijuana shortage. Still, for the Russians that thing is an exercise in naked candor.

Hendricks holds up the piece of paper for the General to see.

HENDRICKS

On the back side is this map of their forward command post. It matches our own intelligence pretty closely, but in the kind of detail you'd give your left ball for. They must be in deep shit to be handing us this kind of info.

GEN. THOMPSON

Hell's bells, coming from them this is practically an unconditional surrender! What was that part about "policy-making?"

HENDRICKS

"Please send officers at policy level."

GEN. THOMPSON

Sounds like they want to talk terms so bad it hurts. Why is this coming from a front-line commander? He has no authority to request any kind of meeting at all with the enemy.

HENDRICKS

I have that kind of authority.

GEN. THOMPSON

You're not a Soviet. Is this guy acting on his own initiative? We haven't heard a word from the Presidium. I mean that literally. Their comsats have gone completely silent

(CONT'D)

GEN. THOMPSON (CONT'D)
for almost a day. Normally they're at
least swamping each other with information.

HENDRICKS
I didn't know that.

GEN. THOMPSON
You would if you could afford to keep your
radio on. They fell silent 20 hours ago.
The Soviets are up to something big.

HENDRICKS
(starting to get the picture)
To me it just sounds like a set-up. An-
other of their cheap sadistic tricks.

GEN. THOMPSON
Cheap it is not. It's paralyzing their
entire communications network.

HENDRICKS
General, I guarantee you: whoever goes,
they're going to nail him. We're playing
"chicken" with psychopaths here.

GEN. THOMPSON
(not happy)
Be that as it may, we are going to take
their bait, because there is a remote,
theoretical, flimsy chance it might be
legitimate and start us on the road to
ending this...I was going to call it a
war, but the word doesn't do it justice.
To preserve some specimen of human life
in the future. Joe, before much more time
passes the Earth will be a smouldering
heap of slag, and mankind a memory in the
mind of God. Hell, I no longer even care
very much who wins, as long as somebody
wins! Don't you understand what you've
got there, Joe? A peace feeler from the
Soviets, and a dammed frantic one too!
They want something very badly, and it
sounds very much like a termination of
hostilities! Maybe the mobile knives HAVE
worked! So go find out what they want,
Joe. Do what can be done. And be utter-
ly discreet. You have my full authority
and support.

HENDRICKS
(snorts in derision)
Support! Don't I wish! Three rifles from
the Crimean War and half a dozen switchblade
knives, and where the hell are those replace-
(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)
ments you keep promising?

GEN. THOMPSON
Those troops still haven't arrived?

HENDRICKS
No sir they have not!

GEN. THOMPSON
Damn those worthless transports! Let me know the instant they're down safely... or otherwise.

HENDRICKS
Yeah.

Hendricks breaks the connection. The screen goes hissing blank.

INTERIOR - CORRIDORS - DAY

Hendricks and Scott walking. Black mood on Hendricks.

[NOTE that there are no windows in this underground warren. Just a lot of concrete.]

HENDRICKS
We've been using the screamers for almost a year. Now, all of a sudden they just collapse like wet cardboard?

SCOTT
Have you seen the new ones?

HENDRICKS
What new ones?

SCOTT
The ones with the jack-in-the-box chain saws?

[CONTINUED:]

HENDRICKS

No.

SCOTT

One of them got into a Red bunker last week. It got almost half a platoon of them before they sent it to the cleaners.

HENDRICKS

I hate those damn things.

SCOTT

Be glad they're on our side.

HENDRICKS

Don't worry, they'll have their own soon.

SCOTT

Maybe they won't last that long.

HENDRICKS

You think so, Scotty? Are the Commies really throwing in the towel?

SCOTT

Wishful thinking. It's kind of hard to see them surrendering.

HENDRICKS

I'll say.

They walk into the canteen.

INTERIOR - CANTEEN - DAY (NO WINDOWS)

There are some U.N. soldiers lounging around eating, gabbing, playing cards. For the most part they are a mixed bunch of USA and Japanese troops, with a few West French and Antarc-ticans thrown in. They all look weary. The air hangs heavy with blue cigarette smoke, a choking haze that makes near objects recede into a gauzy distance. Discipline seems casual in the bunker.

A DOG is running around, some kind of mutt with a big mechanical device attached to its collar.

Hendricks and Scott walk in. Scott gets a can from a dispenser and they find seats at a table, by themselves.

Hendricks watches Scott pop the can open and tilt it back.

HENDRICKS

I hate that crap.

SCOTT

You hate everything.

HENDRICKS

That stuff tastes like something you'd clean out a drain with.

SCOTT

If you knock it back fast enough you can fool yourself.

HENDRICKS

The last thing I want to do is fool myself.

SCOTT

The alcohol is real.

HENDRICKS

Yes, and what a wonderful flavor the penicillin imparts. Why don't they just come out and call it what it really is: Bacteria Beer.

Hendricks fishes a couple of cigarettes from his pocket and passes one to Scott. Both light up and start puffing away. The DOG with the thing on its collar comes up begging and Scott leans over to the lunch table to get it a little treat. People food.

SCOTT

(tossing morsels)

Here, Kitty Cat. Good Kitty Cat.

[The dog's name is Kitty Cat.]

Disgusted, Hendricks watches, then gazes around the foggy kennel full of armpit-scratchers. Everyone in the room is chain-smoking, including those who are eating.

HENDRICKS

Lookit 'em eat that fucking stuff.

SCOTT

Nick, you eat soybeans and algae.

HENDRICKS

Yeah. Straight. Baked soybeans and steamed algae. With salt. Not dressed up to look like some kind of mildewed hamburger or phony greenbean. Or that so-called "coffee". You know where they get the caffeine from? Chickenshit, that's where. Brewed soybeans with chickenshit. And

(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)
polystyrene and Christ knows what else.
(shudders)

Ugh!

SCOTT
Oh, it's not so bad. It grows on you.

HENDRICKS
You can say that again. It grows on
anything.

SCOTT
Aren't we Saint Nicholas today.

HENDRICKS
(grumbles)
I just like, things that are real,
that's all.

SCOTT
(drinking)
Expensive hobby these days.

From the next table, Scott leans over from his winning poker
hand to ask:

[CONTINUED:]

LEONE
Hey Skipper--are the Reds really
surrendering?

HENDRICKS
Hard to say.

A SOLDIER
Is it true the war'll be over by
Christmas?

HENDRICKS
Maybe. Which Christmas?

Suddenly the Spec 5 Communications Officer comes running in,
wild eyed.

COM OFFICER
Skipper, there's a Chicken Coop and she's
coming down fast and hard!

A LOUD CLAXON SIREN begins to sound. Everybody jumps to
their feet.

Hendricks charges out of the canteen, down the hall, up some
steps, and outdoors.

EXTERIOR - LANDING STRIP - DAY

Men are running around. Down the runway, a huge, flimsy-
looking shuttlecraft has crashed, and lies in ruins like
a broken dragonfly. A roiling cloud of gray dust extends
beyond it for some distance, illustrating its crash path.

These shuttles are single-use gliders meant to make a one-way
trip from space. They are dropped from orbit and make an
unpowered descent and landing. Then they are discarded.
They are cheap. The one we are looking at has come apart
and is spread out along the runway for a hundred yards, just
like a crate of ~~chickens~~ dropped from a truck.

Hendricks runs to the wreckage. He has seen it all before.

HENDRICKS
Anybody alive in there?

Pandemonium. Medics run from body to body.

HENDRICKS
Any survivors?

An arm emerges from a piece of fuselage, and waves.

CHICKEN COOP
= 4 ?
(DEBATABLE)

CHICKEN
= 5 X
(UNRECORDED)

VOICE

Me. Here. Help me!

Hendricks runs toward the arm. It is attached to a very YOUNG SOLDIER, who lies pinned under wreckage.

Hendricks kneels by him. His arm is bleeding.

HENDRICKS

Are you hurt?

YOUNG SOLDIER

Just trapped, that's all, sir.

HENDRICKS

How about your arm there?

YOUNG SOLDIER

(panting; his eyes panicky)

I'm not hurt, I'm just stuck, if you can just get this stuff off me, sir.

Hendricks pats his arm reassuringly.

HENDRICKS

Let's have some help here! Get this man free!

Meanwhile, attracted by all the activity, the screamers--the little killing machines--are hovering around the edges of the action, keeping a respectful distance.

While he is examining the trapped soldier's injured arm, he notices the boy's wrist.

HENDRICKS

Where's your jammer?

TRAPPED SOLDIER

My what, sir?

HENDRICKS

Your jammer! Your goddamned transponder!

TRAPPED SOLDIER

I don't think I have one, sir.

HENDRICKS

Oh my God.

(turns and shouts)

Give me some goddamn help, this man has no transponder!

Suddenly, the nearest screamer starts WAILING and darts on a beeline toward the trapped soldier.

DOV FEARS
CUTTING
EDGES - THE
WOUND WOULD
FREAK HIM
OUT THAT!

FIX.
(DOV'S
REACTION
TO BEING
CUT)

Hendricks hauls off and KICKS it;
it flies through the air like a soccer ball.

Other soldiers come running; they cluster around the pinned soldier, making themselves into a wall between him and the milling screamers, which are starting to screech up a storm.

HENDRICKS

Get this stuff off him!

Hurriedly, they lift the debris clear of the soldier;
immediately he jumps to his feet.

Keeping a tight circle around him, they walk him to the bunker.

The screamers circle around them, but keep a set distance all the way; they want to get at the new soldier, but won't pass the others to get at him.

When they get near the bunker door, the screamers drop back and their horns die out, one by one.

INTERIOR - BUNKER - DAY

The tight knot of men enters the bunker, and immediately they SLAM the door shut.

All the men relax with loud sighs of relief, and move clear of the new arrival, looking him over.

HENDRICKS

(angrily)

Why aren't you wearing a transponder!

NEW SOLDIER

Sir, I guess I don't know what one is.

HENDRICKS

(he can't believe it)

What!

Hendricks holds up his wrist and points to the BRACELET on it.

HENDRICKS

This is a transponder, otherwise known as a jammer, and it keeps those things outside from cutting you into little strips of bacon, and I want to know what the hell they're thinking of to send you down here without one!

The young soldier is shaken. Hendricks has vented his anger. He regains control of himself.

MAYBE
EXPLAIN
ITSELF
LATER

SEE P.

SEE P.

SEE P.

CLEARST

HENDRICKS

(his pulse is almost
down to normal)

All right! It wasn't your fault!
I'm sorry! How bad is your arm?

Before he can answer, the outer door bangs open and a soldier
come running down. ✓

S

SOLDIER

(out of breath)

Sir, the screamers are cutting up
the bodies.

HENDRICKS

Oh Jesus Christ.

(to new soldier:)

You stay here.

(to others:)

Get this man outfitted with a jammer
immediately.

Hendricks runs up the steps and outside.

DISSOLVE TO:

INTERIOR - HENDRICKS' OFFICE - DAY

Hendricks is seated at his desk. He looks grim and tired.
In front of him on the desktop are a couple dozen sets of
dog tags (military I.D. necklaces).

One by one, he is picking up the tags, comparing them with
a list, copying some information from the tags onto the
list, and dropping the tags into a big manila envelope.

A knock on the door.

HENDRICKS

Yeah, come in!

The door opens and in comes the young soldier, the new arrival.
His left hand and forearm are bandaged.

HENDRICKS

How's that arm?

NEW SOLDIER

Not bad, sir. Just a gash.

HENDRICKS

Good. Well, now we can talk. In case
you hadn't figured it out yet, I'm
Joe Hendricks and I'm the C.O. here.
Who are you?

NEW SOLDIER

Private First Class Dov Mendelsohn,
42nd Battalion of the 101st Regular
Infantry, 3rd Israeli Army, reporting
for duty sir.

From inside his tunic he plucks a thick envelope, and thrusts it into Hendricks' unprepared hand like a nurse slapping a scalpel into the palm of a surgeon. Then he salutes, smartly.

A little too smartly for Hendricks, who returns the salute like a man waving a fly out of his face. Then he pulls Mendelsohn's records out of the envelope and flips through them like junk mail. Some of them spill on the desk.

Dov is nonplused; doesn't the Colonel realize these are his records?

HENDRICKS

Why did you crash? Or do you know?

DOV

Sir, we started taking hard snake the second we hit the troposphere. From then on down to the surface they never stopped beaming us.

(tries to be professional,
but his chin trembles)

We lost six men on the way down, sir.

HENDRICKS

Just six?

DOV

The pilot was a hero, sir, he deserves a medal! Sir, it's a miracle we landed at all!

HENDRICKS

You can say that again.

DOV

(blurts)

Sir, those deaths were unnecessary! If we had powered craft instead of that glider we could have taken evasive action! We couldn't make a controlled landing, that's why she crashed, sir!

HENDRICKS

They always crash. Those things are no goddamn good.

DOV

Sir, they could be made safe. If they
(CONT'D)

DOV (CONT'D)
had engines, if they had onboard computers,
if they had proper shielding and arma--

HENDRICKS
(loses his temper)
If we had ham we could have and and eggs
if we had eggs! God damn it, what do you
think this is, 1950? To do what you're
talking about takes resources! You do not
build a space fleet out of 6 billion non-
biodegradable cigarette lighters! If you
want something done about the landers, go
get a hammer and nail and do it yourself!
Now shut the fuck up!

The outburst subdues both of them. Hendricks returns to his
dog-tag cataloging to avoid Dov's eyes.

DOV
(finally; & very carefully)
...Sir?... The other men in the lander...
in my outfit... Are they...?

Hendricks looks up at him. In spite of a youngish face, Hen-
dricks' red-rimmed eyes look about a thousand years old.

HENDRICKS
Mendelsohn, how old are you?

DOV
Sir? Fifteen.

Hendricks just looks at him. How can anyone be that young.

HENDRICKS
Do you have any idea what possessed them
to send the batch of you down here
without jammers?

DOV
Well, sir, I guess things are just a
little bit disorganized at the Sanctuary
right now. They trained us pretty hastily,
sir. There were a lot of things they omitted.
They told us we would get whatever we
needed down here.

HENDRICKS
They said that?! Well, Mendelsohn, as a
Jew you should appreciate this proverb:
Blessed are they who ask nothing, for
they shall receive it! Did they bother
to mention the screamers?

DOV
 (taken aback)
 Sir, everyone knows about those.

Hendricks reaches under his desk and pulls out something which he slams down in front of Dov, CLANK!

HENDRICKS
 This is your basic Type A screamer.

A grapefruit-sized sphere with complicated wheels. Two articulated, swivelling circular sawblades on either side like it's playing a pair of orchestral cymbals with razor edges.
 And a big set of pliers for a face.

HENDRICKS
 Don't worry, it's dead. All the guts yanked out, you should pardon the expression.

On top, some simple sensory apparatus and a big HORN. Dov gawks at it.

HENDRICKS
 The function should be pretty obvious. Identify, pursue swiftly over uneven terrain, grab hold and start sawing while making a noise like 200 dying pigs.

BAD
 NIGHT
 VISION

DOV
 What is a pig?

HENDRICKS
 Unimportant, you get the idea. First time you've seen one?

DOV
 Yes sir.

8-1-66

Hendricks twists it around and taps a small plate on the back. ✓
 An identifying label:

U.N. DEPT. OF DEFENSE
 AUTONOMOUS MOBILE SWORD

HENDRICKS
 "Autoswords" they wanted to call them. It never caught on. But you can call it a duck and they just go right ahead and
 (CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

kill you if you're not wearing a jammer.
 X [The jammer confuses their so-called "Victim Selector". Anybody without a jammer, it's open season and too bad Charlie. Got the picture? Mendelsohn, how well do you know the other men in your outfit?] ✓

DOV

The other men? Well, sir, we took our basic training together. A week at Camp Justice.

HENDRICKS

(can't believe it)

One week!!?

DOV

Yes, sir. There was not really time to get to know everybody. Our outfit had more than forty men in it.

HENDRICKS

Now it has one.

While this sinks in, Hendricks scrapes the remainder of the dog tags into the envelope.

INTERIOR - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY (NO WINDOWS)

Hendricks is standing before his assembled company, seventy-odd men.

HENDRICKS

Thanks to some 4-star loudmouths, most of you already know that the Reds want us to go over to their lines to talk turkey. They don't state the nature of the turkey, but our official turkey-shooters have their barrels aimed at a suspension of hostilities.

This gets a HUGE CHEER.

HENDRICKS

(waving them down)

Before you pinheads get carried away and start making big plans, like dying of old age or reading a long book, permit me to remind you that this whole thing is probably another trap. Let's don't

(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)
forget that "Christmas cease-fire" of
theirs.

Groans, bitter curses.

HENDRICKS
This time does feel different, though.
I'm not taking any bets, but the telegram
they sent is both more urgent and more
frank. Real broad hint that they're in
bad trouble. And they sacrificed a man
to get it into our hands.

VOICE FROM THE BACK
So what! If they missed a meal they'd
eat him!

HENDRICKS
Yeah, but Moscow is acting real funny
this time. And we've got to go through
with it anyway, because if this war keeps
on the Earth will be a smoking sack of
shit and all of us will be nothing but
memories in the mind of God, presuming
there is such a thing.

LEONE
Hey Skipper, that's terrific stuff and
I admire the heck out of you and I want
to end the war as much as the next guy.
But why is it us that has to go to them?
If this little tea party is so all-fired
fucking important to them, why don't
they come over here?

A SOLDIER
Yeah!

SOLDIER #2
Damn right!

SOLDIER #3
Best question I heard all day!

HENDRICKS
Oh, probably because it's a trick.

Silence. Everybody waiting for the other shoe to drop.

HENDRICKS
On the other hand, maybe the screamers
(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

have got them boxed in and they can't come out. Or maybe they just don't trust us. How the hell should I know, shithead? Besides, you want the Commies creeping around here looking at everything and putting time-bombs in the toilet? This is their party, we'll go drink their booze.

End of that discussion.

SCOTT

Who gets the privilege?

HENDRICKS

Well, they're asking for somebody at policy-making level.

SCOTT

1 Only one of those around here since Commander Powell died.

The whole room is looking to Hendricks.

HENDRICKS

Yeah, I guess I can use the exercise.

SCOTT

I'd like to come with you. This is a one-time opportunity to study a Russian bunker from the inside.

HENDRICKS

Scotty, if you were at policy-making level I'd take you in a second. If you or any of the rest of you Rhodes scholars spoke decent Russian, I'd take you. But you don't, so I'll take Leone, because he can shoot the eye out of a fly at half a mile, and is totally useless back here.

Dov holds up his hand.

HENDRICKS

Yes, Mendelsohn.

DOV

Sir, I speak Russian.

HENDRICKS

You do?

DOV

Yes sir. Fluently.

HENDRICKS

Aren't you a little green for a mission of this sort? And maybe a little shook up too, at the moment? I can't afford a man with shaky nerves.

DOV

No sir! My nerves are steady as steel! But the last thing I want to do right now is hang around down here, if you want to know the truth, sir.

HENDRICKS

All right, I'll buy that, and I can use my own interpreter. I don't trust the Commies as far as I can throw a goddam borscht. You're on. I'll take you.

LEONE

Me too, Skipper?

HENDRICKS

No, Trigger-happy. Just two people. There's a reason for that rule, if you have any of your memory left, pinhead.

(to Dov:)

Son, can you shoot?

DOV

I can try, sir.

INTERIOR - PASSAGEWAY LEADING OUT OF BUNKER - LATE AFTERNOON

Hendricks and Dov are putting the finishing touches on their outfits--full combat gear, 80 pounds of clothing and armament, all in shades of camouflage grey. Scott and a couple of others are helping them. Dov is strapping a jammer to his wrist.

SCOTT

That codes it to your biosignature permanently. From now on it won't work for anybody but you. That way the Commies can't use it if they capture it.

HENDRICKS

Reassuring thought, huh Mendelsohn? We'd better cracking. We've got a seven-hour walk in front of us.

DOV

Sir? For a meeting of this importance, shouldn't you arrive in a vehicle?

HENDRICKS

Of course I should arrive in a vehicle, if I had a vehicle to arrive in. Mendelsohn you fool, there's no fuel here, unless you want to cannibalize the refrigerator or the electric lights. Scotty, I'll be calling in every six hours, starting with a transmission test as soon as we get to the other side of the ridge. If I miss a transmission, don't come after us. Call General Thompson so he can start doing nothing about it. If you can't get through to him, well, it doesn't really matter. Just move into my office and carry on.

SCOTT

I'd still like to come along. To see if it's true they really have women.

HENDRICKS

I need you here. If they have women, I'll try to trade Mendelsohn for one.

SCOTT

You take care of yourself Nick, you hear?

HENDRICKS

Don't I always? You do the same. Where else am I gonna find an honest man?

[CONTINUED:]

Their friendship goes way back.

HENDRICKS

We better get moving if we want to
get there before dawn.

Hendricks & Dov stomp up the concrete steps leading to the
surface.

EXTERIOR - BUNKER - LATE AFTERNOON

Hendricks and Dov emerge and stand for a moment, contemplating
the depressing vista. The ground is bare and rubble-strewn,
with the ruins of buildings standing out here and there like
yellowing skulls.

HENDRICKS

Welcome to Fort Apache. Have you heard
that one yet?

DOV

Heard what one, sir?

HENDRICKS

Welcome to Fort Apache, where there's a
woman behind every tree.

[There are no trees.]

Hendricks lights a cigarette and offers one to Dov.

DOV

No thank you sir.

They move away from the bunker

They come to the top of the hill on which the Russian messenger
died. Hendricks pauses there and raises his field glasses.

The landscape is dead. Nothing stirs. We can see for miles,
endless ash and slag, ruins of buildings.

He lowers the binoculars and they start down the opposite side
of the slope.

EXTERIOR - DEVASTATED POST-NUCLEAR LANDSCAPE - LATE AFTERNOON

They stop at the bottom of the slope. The bunker is now
eclipsed from view on the other side of the ridge. Hendricks
gets out the transmitter.

HENDRICKS

(into transmitter)

This is Bona Fide calling Simon Pure.
Do you read me, Simon? Over.

SCOTT'S VOICE

I hate those silly names. Over.

HENDRICKS

Too bad. They're ones I can remember easily. I gather you can read me. Over.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Loud and clear, Bona Fide. Over.

HENDRICKS

My next transmission will be at midnight. Over and out.

He puts away the transmitter, and they push off.

The two humans walk in silence, bulky grey moon men in their camouflage suits, carrying rifles in nervous hands.

CAMERA ANGLE PEERING OVER SOME RUBBLE AT THEM -- a gleaming metal SCREAMER hulks huge in the close FOREGROUND. It seems to be spying on them through the rubble; it turns slowly, evidently following their movement.

We CUT BACK TO HENDRICKS & DOV WALKING, their faces--tense under their helmets--scanning the ground ahead and to either side...but not behind...

ANGLE ON THE SCREAMER -- as it MOVES OUT from hiding and rolls forward, coming up behind Hendricks and Dov...

BACK AGAIN TO THE TWO MEN, who hear nothing until... a sudden FLURRY of activity behind them, followed by a loud SQUEAL.

They SPIN, rifles searching.
The screamer takes off lickety-split.
Carrying something small and furry.

HENDRICKS

(relaxing)

A rat.

They watch it go.

DOV

Rat, sir?

HENDRICKS

They get rats too.

They resume walking.

HENDRICKS

I never saw that type before.

DOV

Are there all that many different types, sir?

HENDRICKS

Oh hell yes. They were built to learn, so they could keep a step ahead of the enemy. So right away they started working the bugs out of their own design, and improving themselves, and they got bigger and faster. Smarter, too. Then we started seeing new types appearing.

DOV

Like what types, sir?

HENDRICKS

Oh, let's see. There was your basic runner, and then they came out with a jumper, and a wall climber, and one which burrowed down into the dirt and waited for some poor Russian to come schlepping along. The blade types got more varied, too. There's your circular saw and your wire saw and your snipper and your daisy wheel. Now they're getting really fancy. For instance there's a new type that just came out, with folding chainsaws that shoot out like a frog's tongue. That one in my opinion is overdesigned.

Dov is deeply disturbed. This has been troubling him since his arrival.

DOV

Sir, they told us none of this at the Sanctuary! We knew that the screamers could kill if necessary to defend U.N. personnel. But their function was to demoralize the enemy, and the blades were mostly for show, for credibility. They were only supposed to kill one time out of a hundred, so you would never know when your number was coming up, that was the way we understood it, sir. The rest of the time they just sabotaged your equipment and cut your power lines. They were not supposed to be used for combat, sir, they were only supposed to be nuisance devices. Psychological weapons.

HENDRICKS

That's a bunch of crap. Oh, they're psychological, no doubt about that. That noise they make was designed to scare the maximum shit out of you.

But listen to me my young friend, the thing that gives them their credibility is not the noise they make but the way they kill. Nothing equals them. Oh sure, you've got your tanks and beams and H-bombs, but on a face-to-face basis the screamers are it. You have no idea how fast they can move. Like a hummingbird made out of razor blades. Let one of those things get inside a bunker full of Russians, and flash! Instant Commie Salad. Sixty seconds later it's rubber bag time. You do stand a slight chance if you catch them in time; they make that godawful noise, so if you hear them coming at you from enough of a distance you can pick them off, if you're a dead shot. But if they sneak up on you, forget it. Before your cigarette hits the floor, you're hamburger.

Dov's face is now the color of this sheet of paper. He stares at the jammer on his wrist.

DOV

Sir, how well do these things work?

HENDRICKS

They work perfectly. They broadcast a coded signal that tells the screamers you're not alive. The screamers only attack living things. And we service our own personal jammers, so we lose very few men to jammer failure. No, it's not us that has to worry, Mendelsohn. It's the Russians. And the civilians, those that are left, and the animals. Vegetables they don't bother with.

Around them as they walk, the world is a slag heap with dark

[CONTINUED:]

weeds growing from the ashes and bones.

DOV

But they are winning the war for us,
right sir?

HENDRICKS

They may have already won it. Look,
hadn't you better smoke?

DOV

What for, sir?

HENDRICKS

(such ignorance
is unbelievable)

There's a lot they don't tell you up
there, isn't there? For the radiation,
pinhead!

DOV

Oh, the radiation. They said we would not
have to worry about that, sir, there was
a drug you could take.

HENDRICKS

(holds out cigarette)

Yes. This!

The light begins to dawn.

Dov takes the red cigarette and accepts a light from Hendricks.
Coughing, he spews out a cloud of smoke.

HENDRICKS

(as they resume walking)

But you have to keep it in your system
at all times; so puff up and stay that
way.

He waves at some dense bushes that grow profusely by the side
of the road.

HENDRICKS

The goddam stuff grows wild everywhere.
It seems to thrive on the radiation.

They walk along puffing, eyes reddening.

HENDRICKS

Learn to like it. On planet Earth you
smoke for your health.

Bloody SUNSET smears itself across the shattered landscape.
Nearby the ruins of a town rise up, a few walls and heaps

of debris.
Hendricks and Dov trudge on, their strides eating up the kilometers.

Dov's anxious eyes watch scabrous grey possums with naked pink tails chase iguana across the rocks.
To him this world is a bizarre dream.

DOV

(emboldened by the
unreality)

Sir, may I presume to ask you a personal question, sir? Please say no if I am out of line, sir.

HENDRICKS

Fire away.

DOV

Well, back at the bunker, sir, when Captain Scott called you "Nick"?

HENDRICKS

Oh, that.

DOV

Nobody else calls you Nick, sir. Your real name is Joseph, sir.

HENDRICKS

That goes way back. Scotty and me have known each other since school--Jeez, school! Anyway, Scotty, he's, well I guess you could call him my best friend. He's the most sincere person I ever met. He never lies. Since the day I laid eyes on him he has not misrepresented himself once. He's the man Diogenes was looking for.

DOV

Diogenes?

HENDRICKS

Forget it. Anyway, Scotty thinks I have a mistrustful nature, which I do, which is why I like him, because I know I can trust him. So anyway, there used to be a unit of currency called a "nickel" and once upon a time people made counterfeit ones out of lead. So, if you were suspicious, you bit

(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

the nickel to see if you left teeth marks.
So Scotty took to calling me "Nickel-Biter",
and then shortened it to "Nick". See?
Nick for Nickel-Biter. Cautious. I am
cautious.

Dov is amused.

DOV

Did you bite nickels, sir?

HENDRICKS

Naw. I never saw a lead nickel. It was
just an expression.

It is "magic hour" and the sun is in their eyes.
So when SOMEONE ABRUPTLY STANDS UP in the ruins,
Hendricks & Dov do NOT SEE the figure immediately.

Then Dov SEES it.
A SILHOUETTE against the sun.
He FREEZES.
Rifle in his hands.
Jaw open a mile.

Hendricks turns.
Sees Dov frozen with his rifle pointed at the FIGURE.
DROPS like a stone, behind cover (weeds),
at the same time yanking Dov down by his coattail.

HENDRICKS

Get down you fool!
(to FIGURE:)

You! Come out!

From the shell of the ruined building the FIGURE advances.
Walking hesitantly toward them.

HENDRICKS

(blinded by the sun)

Stop!

The figure stops.
Hendricks shades his eyes.
It is a BOY.

They lower their guns and rise.
The BOY stands silently.
Looking at them.
He is small, skeletal.
Not very old -- possibly seven.
But it is hard to tell under all the rags and filth.
His hair is long and matted.

His eyes are large but without expression...what we can see
of them in the gloam of the dying sun.
He seems an indistinct shadow.
He holds SOMETHING in his arms.

HENDRICKS

(sharply)

What's that you've got there?

The boy holds out the object.
It is a toy bear.
A ravaged teddy bear.

HENDRICKS

I don't want it. Keep it.

The boy hugs the bear again.

HENDRICKS

Where do you live?

BOY

In there.

HENDRICKS

The town?

"Town". A few walls and heaps of debris.

BOY

Yes.

HENDRICKS

How many of you are there?

BOY

How many?

HENDRICKS

How many people? How big's your
settlement?

The boy does not answer.

DOV

(moved)

You're not all by yourself, are you?

BOY

Yes.

DOV

How do you stay alive?

BOY

I eat food.

DOV
What kind of food?

BOY
Different.

DOV
How old are you?

BOY
Fourteen.

It doesn't seem possible. The wretch is tiny, emaciated. His arms and legs are like pipe cleaners with big knobby joints.

Dov's heart dissolves into a throbbing pool of pity.

Hendricks peers into the boy's face.

Big eyes in the densening twilight.

Big and dark.

Hendricks strikes his cigarette lighter and waves it in front of the boy's face.

No expression in the flickering flame.

HENDRICKS
Are you blind?

BOY
No. I can see some.

HENDRICKS
How do you get away from the screamers?

BOY
Screamers?

HENDRICKS
The machines that kill.

BOY
I hide. Can I come with you?

Hendricks snaps off the lighter. Rises and turns away. Looks down the road to memorize the terrain before total darkness hits.

DOV
(waiting for Hendricks'
decision)
What about it, sir? Can we take him
along?

HENDRICKS
Are you kidding?

Dov's shocked stare annoys Hendricks. He doesn't appreciate the unseasoned youth trying to be a conscience for him. He pulls out his own food rations.

HENDRICKS

Here. This is food. Take it and go.
Okay?

He tosses them down in front of the boy.
The boy does nothing.

HENDRICKS

We'll be coming back this way in a couple of days. If you're still here when we get back, you can come with us then.
All right?

BOY

I want to come with you now.

HENDRICKS

It's too hard a walk.

BOY

I can walk.

DOV

Sir, why can't we take him along?

HENDRICKS

To the conference with the Russians?

DOV

Why not, sir?

HENDRICKS

Because he'd slow us down and because more than two people automatically draws screamers. And then what would we do with him? Raise him? Think, pinhead!

DOV

Sir, we can't leave him here.

HENDRICKS

Mendelsohn, you can't save them all.

DOV

(idealism flaming)
We can save one! Sir!

Hendricks shrugs wearily. Gestures to the boy.

HENDRICKS
All right. Let's get going.

EXTERIOR - VALLEY - NIGHT

Walking.
Hendricks, Dov, the boy.
Following the remains of a road.
Around them is what once were orchards, acres of fruit trees
and grapes. Nothing remains now but a nightmare of broken
stumps.

DOV
What's your name?

BOY
David Edward Derring.

DOV
David? What happened to your mother
and father?

DAVID
They died.

DOV
How?

DAVID
In the blast.

DOV
How long ago?

DAVID
Six years.

HENDRICKS
(slowing down)
You've been alone for six years?

DAVID
No. There were other people for a
while.

DOV
What happened to them?

DAVID
They died.

HENDRICKS
And you've been alone ever since?

DAVID
Yes.

DOV
Are we walking too fast?

DAVID
No. Where are we going?

DOV
To the Russian lines.

DAVID
Russian?

HENDRICKS
The enemy. The people who started
the war. They began all this.

David's face shows no expression.

DOV
I'm from Israel. He's American.
We're on the same side, against
the Russians.

No comment from David. He continues to trail a little off to
one side, hugging his dirty teddy bear against his chest.

Hendricks checks his watch.

HENDRICKS
I have to contact Scott soon. We'll
make camp up ahead.

EXTERIOR - CAMPSITE - NIGHT

They have built a fire in a hollow between some slabs of con-
crete, using weeds for fuel.

The three of them are sitting around the fire, the orange light
guttering on their faces like a dream, turning them into flame
ghosts.

DOV
Who invented the screamers, sir?

HENDRICKS
A lady called Necessity. We were losing
the war. Hell, we tried all kinds of
stuff. Bacterial warfare. Sonic weapons.
We even tried mutating animals into wea-
pons. Nobody had any idea the screamers
were going to turn out to be such a whop-
(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

ping success. It was one of those screw-ball ideas nobody expected to work.

DOV

Why are they so successful, sir?

HENDRICKS

It's not just that they kill and they're scary. You should have seen the land sharks. No, I think what makes the difference with the screamers is the fact that they require no human supervision. They're turned out automatically in underground factories, a long way down. Some of those factories are behind Soviet lines now.

DOV

Who runs the factories?

HENDRICKS

That's what I'm telling you. Nobody runs them. They're automatic. They build themselves. They scrounge their own raw materials.

(pause)

Nobody would dare to go down there.

Hendricks fishes the ration packets out of the fire

David examines the food and passes it back.

DOV

Don't you want any?

David shakes his head "no".

DOV

Why not?

David says nothing.

DOV

You have to eat.

No response from David.

DOV

What's wrong? David?

The boy squats motionless in the shadows, his knees knobby and pale.

Dov looks to Hendricks for help.

DOV
Sir, what's wrong with him?

HENDRICKS
Maybe he's a mutant and he's used to special food.

DOV
What kind of special food?

Hendricks shrugs.

DOV
David? Do you need special food?

Still no response.

DOV
David? What's wrong? David!

HENDRICKS
Let him alone.

DOV
But what's wrong with him?

HENDRICKS
It doesn't matter. When he's hungry he'll find something to eat.

Dov stares at him for a moment; then he leans over and shakes David by the arm.

DOV
David! Can you hear me? David!

Hendricks grabs Dov and spins him around.

HENDRICKS
(angrily)
Life is not the same any more. It will never be the same again. The human race is going to have to realize that.

They settle into silence, each with his own thoughts. Hendricks picks up something bright from the ground, and sits toying with it.

Suddenly Hendricks lets out a loud YELL and jumps to his feet, flinging the object away.

Dov and David are on their feet too. David grabs for his teddy bear.

DOV

What is it?

HENDRICKS

A bug! It looked like a fucking cigarette lighter!

Hendricks gets control of himself and sits back down.

HENDRICKS

(a fine frost of sweat on his brow)

It was some kind of insect, camouflaged as one of those plastic throwaway cigarette lighters.

DOV

Jesus, sir, you really had me going there.

HENDRICKS

I hate things that aren't what they seem to be. TO BE WHAT THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE.

A film of sweat on Hendricks' face; his hands tremble. He checks his watch.

HENDRICKS

Midnight.

He gets out the transmitter.

HENDRICKS

This is Bona Fide calling Simon Pure. Do you read me, Simon? Come in. Over.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Reading you loud and clear, Fido. How are you. Over.

HENDRICKS

Just fine. We're camped out in zone B-Baker Red, about an hour's walk from the Russian bunker. We'll wait here until oh three hundred and then move out. Anything worth reporting on your end? Over.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Leone got drunk and broke his arm. Over.

HENDRICKS

Give him a purple heart. My next transmission will be at oh six hundred. Over and out.

Overhead, the stars are bright in the black sky. Dov is lounging back with a cigarette in his mouth and his hands clasped behind his head, looking up at the Milky Way. There is a gleaming band in the sky, something we've never seen before: a thin silvery strip spanning the dome of the heavens from one horizon to the other.

DOV

(pensively)

Do you remember the Moon?

Hendricks says nothing; he's withdrawn into himself, in a bad mood about the bug that tricked him.

5440

DOV

Do you remember how it had a face, and when it was full, you could see it looking off just slightly to one side and upwards, like it was looking past the Earth and off into the distance? It had an expression, the Moon did, kind of thoughtful and a little bit sad. Wistful.

DAVID

What's the moon?

DOV

The Moon was a big light in the sky. It only came out at night. It reflected the light from the sun. That little strip of light up there is all that's left of it.

HENDRICKS

Every month it made all the fruitcakes and the psychos act up.

DOV

But it was pretty.

HENDRICKS

We've got three hours. Get some sleep.

They stretch out on the rocky ground, tossing and turning...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN

A hand is shaking Dov awake.

DOV

(sits up abruptly)

Huh? What?

Hendricks is standing in front of him.

HENDRICKS
(taps his watch)
Time to move out.

Dov rubs his grainy eyes and comes to his feet. The fire is dead. David stands silently in the still darkness, holding his bear.

[CONTINUED:]

Hendricks crouches by two maps spread out on the ground. One of them is the metallic letter from the Russians.

HENDRICKS

Somewhere up ahead is the first bunker of the Russian lines, their forward command. We have to rely on their map for the final approach to the bunker. Our map agrees with theirs as far as it goes, but right here is where ours ends. So we have to trust them.

He rolls up the U.N. map and puts it away. He keeps the Russian one to guide them.

HENDRICKS

Somewhere up ahead there's supposed to be a pass through the rocks.

He takes out his night binoculars. They see in the infrared, lifting the cloak of darkness but painting the world red. He scans the landscape ahead. Nothing but slag and ash, a few hills, charred trees.

HENDRICKS

They should be expecting us. But they're tricky. There. I see it. A hole in the hill. Let's go.

They start walking.

EXTERIOR - RUINS OF TOWN - PRE-SUNRISE

It is that moment of brightening sky just before the sun peaks up over the horizon.

They walk down a pot holed gully that once was a street, between skeletons of buildings, covered with the eternal dark weeds. Water splashes in puddles in the middle of the street. Rats and iguana scamper. The sky is just turning grey and the whole scene looks like Berlin after the second war.

DAVID

Will we be there soon?

HENDRICKS

Yes. Why?

The end of the street is clogged with destroyed military vehicles, and has been blocked with a barricade of dirt, about ten feet high. Hendricks drops to his belly and squirms up to the crest of the low ridge, where he peers over the top.

On the other side is a wasteland of chewed-up hills and ridges. Hendricks lifts his field glasses.

HENDRICKS

They should be expecting somebody in U.N. uniform...in response to their note. Unless the whole thing is a trap.

Silent and tense, Dov and David wait below Hendricks.

[CONTINUED:]

HENDRICKS
(sweating)

Damn.

He lowers the field glasses, pulls out the map and studies it.

He puts the map away, and takes out a telescoping rod, which he opens out to a length of three feet. He ties a white flag to it, and climbs to his feet, feeling like a target.

HENDRICKS

Let's go.

Dov and David come up behind him; together they pick their way through the loops of barbed wire--Dov helping the unprotected waif--and walk down the far side of the dirt barricade. ✓

Up ahead, a TALL FIGURE appears on a ridge, cloak flapping. Grey-green.

SOVIET.

Hendricks' head snaps toward him.

HENDRICKS

There!

He holds the white flag toward the SOVIET. Behind whom a SECOND SOLDIER appears -- another Soviet. Hendricks waves his free arm over his head like a signalman.

A third figure joins them. ✓

A WOMAN.

Words are exchanged, and they RAISE THEIR RIFLES...aiming!

Hendricks freezes.

HENDRICKS

Stop! We're--

The two SOVIETS FIRE.

The high-impact bullets SLAM INTO DAVID!!!
Knock him back like a wet washrag.

DOV

Oh my God.

Hendricks turns in time to see David hit the ground. Teddy bear flying. He whirls back and raises his own rifle, but in the time it took him to turn away and back again, the Soviets have started to dive for cover.

His rifle-launched antipersonnel rockets slam into the ridge, throwing up huge fireballs and hurling gravel in all directions, but hitting no one.

ILL -
COVERED

HENDRICKS

(screams)

You filth! You murdering scum!

There is no reply from the ridge, where the drifting smoke obscures any possible target.

HENDRICKS

Commies! Commies! Why did you do it?
Why?

DOV

Colonel, sir. Colonel Hendricks.

The urgency and horror in Mendelsohn's voice make him turn instantly, to see the Israeli hovering over the body of DAVID.

Hendricks scrambles over to the pathetic little corpse. What he sees is freaky even for a combat veteran, and devastating to Hendricks.

What he sees is an immense entry wound in David's chest, big enough to throw a cat through, and from this cavity sprays a fountain of...blood?

But this "blood" comes in colors, aquamarine blue and canary yellow, in two big jets, and it smells like burning automobile tires.

From the remains of David rolls a little candystriped wheel. Fluidic relays, printed logic boards. Bundles of multicolored wires like twisty licorice. A section of charred plastic falls in.

David is a MACHINE.

For Hendricks this is a thunderclap.

His mind whirls and his heart hammers.

This is ten thousand times worse than a beetle mimicking a Bic lighter.

Hendricks cannot tolerate imposture of any kind, and now he is confronted with the ultimate counterfeit.

He slams into shock and stands paralyzed, gaping stupidly down at the intolerable thing at his feet.

Dov, whose horror is in the normal range, reaches out with the barrel of his rifle and tentatively scatters the intricate pieces of broken machinery.

He lifts David's hand.

When he does so, 4 GLEAMING BLADES flip out of the fingers like switchblade knives. SNAP!

A death spasm.

Both men leap back but Hendricks -- already at the snapping point -- SCREAMS, whips up his rifle, and yanks back on the trigger hard enough to pulverize it.

Anticlimax. Nothing happens. Instead of firing, the gun BEEPS insultingly. Wild-eyed, he glares down at it. A little redline display scolds him: RELOAD ROCKETS.

There he stands, dazed and panting, the variable-ammo rifle quivering in his clawed hands. Sweat pours from his face. Dov stares at him in astonishment. Genuinely surprised to see his seasoned, tough-talking commander snap like a bent pencil.

Meanwhile the TWO SOVIET SOLDIERS and the WOMAN have approached. Dov and Hendricks turn and stare at them.

SOVIET #1 points to the body of David.

SOVIET #1
Look! See! Hurry up, Unies! There is very little time to spare and none to waste!

They look.

This is first time time we have actually seen David under direct lighting conditions, for reasons made obvious by the rising sun. In the cold light of dawn David is not such a good imitation. You can see the seams running down the arms and legs. The skin color is off. The eyes are not very life-like. He needed the darkness of night and shadow to conceal his imperfections.

SOVIET #1
Yes! A machine! Look well, Unies! Look until your eyes are filled! See and remember!

He raises a small camera and starts snapping picture of the rubber-skinned robot.

SOVIET #2
(who is younger & less harsh)
We watched it tagging you.

DOV
Tagging us?

SOVIET #2
That is what they do. They tag along with you. Into the bunker. That is how they get in.

HENDRICKS
The Forward Command. I came to negotiate with the Soviet Forward Command.

SOVIET #1

There is no more forward command. We
are all that is left. The three of us.
The rest were all down in the bunker.

A silence like granite. No birds, nothing.

SOVIET #1

You have seen! Remember well, Freebies!
Do not forget! Now come!

FORGET
OKAY? ✓

He turns on his heel and strides away through the crunching
debris.

The other Soviet and the woman start after him.

WOMAN

(beckons)

Yes. Come.

Overwhelmed and stampeded, Hendricks and Dov scramble off
after them.

Soviet #1 leads them to a round rusted plate in the ground.
ALBUQUERQUE WATER AUTHORITY. A manhole cover. He hauls it open -
thick, heavy, immense strain.
Immediately the WOMAN climbs down into the dark hole, followed
quickly by SOVIET #2. They vanish from view.

SOVIET #1

Get in!

Hendricks and Dov hang back reluctantly.

SOVIET #1

Quickly, or not at all!

Hendricks, acutely jumpy and suspicious, vacillates like a
tuning fork, then makes his decision and lurches down into
the hole, his eyes snapping with distrust; followed by an
unhappy Dov.

Last one in is Soviet #1, lowering the massive steel lid
down after himself.

It slams shut with a solid clank.

INTERIOR - UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - DAWN (BUT NO SUNLIGHT)

Darkness and dripping water and a rusted steel ladder
and five ill-assorted people climbing down into a cavity
beneath the earth.

This was once the dead end of a sewer tunnel.

An old cave-in has sealed it off: a choked mass of broken
concrete and twisted rubble fills the passage from ceiling
to floor.

The tunnel is now completely obstructed and impassible.

X

NOTICE
IN SEASIDE IT
OFF.
IN NOW
FIELD.

The result: a little concrete chamber, totally enclosed and secure -- more or less.
The only way in or out: up the ladder and through the manhole cover.

This dank cell may not appear too habitable, but it is clearly the abode of someone. It has been fixed up into a depressing sort of living quarters, a subterranean "apartment" with furnishings.

A kerosene lantern guttering on a table - no electricity.

A wooden table and stool.

A pile of dirty dishes.

A ten-gallon drum collecting dripping water, and an assortment of tin cans and bottles.

A ragged curtain...and peeking out from behind it, a grey cot and some shapeless clothes hanging on a hook.

Singularly dismal.

The woman; the two Soviet soldiers; and the two U.N. representatives come down the ladder and distribute themselves around the room in an uneasy circle, eyeing each other. They cling to their rifles.

Hendricks ^{FACES THEM} stands very still. Only his eyes move, flickering around the room, firing glances into the shadows like darts from a blowgun. ✓

HENDRICKS

What do you mean, no more Forward Command?

SOVIET #1

(angrily)

You do not know?

Hendricks knows; but he hates to say it. That makes it real.

HENDRICKS

That thing up there.

(hopes to God he's wrong)

Was that a screamer?

SOVIET #1

"Screamer"?

HENDRICKS

The machines that kill you. The knives that chase you.

SOVIET #2

Sekach.

HENDRICKS

(snaps)

What?

SOVIET #2
Sekach. We call them "Sekach".

HENDRICKS
 What does that mean?

SOVIET #2
 It means...
 (gropes)

DOV
 A Russian word, sir. It means "Meat-grinder".

SOVIET #1
 (the tough one, older)
 They started out small, like little mice. Then they got bigger and faster, and they started hiding, so they take you by surprise and jump. Bad, yes. But everything is bad, and still we are winning the war, and the Freebies they are finished, they have nothing left but their eyes to weep with. Then, yesterday--

(stabs his rifle barrel
 up toward the ceiling)
 --them.

SOVIET #2
 The Davids.

HENDRICKS
 "Davids"?

SOVIET #2
 The first one followed a patrol back to the bunker. They felt compassion and brought it in with them. It let the rest of them in.

The Soviets cannot fail to see the awestruck looks on the faces of both U.N. soldiers; and especially Hendricks' queasy shudder.

HENDRICKS
 (sick at the pit of
 his stomach)
 Are you sure they're ours?

Soviet #1 tosses something to Hendricks. Who snatches it out of the air. A small metal plate with screwholes in it; it was originally attached to something. The corners have been bent back to pry it off.

FASTENED

✓

Printed on the plate is:

U.N. DEPT. OF DEFENSE
AUTONOMOUS MOBILE SWORD
REVISED

Printed directly beneath that is that little emblem we've come to recognize in the supermarket, that unintelligible little cluster of black stripes that the computer reads:



...the "Universal Products Code".

Hendricks stares and stares and stares.

HENDRICKS
"Revised"? "Revised"?

SOVIET #1
Our comrades managed to break one of them. Before they were killed. That was affixed to it. Under the clothes.

Hendricks points to the identity badge. To the combtooth pattern. /4

HENDRICKS
What does that say?

SOVIET #1
Say? It is a symbol.

HENDRICKS
It's international computer language. It's a code. It says something. A computer could read that.

SOVIET #1
(harshly)
We did not remain in the bunker to deliberate such questions.

DOV
How many survived?

SOVIET #1
No one survived.

Hendricks looks at him.

HENDRICKS

You survived.

SOVIET #1

We were elsewhere.

SOVIET #2

We knew nothing until we returned. Then, we knew everything. It was such a very abnormal sight. It must have happened very swiftly. That is the only mercy. Those terrible children.

VERY

SOVIET #1

Children! Capral, they are machines! Mashiny unichtozhenija! Built by United Nations materiel beneath Soviet feet and behind Soviet lines!

MATERIEL

HENDRICKS

They weren't behind your lines until those became your lines.

SOVIET #1

It is an atrocity, a crime of war. The United Nations will be held to account when the war trials are held.

HENDRICKS

Oh, give me a break! Coming from a Commie that's rich! The people who airdropped half a million rabid bats on Japan. War trials! Better wait and see who's holding them first, pinhead! And while you're waiting, go take a flying leap up your own asshole, you loudmouthed hypocrite!

CAPITAL
* IN HEAD

The eyes of Soviet #1 glitter out from beneath his bucket helmet like two little thumbtacks. His mouth has clamped into such a thin line it's practically vanished. He is no one to tamper with. He takes insults badly.

But Hendricks is a nuclear pile. He practices stare-down matches with cats, and so far this has not been a good morning. He's over-reflexed, he's wired and ready to go.

With guns in your hands this is taut stuff. Both Dov and the junior Soviet are freaking out -- almost ready to jump their own senior officers before the room explodes into a furnace of state-of-the-art gunfire.

ALMOST
READY

Only the woman, lounging back on a heap of rags, appears unbothered by all this. She watches it all with sardonic amusement, like it doesn't affect her. Like she's seen it all before. A cool cookie.

WOMAN

Hey, Yank!

HENDRICKS

(eyes on the Soviet)

Are you talking to me, lady?

WOMAN

Yes, to you. Do Americans really have tobacco?

The irrelevancy of this is so distracting that he actually breaks eye contact with the Soviet to look at her.

HENDRICKS

What?

WOMAN

I have heard that Americans have tobacco. Is this true?

HENDRICKS

Tobacco? Yes. It's true. Americans have tobacco. What about it?

WOMAN

Give me a tobacco cigarette.

Blankly, he takes his finger off the trigger to fish in his pocket for a cigarette. ^{THEY IS} ^{WING SPIN}
The crisis has broken, and though considerable irritability, everyone starts breathing, and scuff around clearing their throats and shaking out the kinks. ASAP
SOUTH

He gives her a white, machine-rolled cigarette, and lights it for her. She relishes it, blowing a big cloud of smoke up at the ceiling. ✓

Dov is doing a little dance.

DOV

Sir! Sir!

(hopping up & down & pointing at his watch)

The time! The time! ✓

Time.

Ohmygod.

Up snaps Hendricks' wrist.

OF
LESSENING TENSION:
RELAXATION
THE SOUNDS

HENDRICKS

It's oh six thirty! I'm late!

Cigarettes and are forgotten as he dumps
his pack and starts tearing at it.
He's certainly got everyone's attention.

HENDRICKS

I have to radio my bunker!

SOVIET #1

(crackling with suspicion)

Why?

HENDRICKS

It's a regular check-in to let them know
we're all right, and I'm late!

He sets up the transmitter at the speed of light.

SOVIET #1

What will they do?

HENDRICKS

They'll alert the general, if they can
get through. Beyond that I don't know.
This is Bona Fide calling Simon Pure.
Do you read me, Simon? Over.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ✓
REACH HIM. ✓
- BUT THEY CAN'T
AFFORD THE RISK
TO KEEP IT ON.
TWO LONG /
INDIFFERENTLY

The crackle and rush of HARD STATIC.

SOVIET #2

Down here you will get nothing.

Hendricks stares around the stony tomb. Maybe a better spot.

SOVIET #2

Nothing penetrates. You must go outside.

HENDRICKS

Why should I believe that?

SOVIET #1

It is the truth. It has been attempted
many times.

No time to test their honesty. He peers up at the ceiling.

HENDRICKS

(trying to look through
through 30 feet of stone)

How safe is it up there?

SOVIET #1

What do you think?

HENDRICKS
 (folding the transmitter)
 Mendelsohn, come pull me down if some-
 thing horrible happens.

Hendricks stuffs the transmitter under his arm, picks up his rifle, and heads for the ladder well.

At the foot of the ladder he takes a vital second to look down at his gun -- set for "RELOAD ROCKETS" in glaring red -- and twists the selector switch to something with a full clip, an apple-green ".22 MAGNUM LONG".
 Then he hauls ass up the ladder, with Mendelsohn at his heels, taking flakes of rust in the face.

EXTERIOR - ABOVE TASSO'S BURROW - MORNING

The lid scrapes aside and a tense Hendricks sticks his head and gun up into the early morning light.

Nothing threatening. Nothing at all. Just grey ash and mountains of weed-choked bricks.

He shoves the transmitter out, flips it open, and turns it on.

HENDRICKS
 This is Bona Fide calling Simon Pure!
 Do you read me, Simon? Come in. Over!

The static is still awful.
 But SCOTT'S VOICE comes through, distant and interrupted, floating in and out like a cork on the tide.

SCOTT'S VOICE
 (through STATIC)
 ...Read you, Bona Fide. This is Simon...
 where the fuck...Over.

HENDRICKS
 Scotty, both me and Mendelsohn got delayed
 (CONT'D)

22
 LONG
 MAGNUM

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)
but we're both okay. Did you call the
general? Over.

SCOTT'S VOICE
...You, Nick?...here like a fucking...
thought you...Over.

HENDRICKS
(frustrated)
Scotty, try to hear me. The situation
has totally changed. The Russian bunker
has been eliminated. There's a new kind
of screamer that's wiped out the whole
Russian bunker except for three people.
Did you read that? Over.

SCOTT'S VOICE
...Bad, yes...hear me on that end?...
the interference is...
(fades)

HENDRICKS
Scotty! The screamers have a new variety
which mimics human beings! It looks like a
little boy! It talks! They've killed the
entire Soviet Forward Command! You must alert
General Thompson! Do you hear me! Over!

SCOTT'S VOICE
...Nick...

A rushing sound like the sea wind blows Scott's voice away.

HENDRICKS
(slams his fist
on the ground)
God! Damn!

That's it.
He folds the transmitter and back down into the steamy man-
hole, dragging the plate shut behind him.

INTERIOR - TASSO'S BURROW - MORNING (NO SUNLIGHT)

Dov backs down out of Hendricks' way. The two Soviets and
the woman wait for his report.

SOVIET #1
Well?

HENDRICKS
I don't even know if they heard me.
The static was horrible. Blew them away
before they could confirm.

TRV
TEDDY
BEAR
HERE?

SOVIET #2

The radiation is particularly bad here.

Hendricks consults a cluster of instrumentation on his wrist like a big complicated watch. ✓

HENDRICKS

Yeah, no kidding. Mendelsohn, light up.

Both of them fire up the red-paper cigarettes. This sets off a round of cigarette-lighting, until everyone is fuming away. The Soviets have their own anti-radiation cigarettes, which they share with the woman.

HENDRICKS

(looking at his radiation meter)

Jesus, G-for-Gregory - this place is a fucking furnace!

They puff away like crazy. Soon the room is so hazy you could cut it with a knife, and they all seem considerably more relaxed, except for the woman, who couldn't have been much more relaxed in the first place. The tension falls away from their bodies and they shuffle around, blinking at each other with red, streaming eyes.

Hendricks looks around.

HENDRICKS

(gazing at the gloomy dungeon)

What is this place?

WOMAN

This is my home. I live here.

HENDRICKS

Like a mouse in a hole. Who are you?

WOMAN

I am Tasso.

HENDRICKS

Tasso? Just Tasso?

WOMAN

Tasso Delacluse. You want coffee?

(slight French accent)

Who are you?

SOVIET #1

Yes, perhaps you had better identify yourselves now.

I THINK YOU
HAD BETTER

HENDRICKS
 (jerks a thumb at himself)
 Lieutenant Colonel Joseph T. Hendricks,
 Commanding Officer, U.N. Forward Command
 West. And this...is my aide, Lieutenant
 Mendelsohn.

Dov looks at him in considerable startlement.

HENDRICKS
 A man in my position needs a man in your
 position, Lieutenant. Hang in there.

Dov stands much straighter and looks hard at the Soviets.
 Hendricks nods at Soviet #1. His turn.
 #1 snaps to attention thuds together the heels of his en-
 crusted boots.

SOVIET #1
Komandir I am Serzhant Aleksei
 Cherviakov, attached to the 5th Soviet
 Army, New Mexico Forward Command. Native-
 ly of the Ukraine. I am a Russian.
 (and proud of it)

HENDRICKS
 (amused)
 At ease, Sergeant.

Soviet #2 lets go of his rifle, to wipe his hand off on his
 pants.

SOVIET #2
 Rudi Maxer. Polish. Impressed into
 the Soviet Army six months ago.

Rudi (#2) extends his hand.

ALEKSEI (#1)
 (reminds him)
Capral Maxer.

RUDI
 Yes, a mere corporal.
 (shakes hands with
 the U.N. people)
 You are all my boss.

DOV
 This gear is awfully heavy.

RUDI
Tak. Heavy.

As if by agreement, they all let their heavy packs slide to the floor, then take off their helmets and run their hands through their sweaty hair.

Quite a relief.

Rifles finally leave hands for positions leaning against things, within reach.

Hendricks and Aleksei eye each other suspiciously during this stripping of excess gear.

There is now a general scratching of itchy sweaty body parts. With the armor off, we can have a gander at the two individual "enemies" beneath:

#1 -- Aleksei -- is older, with dark thinning hair and B-B's for eyes. A tough cookie. The woman is a cool cookie and he's a tough cookie.

#2 -- Rudi -- is young, with long blonde hair. A smooth, round face and a cornsilk beard. An open manner. He's an apple strudel.

[& Dov is an animal cracker & Hendricks a piece of hardtack.]

DOV

I'm hungry.

Tasso, who all this time has not stirred from her laidback position on the rags, rises catlike and swaggers over to a makeshift stove. She starts a fire (dry weeds) under a can of water, igniting it with one of the ubiquitous disposable lighters.

HENDRICKS

Real coffee?
(hopefully)

TASSO

No.

He's not interested.

He and Dov start rooting in their packs for rations.

Breakfast.

The Soviets eye them suspiciously then with covert envy when they see the UN-issue ration packages emerge.

They have no rations of their own.

HENDRICKS

(eating)

How did you people survive, anyway?
Are the Davids unusually slow or something?

ALEKSEI
 Slow! It could not have taken longer
 than--
 (snaps his fingers)

RUDI
 We were in here.

HENDRICKS
 Here? What the hell were you doing
 in here?

The two Soviets exchange a look.

TASSO
 It was their turn.

Hendricks and Dov turn their heads on their necks and stare at
 Tasso.
 Aleksei and Rudi look blase.

TASSO
 If not them, it would have been somebody
 else.
 (shrugs)
 It was their turn.

It's true. Russians have women.

RUDI
 It was only for a couple of hours. Then,
 when the sun had gone down, we returned
 and found...
 (searches for words that
 will describe it)

TO THE GUNNAR

HENDRICKS
 ...No more people and no more Davids.

ALEKSEI
 Except for the single one, destroyed by
 our brave comrades. The one with the
 badge of the United Nations.

DOV
 So there may have been only the one.

They give him a look. Hardly only the one. Dov subsides.

HENDRICKS
 Have you tried getting through to your
 rear command?

Aleksei - #1 - gives him a Russian look.

RUDI

We have tried nothing. We returned to here immediately.

HENDRICKS

Then you haven't been back to the bunker? You just hung around long enough to tear that thing off the robot, and then split?

RUDI

It has only been the one night.

ALEKSEI

We are going to scout today for some of our other units.

HENDRICKS

How? You have transport?

ALEKSEI

No. No more transport. All sabotaged by the Sekach.

(a disgusted gesture)

HENDRICKS

What are you going to do then, go running around on foot? Without these things?

(pats his jammer)

RUDI

(takes the plunge)

There is but one place for us to go now. To the U.N. Forward Command.

ALEKSEI

(to Rudi:)

Molchi, Poliak. Ty ne komandvesh.

HENDRICKS

There's a thin possibility I suppose that we might be able to escort you back to our lines. If we move after dark.

(thinking it out)

Use our buglights...no talking...

ALEKSEI

As your prisoners?

HENDRICKS

No, as diplomatic guests. We're here to negotiate. You guys aren't prisoners-of-war, you're ambassadors-at-large. You get the Class A treatment, Pinhead. You get
(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

to eat what I eat.
(shoves a ration
package at him)

Startled, Aleksei argues no more, but digs in to chow down. Rudi is touched when Dov follows his boss' example and shares his yummy algae cakes.

HENDRICKS

I don't want to move out before the sun goes down, because the screamers have such lousy night vision. The stupid bastards can't seem to get that part right. So after it gets dark I want to go have a little gander around the Russian bunker.

The tension in the room rises by several pounds per square inch.

ALEKSEI

[What! Back into the bunker?] ✓

RUDI

(horrified)
Go back into our bunker?

HENDRICKS

That's right.

From Aleksei, a burst of wild-eyed Russian.

ALEKSEI

[Again into the bunker? Njet, njet, njet!] ✓

RUDI

We have survived one return, because we were lucky and the Davids had gone. Maybe they have come back. Maybe other varieties of Sekach have come.

HENDRICKS

Now get this straight the first time because I hate repeating myself. Number One: at twelve hundred hours

I've got to try and raise my bunker on the radio, but the chances stink because of the radiation levels. Number Two: the radio in your bunker is going to be a lot more powerful than this dinky little toy, and it's critical that I get this information back to my executive officer immediately. Number Three: the reason you didn't find any screamers when you went back is because they have shitty

(CONT'D)

CRUCIAL

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

night vision, so there probably won't be any of them there tonight unless the lights are still on. Number Four: at the risk of being a wet blanket and ruining everybody's good time, permit me to remind you that the Russians have been known to pull some pretty damn nasty tricks in the past, so before I tell the Commander-In-Chief that the Russian bunker's been liquidated I want to see it with my own eyes. Number Five and most important of all: I'm in command here now and what I say goes. Got it? If you need a translation Lieutenant Mendelsohn can provide one.

They don't need a translation.
He's in charge.

HENDRICKS

(consults his watch)

So...if ~~by the time the sun hits the horizon~~ I still haven't gotten through to our own headquarters, then we're all taking a little tour of the Soviet Forward Command.

Hendricks' watch BLIPS at him.

HENDRICKS

Mendelsohn, light up.

Mendelsohn does so. So does everybody else.

TASSO

Give me another American cigarette, Yank.
I forgot how good tobacco is.

We leave them there, smoking in heavy silence, and...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR - HORIZON - SUNDOWN

The HORIZON bites into the SUN like black snaggle teeth into a lemon.

The sun is molten yellow, the sky is furnace red.

INTERIOR - TASSO'S BURROW - SUNDOWN

The two U.N. and two Soviet soldiers.

Once again in full combat gear.

Sitting huddled like a football team with rifles.

Taking final briefing from Hendricks.

Hendricks consulting his wrist instrumentation.

HENDRICKS

And the sun...is down...now.
Okay, people, turn on your buglights.

ALEKSEI

(to Rudi:)
[What means] "buglights"?

RUDI

[Miner's-Lamps].

ALEKSEI

Ah.

They reach up and switch on vivid YELLOW HELMET LAMPS. The Soviet headlamps look like yellow miner's lanterns. The U.N. version is more like a penlight, shooting a beam of light wherever Hendricks turns his head. He reaches up and adjusts it - irises it out to a wide field of coverage and down to pinpoint. Settles on a cone of medium angle. The burrow lights up with an intense yellow glare.

HENDRICKS

Mendelsohn, you've got one too.

Dov searches and finds the switch.
Adds his own headlight to the yellow blaze.

HENDRICKS

(before Dov asks)
They can't see at all in this range of yellow.

DOV

Why were these not employed last night, sir?

HENDRICKS

Because, birdbrain, last night we were worried about Russians. Russians see in the yellow. Tonight we keep a couple of them alive. You watch after Blondie there. I'll cover Pinhead.

(to the others:)

Allright everybody listen up. If there are any lights on at the bunker we take them out silently. No talking except when unavoidable. When we're done at the bunker we come straight back here, pick up the woman, and move out for Fort Apache.

(CONT'D)

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

Unless there's trouble, in which case we go to ground and fight it out. If we get split up, we rendezvous back here at the mousehole. At twenty-one-hundred hours we move out and stragglers get left behind. Any questions?

There are no questions.

HENDRICKS

Then let's go.

They all rise, massively.
Their sweaty gear rustles and clanks as they head for the ladder.
Headlamps bobbing like jackolanterns.

Hendricks pauses in front of Tasso, who is curled up on her rag chair, sullenly picking lint from the front of her Russian army shirt.

HENDRICKS

See you in a couple of hours.

TASSO

Give me another American cigarette.

HENDRICKS

(feels)
Sorry. All gone.

TASSO

Too bad.

HENDRICKS

Better start packing, mouse.

They leave her sulking there and make their exit in a blaze of golden glory.

[CONTINUED:]

APPENDIX I

WORLD WAR III: THE TWO POWER BLOCS

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS [USSR]:

COMMES
REDS

Russia
Poland
Greater Germany
People's Republic of France (E. France)
Baltic States
Italy
Arab States
N. Africa
S.E. Asia
Taiwan
Cuba
Mexico
S. America

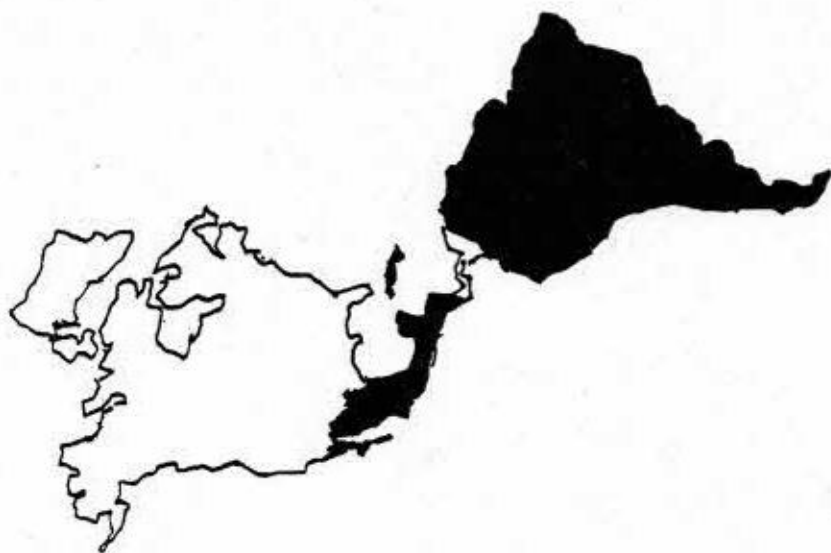
LOCATION: EARTH

UNITED NON COMMUNIST NATIONS [UNCN]:

UNITES
FRONTES

USA
Canada
Canal Zone (Panama)
U.K.
Spain
W. France
Low Countries
Scandinavia
Israel
Egypt
S. Africa
Iran
Afghanistan
India
China
Japan
Australia
Antarctica

LOCATION: ASTEROID HERMES aka "SANCTUARY"



APPENDIX II

APPENDIX III

CAST (ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

CORPORAL LEONE (USA)
SERGEANT ERIC (S.AFRICA - black)
RUSSIAN MESSENGER
CAPT. SCOTT, X.O. (S.AFRICA - white). Liked by all.
LT. COL. JOE HENDRICKS, C.O. (USA). Battlefield promotions have thrust him into command in spite of his relative youth (30-40ish) and in spite of his paranoid obsession that things are not what they appear to be. He hates-- has a horror of--anything that is not genuine.
RADIO OPERATOR, SPEC 5 (USA)
GENERAL LUCIAN K. THOMPSON (USA). Old friend of Hendricks.
ASSORTED U.N. SOLDIERS (about 50 of them, a mixed bag of USA, South African, Western French, etc. troops)
PRIVATE DOV MENDELSON (ISRAEL). 16-year-old recruit. Naive, hot-headed idealist. Speaks Russian. Has a phobia of knives and sharp instruments. 7
DAVID EDWARD DERRING. 14 years old but looks 8. Refugee. Skinny and pitiful. Carries a teddy bear. ✓
CORPORAL RUDI MAXER (POLISH). Impressed into the Soviet Army. Young, blonde. Likeable.
SGT. ALEKSEI CHERVIAKOV (RUSSIAN). Dark, older than Rudi, sullen. Tough cookie. You get the creepy feeling he's got a periscope in the back of his head and is watching you when his back is turned.
TASSO DELACLUSE (FRENCH CANADIAN). Sexy creature from Manitoba, starting to show a little mileage around the edges. Part of her sexiness is that bruised sulkiness around the mouth and eyes of a woman who has just made love. Another thing that makes her attractive is her matter-of-fact attitude toward the catastrophes that surround them. It gives her the appearance of great strength. She cares only for the fundamentals: food, shelter, sex. Under the circumstances it would be surprising if the men did not compete for her.
WOUNDED RUSSIAN SOLDIER. Physically immense, but he has only one leg and must support himself on a crude hand-made crutch. There is a comforting, protective quality about him.