111043

SHADOW 19

by

Jon Spaihts

Current Revisions by

Michael Brandt & Derek Haas

6/6//07

FADE IN:

ON A DOWNTOWN TOKYO STREET - DAY

The sun is shining off the glass and steel towers that make up downtown Tokyo. Futuristic cars line the street, birds sing in the trees.

But something is missing. Something... familiar.

And we start to understand... there are no people here, no people anywhere, not on any street in all of Tokyo.

The only sound is the melancholy whistle of a bird.

And then we HEAR the steady sound of footsteps on asphalt, just one set of feet on a steady march.

The CAMERA PICKS UP a pair of heavy BLACK BOOTS, accented in red, walking purposefully up the middle of the empty street. From the gait and the boots we already know this is a...

SOLDIER... wearing an enormous red and black ARMORED SPACE SUIT. Motors hum as this soldier keeps his pace... and as the CAMERA PULLS BACK, we realize he's carrying a flag.

A flag featuring three RED INTERLOCKING CIRCLES against a black background.

The soldier gets to the middle of the street, the middle of Tokyo, unopposed...

...looks around, his eyes hard and fierce, and then WHAM!!

He whirls down and PLANTS THAT FLAG in the middle of the concrete.

Satisfied, he wheels around and starts to march away. As he does...

...the CAMERA MOVES UP, UP, UP, UP rising faster and faster, quicker and quicker... the city grows smaller and smaller, until our view becomes a shot of JAPAN from space. It settles here for just a moment...

...before finally, the CAMERA SPINS AROUND to show the moon... and pushes in closer to find a BATTLESHIP orbiting the moon.

TITLE: *"Continental Battle Ship GUERNICA. Today."*

And then we...

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP:

...on the face of CAPTAIN CONRAD VANCE, a rugged man of 36, staring right into the camera, grave and focused. He has the sharp eyes of a warrior.

The CAMERA SPINS AROUND and we realize Vance is studying his reflection in a mirror. He splashes some water on his face, checks his eyes, and sets his jaw.

As the CAMERA PULLS BACK FURTHER we realize Vance is wearing a similar massive ARMORED SPACE SUIT, a half-ton war machine strapped to his body, but the colors are blue. The pulse rifle next to him is as big as a cannon.

In his right hand, he's squeezing a SMALL RUBBER BALL. He flips it at the corner where the floor meets the wall and it bounces and rockets back at him. Like lightning, he snags the ball out of the air, his reflexes perfect.

He looks up at a clock, which reads 11:50.

Ready, he puts the ball on the sink and pulls on some GLOVES, snatches up his rifle, clicks it into a slot on the side of his suit and heads out the door and down a long corridor to a...

BATTLESHIP WAR ROOM:

Motors HUM as he walks; his footfalls shake the deck as he passes a group of fifty SOLDIERS who are dressed just like him, all facing a...

...GIANT DISPLAY SCREEN filled with lunar maps and battle strategies.

Another soldier, CAPTAIN WARREN BANNEKER, stands by the displays and nods at Vance as he approaches. Not as rugged as Vance, and a little thicker around the middle than the rest of the soldiers, Banneker isn't wearing the combat gear of the other men... but from the stripes on his uniform it's obvious, he's one of the best.

BANNEKER
Today is the day we carve up the Hegemony and turn this goddamn war around once and for all.

Vance nods at him, all business.

Banneker hits a button and a holograph display of the moon orbiting the Earth comes up.

BANNEKER (CONT'D)
Since the beginning of war, basic military strategy dictates the army holding the high ground wins the battle. Well, the moon is the ultimate high ground and we've learned the Hedge plans to install a lunar weapon capable of delivering enough concentrated Hellfire power to destroy the Continent. Our defenses work against their ships, but will be useless against this lunar weapon.

The display becomes a MAP OF THE MOON. An area indicates a strike point.

BANNEKER (CONT'D)
Over a year ago, we got a man on the inside with the Hegemony. This morning, he was able to beam us the coordinates of their positions on the moon.
(beat)
Captain Vance?

VANCE
(to the men)
I've given you an armor-piercing load so you know what that means.

A black soldier, GETTIS, speaks up from the first row...

GETTIS
Tanks?

VANCE
Yeah. They've landed AmScats and Blackbirds, here, here and here.

He points to a place on the map behind the advancing tanks.

BANNEKER
This is where the tanks are going to be and they don't turn around too easily. They've also developed some new behemoth tank that's plowing along behind. It's jamming our video so we're walking into the unknown a bit.

VANCE
It doesn't matter. They won't know what's coming. This is the turning point of the war, men.

BANNEKER
We've got a hundred thousand soldiers dropping here and here... just ahead of us. We have to take out the Hedge tanks for those troops to have a chance.

VANCE
It's going to get bloody. Only a handful of us will make it back.

He locks eyes with a couple of the soldiers.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Gettis, you lost your wife and two kids in Tokyo. And your three brothers were killed in that first strike in Seattle, Barton. I don't have to go through all the scars we share, but I sure as hell am ready to give some back...

The men let out a military HOO-YA!

BANNEKER
I don't have to tell you how important this is. If we don't succeed, if the moon falls, everyone on the Continent and everything we've fought for will disappear within weeks. But if we can neutralize their tank positions then our troops will <u>own</u> the moon. And from there, this war is ours for the taking.

VANCE
A long time ago, a military man said "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." Well, men, we're the few. Fewer than this world could ever dream of.

He looks at each of them with a hint of a smile, like battle is what he's made for.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Fight like the future is up to us.
(beat)
Now get to your capsules and lock in.

The Marines head to a series of individual DROP CAPSULES, which close and sink into LAUNCH TUBES. A clock reads 11:59:40 and counts up.

As Vance approaches his capsule...

BANNEKER
Get back here safe, Conrad.

VANCE
One thing we do know for sure, Warren. I always make it back.
(beat)
There's a bottle of scotch in the galley. Don't touch it because I'll be drinking it tonight.

And with that... he puts on a helmet and drops into his...

CAPSULE:

...and this time, we stay with Vance, surrounded in an individual drop ship like he's a cigar in a plastic tube. Numbers are counting down, reflecting off his mask...

VANCE
Athena?

ATHENA'S VOICE
Active, Captain.

...and when the clock hits 12:00 straight up... WHAM!!! the drop ship launches... we pull back to reveal... we are now in...

EXT. SPACE

...where we see their rugged BATTLESHIP ejecting individual drop capsules... fwoom, fwoom, fwoom... the way B-12s used to drop parachutists over Germany.

As the CAMERA PULLS BACK further, we see the great blue planet EARTH positioned out in space, but we are closer to the...

MOON:

...where we pick up those capsules headed like missiles toward a spot on the moon's surface... and we push in closer still until we are right on top of...

VANCE'S CAPSULE:

...he is gritting his teeth, riding the G-Forces down to the surface of the moon. FWOOM, FWOOM, FWOOM... they continue toward their strike point at break-neck speed, but silently as they rocket through space. And then...

ON THE MOON'S SURFACE:

...BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM... fifty drop-capsules ram into the chalky surface... dissolving as they impact, revealing all the Marines in full armor.

We stay with Vance as his VISOR DISPLAY fills up with information and he realizes...

VANCE
(screams)
We're in the wrong entry point... we're in the wrong goddamn...

But his voice is cut off by... WHISSSH, WHISSSSH!!!

...a STREAM OF MISSILES are coming right at them as the CAMERA PULLS BACK and we reveal...

...they've landed smack-dab in the middle of the Hegemony tank cluster.

The tanks are three stories high and painted with the RED INTERLOCKING CIRCLES of the Hegemony...

...and they are unloading everything they've got at Vance and his men. So much for their surprise attack...

In the nick of time, Vance jumps out of his impact crater as BOOOM! The first missile -- which is a STREAMING ENERGY PULSE -- finds the ground, missing Vance but barreling into the Marine behind him and ripping him into 500 pieces as he explodes.

SCREAMS fill Vance's helmet as a dozen marines are taken out in this first blitz before they even have a chance to fight.

One late-arriving capsule is shot cleanly out of the air.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Marines! Give me a battle line, twenty meter spacing! Athena, get me an eye in the sky and go tactical!

An ELECTRONIC VOICE of his armor's battle computer answers...

ATHENA'S VOICE
Tactical.

A missile fires out of a carrier on Vance's back... shoots up into the air and then explodes... leaving a hovering SATELLITE to peer down on the battlefield and give them localized data...

Vance's visor immediately lights up, now organizing the terrain around him with information: ENEMIES, FRIENDLIES, RANGES and VELOCITIES.

VANCE
Four Amscats, three blackbirds, advance on me and hold nothing back!

The tanks are right on them as Vance breaks into a run across the terrain, using the lack of gravity to his benefit to take mighty leaps.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Incoming...

From the tanks, ENERGY BEAMS flash toward the Marines. Vance leaps off the ground, JUMP-JETS firing from his boots. He arcs through space, firing his cannon all the while.

Behind him, a collection of Marines do the same as they unload on the tanks...

...only to have their missiles ZING off the armor.

INT. BATTLESHIP - COMMAND ROOM (IN ORBIT)

Now that the satellite is up, Banneker watches the battle inside of a 3-Dimensional Computer Simulation. He can control the angles and spin around and watch various points of the battle like he's right there inside it... also hovering in the air around him... GRAPHICS and DATA fill him in on distances and weaponry along with...

... THE FATALITY MARKERS which throb on the image as Marines are taken down.

Banneker starts barking instructions...

BANNEKER
All right Captain Vance... three tanks right in front of you... use plasma grenades.
(MORE)

BANNEKER (CONT'D)
You're not breaching with Rump Rounds so you need to get close and demo these assholes.

EXT. MOON'S SURFACE - BATTLEFIELD

Vance charges a tank as enemy fire obliterates the ground around him.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Fatality. Sergeant Holder.

VANCE
Shit.

Vance reaches a tank: gets in under its guns and keeps going, right between its gnashing treads and under its armored body.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Fatality, Private Arend. Fatality, Private Condrey. Fatality, Private Cook. Fatality, Private Nesbitt.

From a pod on his thigh, he pulls a series of powerful MINES, sticking them up under the belly of the tank, all the while moving...

VANCE
Athena, detonate on my mark.

On the underside of the tank, belly hatches open. ARMED TROOPERS drop out and start firing small arms at Vance, but the bullets ricochet off his armor.

The opening of the hatch is tiny... it would take an impossible throw...

...but Vance is up to the task, he hurls a mine into the opening, fires his jump-jets and cannonballs, just as he screams...

VANCE (CONT'D)
Blow it!

...and behind him, the tank EXPLODES spectacularly...

...right as Vance lands on the lunar surface again and looks up, gaping in awe. An enormous tank, the COLOSSUS, climbs over the ridge; it's an armored beast twice as big as the other tanks.

VANCE (CONT'D)
I see the new tank. Christ, it's...

...firing... BOOOOM! The biggest explosion yet as the Colossus takes out a cluster of Vance's Marines with a huge cannon...

ATHENA'S VOICE
Fatality, fatality, fatality, fatality...

VANCE
Cover. Take cover!

BANNEKER (O.S.)
Set up a diversion, Vance! Do what you have to do to get to that tank!

Vance dives out of the way as the behemoth tank practically runs over him...

... and then ARMED TROOPERS stream out of it like someone opened a faucet. These are human soldiers, but wearing much more sophisticated attack gear, along with the ubiquitous red colors of the Hegemony.

They come down from huge portals, using the lack of gravity and the weight of their space suits to soften their landings... while a few FIGHTER SPACECRAFT stream out of the Colossus's open hangar to provide air support.

VANCE
Gettis, Cooper, Shepherd... get your men into a tuck position. Draw their fire and let me try to get in under the big gun!

Gettis looks panicked from his position...

GETTIS
But Captain!

VANCE
Do it!

As Vance watches, a final group of ten Marines lead by Gettis fall into a DEFENSIVE semi-circle... like they know this is going to be their last stand before they are wiped out.

The Hegemony division fail to see Vance from where he's positioned behind them. They wall off this final group of marines.

Vance starts sprinting away from them, toward the Colossus as...

...the big tank fires right into the middle of the final group and the last of Vance's men die in a gigantic explosion.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Fatality, fatality, fatality, fatality, fatality...

Vance just grits his teeth and shows us why he's the commander of this division. He races toward the Colossus... half running, half flying, his jump-jets blazing. He weaves to avoid a straight on cannon shot from the enormous machine and gets in under the guns.

He leaps up toward the Colossus's hangar and then flips his cannon around, fires, and uses the recoil and lack of gravity to actually propel himself upward into the open hangar where the Hegemony troops were pouring out...

IN THE COLOSSUS'S HANGAR:

A soldier is waiting there but Vance has the element of surprise on him and fires his pulse rifle twice into the guy's chest.

IN EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

...we watch the pulse pierce through the Hegemony soldier's armor... and rip through his skin... but then in...

AN EVEN MORE EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

...we see tiny robots called NANOBOTS immediately stitching up the wound!

The CAMERA PULLS back out...

TO THE HANGAR...

...and we see the soldier's armor also repair itself!

Vance can't believe it...

VANCE
They've got Nanos!

BANNEKER (O.S.)
What??

VANCE
They've got nanobots inside their soldiers!

BANNEKER
Abort, Vance! Get out of there!

The soldier, instantly healed, smiles at Vance. He levels his pulse rifle, but Vance grabs the guy's gun and uses the momentum to send the guy flying out of the opening of the hangar and down the hundred feet to the surface below.

VANCE
I told you... I never get killed.

He pitches a mine into one of the hangar's cannon turrets and then runs balls out...

...to where a HEGEMONY PILOT is just starting to climb into one of the FIGHTER SHIPS. The poor pilot looks up just in time to see Vance's boots flying at his face...

WHAM!!! Vance knocks him off his staircase and jumps into the cockpit of the fighter, right as a wave of Hegemony troopers pour back into the open hangar.

They unload their weapons at him... but Vance punches the throttle on the ship and LAUNCHES the fighter out of the hangar...

MOON'S SURFACE:

...and heads toward open space and that big blue planet Earth on the horizon.

The Colossus aims for his fighter ship and FWOOOM! Sends out two missiles after it, just as Vance's ship reaches...

SPACE:

...leaving the moon's surface far below. But it looks like his fighter's in serious trouble. As much as he evades, <u>those two missiles stay right on his tail</u>.

He guns it for his own battleship... and watches as giant cannons on the ship swing his way...

VANCE
It's me in the red-bird! I'm in the Hegemony red-bird!

...and just as the missiles bear down on him...

..FWOOSH... FWOOSH... the battleship fires energy blasts from those cannons... which barely miss his fighter and instead... BLAST those missiles right out of space.

Vance banks the fighter and finds an open portal...

INSIDE THE BATTLESHIP:

...before crash landing the red-bird into a containment wall... leaving the stolen fighter a smoking, tangled mess, but intact, and we immediately...

CUT TO:

INT. BATTLESHIP - GALLEY - DAY

...where Vance, out of his battle armor, alone and looking pissed, is sitting at a table, staring at a BOTTLE OF SCOTCH, unopened.

The large galley is conspicuously empty all around him.

Finally, Vance picks up the bottle and heaves it into the wall, smashing it... he's angry, frustrated...

Just then, a pair of footsteps echo through the room. Banneker sits down heavily across from Vance.

Banneker lets out a long breath... measuring the warrior across the table.

BANNEKER
They set us up.

VANCE
The drop coordinates...

BANNEKER
They must have fed our man misinformation. We made the mistake of believing it...

Banneker just lets the sentence trail off, defeated.

Vance rubs his eyes with both hands... frustrated, angry, exhausted...

VANCE
The ground troops?

BANNEKER
A rout. Tanks never gave them a chance.

VANCE
So it's over?

Banneker leans back...

BANNEKER
I never guessed we'd be on the wrong side of this thing...

Vance pleads...

VANCE
Drop me at their lunar weapon site. I can blow --

BANNEKER
(interrupting)
No. You can't, Vance. And you know it. We can't get you close enough and their defensive swarms will tear you apart before you get within fifty kilometers of the weapon.

VANCE
I'll take my chances.

BANNEKER
You saw it... they had nanobots in their soldiers. Any shots penetrated are almost instantly nullified. We don't have anything on the Continent to match that...

Just then, a young lieutenant, COBURN, rushes into the doorway...

COBURN
They're recalling us. They want you two on the Continent.

VANCE
Why?

COBURN
All I know is we're supposed to run silent and avoid anything remotely looking like a Hegemony ship once we go sub-orbit, all the way to the S.A.

Banneker and Vance look at each other, puzzled.

VANCE
The Science Agency? If they think I'm just going to give up...

COBURN
The order is from Brody himself.

VANCE
Tell him I'd like to protest the order.

COBURN
You're going to have to protest it yourself. We've already gone dark. Nothing to do but wait for us to land.

And with that, Coburn walks off.

Vance and Banneker look at each other, trying to figure this one out.

Finally, Vance stands and walks out of the galley, leaving Banneker at the table.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLESHIP - EARTH APPROACH

The Battleship passes a CONTINENT DEFENSIVE SPACE STATION: a huge manned SATELLITE bristling with guns. It has the symbol of the continent painted on its side: five blue stars all in a straight line.

The satellite SCANS the Battleship with a laser as it passes.

Earth shines below, half in light and half in shadow. On the planet's night side, cities shine in the darkness: far larger than today's cities, and connected by arteries of light.

The Battleship descends toward Australia.

As it does, we can see a constant barrage of SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILES BEING FIRED from both Indonesia and New Zealand at Australia.

None of them find their mark, because a DEFENSIVE NETWORK OF SATELLITES shoots them out of the sky.

It's clear... <u>this elaborate space-based system is the only thing keeping the Australian continent from being demolished</u>.

INT. BATTLESHIP - VANCE'S QUARTERS

Vance lies on a bed, waiting for the long final descent.

He's holding a razor-thin LCD screen... a futuristic news channel is in the middle of a debate...

ON THE SCREEN:

MALE COMMENTATOR
...with the fall of the peninsula, the Hegemony now controls 89% of the land mass in the world.

Sophisticated graphics hover next to them while they talk...

FEMALE COMMENTATOR
But let's be honest... we saw this coming and we did nothing. We watched as it spread from Central Alliance, watched as they stomped on personal freedom, watched as they committed genocide on their own people, watched as they converted into a militocracy... and then with this Hellfire weapon... they built up an arsenal while we buried our heads in the sand!

MALE COMMENTATOR
Now, come on. I think you're being a bit unfair with your...

FEMALE COMMENTATOR
(interrupts)
No, what was unfair was trying to impose sanctions while the Hegemony destroyed entire populations. With Hellfire, they invented the holy grail of weaponry, a way to destroy people without destroying the land and resources. Unfortunately, we learned the hard way they weren't afraid to press the button...

MALE COMMENTATOR
Well, I'll admit the sanctions weren't effective, but I still think war wasn't necessarily the answer...

BACK WITH VANCE:

He's had enough... he clicks the screen away and taps an icon for PERSONAL MESSAGES.

There's one from his sister, COLLETTE...

ON THE SCREEN:

She stares into the camera...

COLLETTE
Hey, Conrad... hurry back to us...

Then she looks off-screen...

COLLETTE (CONT'D)
Max! Come say "hi" to your Uncle Conrad...

She scoops up a cute little girl of 5 who squirms in her mother's arms...

COLLETTE (CONT'D)
(coaxing)
Say "hi uncle"... say "hi uncle"

MAX
Hi Uncle Conrad...

IN VANCE'S QUARTERS:

Vance can't help but crack a smile as we hear...

COLLETTE
(on the screen)
All right, big brother. You just come back to us in one piece like you promised. We miss you and we love you. Bye. Say "bye!" Say "bye!"

MAX
No.

This gets Vance to smile again.

COLLETTE
All right... love from all of us. Bye.

The message ends and the computer says: *"Save?"* Vance clicks "yes" and closes the file.

EXT. SPACEPORT - MORNING

A vast landing ground surrounds the SPACEPORT TERMINAL. Military spacecraft lie at harbor. The distant towers of a CITY shine in the sunrise.

Vance's battleship settles into a landing bay. A gangway tube extends from the spaceport to the ship.

INT. GANGWAY - MORNING

Vance and Banneker debark, wearing their dress uniforms. They continue to a...

BUSY CONCOURSE:

...where a man in a suit stands waiting, JOHN RANDALL, 50, a good-natured bear of a man with a barrel chest.

BANNEKER
Hello, John.

RANDALL
Captain Banneker.

BANNEKER
Captain Vance, meet John Randall of the DOD.

They shake hands...

RANDALL
Welcome home.

They turn and start walking...

RANDALL (CONT'D)
It's an honor to meet you, Captain Vance. You have quite a record.

VANCE
Not good enough.

RANDALL
Yes, well, I've been briefed on the losses...

VANCE
They were soldiers doing their jobs. I just wish we hadn't dropped into an ambush.

RANDALL
The lunar battle was obviously devastating for everyone on the Continent...

At the end of the concourse, they climb into a ROBOTIC TROLLEY... which roars away like a bullet-train, pilotless, soaring on its own. This is an every-day occurrence to them.

The trolley passes by the famed "Sydney Opera House," which now is preserved like an ancient ruin...

ON THE TROLLEY:

RANDALL
...and it expedited the Science Agency's... well...

He's choosing his words carefully, so Banneker interrupts...

BANNEKER
Why are we here, John?

RANDALL
Obviously, this is a dire time for... well... the survival of our free society... of <u>any</u> free society I should say. And dire times often lead to... extraordinary discoveries.

With that, the trolley lands, skidding to a stop in front of an imposing classical skyscraper. <u>A sign lets us know this is the headquarters of the SCIENCE AGENCY</u>.

The three passengers get out and head inside...

INT. SCIENCE AGENCY - DAY

...where the cavernous lobby bustles with people. Heavily armed guards stand post at every door, while WORKERS and SCIENTISTS hurry around like ants in an anthill.

Randall leads them to a distant bank of elevators... it opens as they approach.

ON THE ELEVATOR:

The doors close and the elevator descends... even when they reach the lowest basement level, the elevator keeps right on sinking.

Finally, the doors open on an...

UNDERGROUND COMPLEX:

...and the trio emerge from the elevator as a high-ranking scientist, DR. MARBECK, approaches.

RANDALL
Captain Vance, Captain Banneker, I'd like you to meet Dr. Carl Marbeck, director of the SA.

DR. MARBECK
Welcome, men...

He nods at Randall, who nods back...

RANDALL
Well, this is where I leave you. You've been officially reassigned to the S.A.

VANCE
Now wait just a goddamn second.

RANDALL
Sorry, Captain. There's no war left to fight... We need you here. You'll understand why in a moment.

With that, Randall turns and his heels click across the floor on his way back to the elevator.

Vance turns to Marbeck...

VANCE
What's "here?"

DR. MARBECK
The reason for your selection...

He leads them away, and they follow...

DR. MARBECK (CONT'D)
The two of you have planned and executed more missions than any soldiers on the Continent.

(MORE)

DR. MARBECK (CONT'D)
Captain Vance, you have the fastest reflexes in the Corps, and the lowest resting pulse rate. Your eyesight and hearing are in the first percentile.

Vance nods... he's not learning anything he doesn't already know.

DR. MARBECK (CONT'D)
And Captain Banneker, your strategic, tactical planning combined with your input in developing the latest body armor are the only reason the Continent has held out as long as it has.

They end up walking down a...

GRAND CONCOURSE

...which is a huge space, gleaming and supermodern. Walkways above walkways, all bustling with movement as scientists hurry to and fro.

In the center of the concourse stands a great GLOBE OF THE PLANET EARTH...

It shows the continent of Australia painted in blue and every other bit of land painted in red with the interlocking circles of the Hegemony. The situation is obviously dire.

Marbeck looks at the globe.

DR. MARBECK
You ask why we called you. The truth is we're out of options. We know that with the fall of the moon, the Hegemony has begun assembly of their lunar Hellfire weapon. By our estimates, they're a month away from having the capability to fire it.

VANCE
Send me in. I'll destroy it...

MARBECK
(shakes his head)
The free world is gone. You need to accept that. We have.

VANCE
I'm a soldier, not a lab rat.

MARBECK
But that's what we need. A soldier.

VANCE
Why?

MARBECK
Because we also need another world.

With that, he leads them into a...

GIGANTIC HANGAR CALLED HANGAR ONE:

...where the largest SPACE SHIP we've ever seen is nearing completion of construction. Written on its side is the word PROMETHEUS. It's certainly not built for speed, more like a flying city.

MARBECK
Against the Science Agency's recommendations, for thirty-five years our military tried "fight." Now, for the survival of our people, we must choose "flight."

They take in the scale of the ship, awed.

BANNEKER
We cut and run?

MARBECK
Yes.

VANCE
How many?

MARBECK
As many as we can fit inside Prometheus.

VANCE
(repeats)
How many?

MARBECK
Six hundred thousand.

VANCE
And the other twelve million?

MARBECK
Surrender. Hope for mercy.

Banneker snorts...

BANNEKER
I assume you and the rest of the Science Agency will be the first ones to climb aboard Noah's Ark here?

MARBECK
You assume wrong. I and 95% of my staff will make sure Prometheus gets away safely, and then will attempt to negotiate a surrender with the Hegemony. None of the current administration will board. By staying behind, we hope to bring order to this process.

Vance looks at the work put into this ship, the years of planning it must have entailed.

BANNEKER
How have you kept this secret?

MARBECK
Human freedom, Captain, is a strong motivation.

VANCE
I'll ask the obvious question. Where the hell is Prometheus going?

CUT TO:

INT. DIRECTOR'S CHAMBER - DAY

Marbeck stands in front of Banneker and Vance in a MEDIA ROOM... already in here are a dozen other scientists. Vance's eyes are drawn to ADA KILDARE, 30, a beauty. She watches Vance, skeptically.

Marbeck raises his hand and a holograph of a STAR swells into existence in the air above the conference table.

MARBECK
Erix. Similar in size and orbit to Earth, with a single large moon. A new hope for us, just twenty light-years away.

IN HOLOGRAM: Planets spring into being around the star. The fourth planet, ERIX, grows to fill the space over the table: an angry RED PLANET with a pale yellow moon.

Banneker looks at the hologram, fascinated.

MARBECK (CONT'D)
Our plan has been decades in the making, since the Hegemony first created Hellfire. We had hoped we wouldn't need our final option, but here we are...

Just then, the Hologram pushes in closer as we see TITANIC MACHINES moving over the planet's surface on giant treads... firing rockets, seeding it with water, oxygen, carbon...

MARBECK (CONT'D)
Erix was the closest planet orbiting a central star in what we call the green zone... not too hot, not too cold... the zone most conducive to life. As you can see in this simulation, after twenty-two years of space flight just under sub-light speed, we now have six crawlers spreading over the surface of Erix, sowing the seeds of life. Water, oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen... all the things to turn Erix into a new Eden.

He points at the holograph...

MARBECK (CONT'D)
Except one of our crawlers, Crawler Three specifically, has broken down. Its communications array failed. Without satellite data, it can no longer chart its course. It will not move or launch the seed rockets it carries.

BANNEKER
How can you know this? Any message from the crawler would take a generation to get here.

MARBECK
Well, that's certainly true in the physics you were taught. But there have been some, well, unannounced breakthroughs in the field. We sent more than just crawlers to the planet.

He points to Ada...

MARBECK (CONT'D)
Ada Kildare was instrumental in what we've accomplished. Ada...

She takes over...

ADA
We sent a gateway.

Just then, curtains open up behind them to reveal an ENORMOUS CHAMBER, the size of a football stadium, holding a single sophisticated MACHINE, the size of a closet. Massive power cables hang from the corners of the room and run to the machine.

ADA (CONT'D)
The Lang Transporter. It allows objects to travel instantaneously from one point to another...

BANNEKER
You have a teleportation machine.

ADA
A Lang Transporter, yes.

BANNEKER
(getting it)
And that door there goes to this other planet. Erix.

ADA
That's right. The transporter has a connection with the gateway we sent to Erix 20 years ago.

Vance takes it all in...

ADA (CONT'D)
Dr. Lang, the inventor, was years ahead of his time. He engineered the gateway 20 years ago knowing he'd have the time it travelled through space to invent something to connect with it.

VANCE
If you got a door, just send a mechanic through and fix the thing...

ADA
Believe me I wish we could. But Crawler Three is a hundred kilometers from the gateway, and it's not likely an easy hundred kilometers.

VANCE
So send a team of mechanics with a platoon of Marines to protect them.

ADA
It takes a week to run the molecular calculations of whatever life we send through. We can run calcs for one man, but we just don't have the time to do it twice... .

VANCE
And it's easier to train a soldier to be a mechanic than the other way around.

ADA
Unfortunately, yes.

VANCE
Unfortunately?

They share a tense moment, this is not getting off on the right foot.

MARBECK
(quickly)
The transporter is large enough to transport a man and a few tools. Or weapons, as it may be. But that's it. That's why we need you, Captain Vance.

Vance nods, skeptically, then...

VANCE
Well, thanks for bringing me off a battle ship to come down here to the "retreat" agency. But like I told Dr. Marbeck, I'm not a lab rat...

With that, he spins around and starts walking out of the room...

MARBECK
(calls out)
Where are you going?

Without turning around...

VANCE
To the Admiral.

Marbeck and Ada watch, but the CAMERA FINDS Banneker, who has a sly smile on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ADMIRAL BAR - DAY

It turns out "The Admiral" is a bar overlooking the harbor...

...and Vance is in the place, doing some heavy drinking, alone.

After a moment, Banneker sidles up next to him at the bar.

He doesn't say anything, just lets Vance drink. Then...

VANCE
They send you to drag me back?

Banneker downs a shot of whiskey, shakes his head...

BANNEKER
They wanted to. But after five years of combat, I know you better than that.

VANCE
Smart.

BANNEKER
So I told them to send <u>her</u>.

He points to the front of the bar, <u>just as Ada enters</u>. She spots them and heads their way.

When she arrives, she ignores Vance and speaks to the bartender...

ADA
I'll take a sharpshooter, straight back, no ice.

He makes the drink for her and she tosses it back. Banneker and Vance just watch. After a moment...

VANCE
You trying to show that you're one of us?

ADA
Hardly.

They stare at each other for a moment, then Ada starts coughing, the drink too strong. Vance cracks a smile.

VANCE
I'm not going to help in the Continent's retreat. You want my help, send me back to the moon to fight.

ADA
And once you're killed, Captain?

VANCE
At least we'll have fought to the end and taken some with us.

She starts to say something but Vance interrupts...

VANCE (CONT'D)
Nearly twelve million people... ninety-five percent of the continent are going to be left behind according to your "plan."

ADA
Yes.

VANCE
There's no such thing as a surrender. You know it and I know it. The Peninsula tried to raise the white flag, tried to negotiate, and you saw what happened to them. That means twelve million people die without a choice. That's not a plan. That's just plain old political bullshit.

Ada gestures at the bar, all the people milling around, trying to forget about their problems...

ADA
If this building were on fire and you could only save two people, would you?

Vance looks back at his drink, considers this...

ADA (CONT'D)
Well, that's what's happening. The building is on fire. It's gonna burn whether we want it to or not.
(beat)
As much as I hate to admit it, we need you. Both of you. The lunar weapon will be ready in 30 days. Which means we have to launch Prometheus in less time than that. And we have to know that the people on board are going to have air to breathe when they arrive after traveling twenty years in space.

Vance takes another drink. She looks at him, meets his eyes.

ADA (CONT'D)
If that doesn't mean anything to you, maybe this will: I've been authorized to tell you your families will be included on the ship. For what you're doing.

Vance looks up at her, hotly, like she said something she shouldn't have.

He stands, finishes his drink, and leaves her there, her offer hanging in the air.

Ada looks at Banneker for an explanation...

BANNEKER
(gravely)
His family was in Japan.

He doesn't need to say anymore. Ada can only watch Vance go.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Vance walks the streets of the city, disappearing in the crowds of pedestrians.

He finds a park bench and sits down, heavily, watching the people scurry about, oblivious to their fate.

A bird lands nearby and he watches it peck the ground for food, lost in his thoughts. Then he HEARS SOMETHING... like a low rumble that starts to grow louder...

...the noise is coming from above him and he looks up in the night sky, to see the moon is right above him...

...and the NOISE GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER AND LOUDER until it is damn near deafening.

And then as he looks up... A BLAST OF LIGHT ERUPTS FROM THE MOON...

...and the light is on the city in a flash...

...a BLAST OF HELLFIRE...

...and this time we see it clearly as Vance watches... the crowds around him are completely incinerated, burned to death, even though he remains untouched, intact...

...all around him, death, death, death, burning human flesh... without warning from the sky and just then...

...the CAMERA PULLS BACK, BACK, BACK, until it comes right out of Vance's eye...

...and he is still sitting on the park bench, observing the birds, pecking at the food and all the people walking about, happily.

Even if they don't know their fate, Vance clearly does.

He reaches in his pocket and pulls out that thin video screen... taps it a few times and even though we don't see the screen, we hear again...

COLLETTE
Max! Come say "hi" to your Uncle Conrad... say "hi..." say "hi..."

CUT TO:

INT. SCIENCE AGENCY - MARBECK'S OFFICE - DAY

It looks like the den of a university professor: books on shelves, holography table, huge display screens for data.

Marbeck is in here with Ada and Banneker, when Vance enters...

Before anyone can say anything...

VANCE
Here's what I need to know: what's the ground made of? Does it rain? What's the rain made of? What about background radiation? Electrical storms? Volcanoes? Earthquakes? What's on the planet? I assume you can't terraform without biomass to work on. So that means biology. What kind? Cells? Plants? Animals? Intelligent life?

Marbeck smiles at Ada... Vance is in. He keeps going...

VANCE (CONT'D)
Because I'm combat-certified in low gravity, heavy gravity, zero gravity. I can operate in vacuum atmosphere, underwater and in a desert. But what I've never trained for is life on another planet.

MARBECK
We'll get you all the data you could possibly need.

VANCE
I doubt that. But I'll take what you have. Now who's going to show me how to fix this thing?

CUT TO:

INT. SCIENCE AGENCY - TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

A house-sized machine dominates the room. It's shaped like a beetle's head: two eye-like domes, a shell of armor plate. One armored dome is torn raggedly open...

Banneker, Vance, Ada and Marbeck enter...

MARBECK
This is a replica of Crawler Three's comm array. We reproduced the damage from diagnostics.

BANNEKER
What did this?

MARBECK
Most likely collision damage.

VANCE
Then how did it make it a hundred kilometers?

MARBECK
We have no idea.

VANCE
And to fix it?

ADA
There are components you're going to have to move. Systems to shut down and restart in a certain order.

Marbeck points at the mock-up...

MARBECK
The real danger's when you finish. Crawler Three's going to start talking to the network and in less than a second they'll exchange more information than a human brain can handle in a lifetime. She's going to find out she's late starting the Oxygen Generation program. And right that second she'll launch her rockets, bound for the seas.

BANNEKER
How big are the rockets?

MARBECK
It'll get around two thousand degrees Kelvin quickly.

VANCE
For how long?

MARBECK
Ten seconds or so. Only a second or two of peak heat.

BANNEKER
(to Vance)
I can modify your battle armor to ride that out.

Vance and Banneker exchange nods.

CUT TO:

INT. VANCE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

A simple room with a desk, a holography table, and an industrial metal bed.

A series of QUICK CUTS shows:

Vance using a machine to keep his reflexes honed... the machine fires beams of light at him which causes him to pivot and keep catching the light in his hands.

Banneker flipping through data, maps of Erix, diagrams of Crawler Three... Vance joins him and they talk over strategy well into the night.

Vance running on a treadmill that has no tread... just magnets. He's watching a Holograph monitor...

HOLOGRAPHIC TELEVISION MONITOR:

A broadcast plays out three-dimensionally, with graphics integrated right into the program...

The graphics read: THE PATH TO WAR! A host addresses viewers...

HOST
In this, the first of our two part examination of the path to war, we will look inside the Hegemony to see what life is like behind enemy lines.
(beat)
Endless shifts in their war factories, soldiering without pay and without benefits, and an illiterate populace ruled with an iron fist.

Graphics show a depressing, Nazi-like way of life inside the Hegemony... A University Professor appears...

DR. GERHARD THOMAS
George Orwell was only off by two hundred years. This is a dystopian government who looks at its citizens simply: they are cogs in the military machine. The big question is: what will the Hegemony do when there's no one left to fight...

We cut from Vance jogging to...

Vance, Banneker and Ada in the room, Ada going over more specs. Banneker catches Vance eyeing Ada instead of the specs.

INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

Vance in full body armor, practicing the repair. He looks like a beast compared to the scientists standing around. Marbeck, Ada, and Banneker watch him work.

Vance's right hand is tucked behind his back; he works with only his left.

When he finishes the repair, he lifts his hand with a flourish just as diagnostic lights flash to life.

COMPUTER VOICE
System operational.

APPRENTICE ONE
Three minutes, forty-eight seconds. With one hand.

Apprentices start to restore the mock-up to its damaged state for the next practice run.

MARBECK
(to Banneker)
Next, he'll be doing it blindfolded.

Vance smirks...

VANCE
Athena. Blackout.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Blackout.

Vance's visor goes opaque.

VANCE
Start the clock.

BANNEKER
Go!

Vance starts doing the repair, completely blind.

MARBECK
You think he's ready?

BANNEKER
He's ready.

By the looks of him, he is.

CUT TO:

INT. VANCE'S QUARTERS - DAY

Vance is looking in the mirror, <u>like he was in the opening of the movie</u>, getting his mind right, focused. Now we see this is a ritual before he goes into combat.

He bounces the ball off the wall to test his reflexes, catches it... then splashes some water on his face, just like before and right then...

...there is a KNOCK on the door.

He opens it to find Ada standing there.

ADA
We're ready for you.

Ada starts to leave and then turns back.

ADA (CONT'D)
You should know... We've only attempted to send one other man through the transporter.

VANCE
Who?

ADA
Dr. Lang. Like many great scientists, he demanded to test out his invention personally...

VANCE
He didn't survive?

Ada shakes her head.

ADA
In simplest terms, the machine fires a tremendous amount of energy at you to make the transportation. He went through without military armor. His body couldn't handle it. Another reason they brought in a soldier.

She turns to walk out, but Vance's voice stops her...

VANCE
Which you're against...

ADA
I don't have a lot of faith in the military.

VANCE
A pacifist...

ADA
A realist, Captain. The pacifists lost on Earth. I only hope we're a smart enough species to rethink our priorities on Erix.

With that, she heads to the door, then turns, like she didn't end that conversation like she wanted...

ADA (CONT'D)
Even so. Please be careful. A lot of people are counting on you.

Vance smiles...

VANCE
There's one thing you should know about me, Dr. Kildare.

ADA
What's that?

VANCE
I'm the guy who always makes it back.

Ada nods, her eyes conveying her hope that he's right. And with that, she leaves...

CUT TO:

INT. TRANSPORTER FACILITY - DAY

In his new combat armor, Vance enters the giant room holding that small closet, the Lang Transporter. Banneker is waiting for him.

BANNEKER
You shouldn't notice any difference in the armor. I bumped up the refraction point and changed out the atmospheric array for a radiation array.

Vance moves the modified armor.

VANCE
It feels good. Feels the same. Athena... systems check...

ATHENA'S VOICE
All system functions normal.

BANNEKER
Good luck, buddy.

Vance nods...

VANCE
Go find me a bottle of scotch.

BANNEKER
(smiles)
You got it.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM:

Marbeck, Ada, and a slew of scientists and apprentices watch Vance move to the machine.

The most sophisticated monitor we've ever seen displays graphics of Vance's body, his armor, his weaponry... all broken down to molecular levels. A stream of calculations flashes by, computations moving at the blink of an eye. In fact, the whole room is blanketed with these monitors.

Banneker joins them in here... but all eyes are on Vance. Tension is thick in the room, while...

IN THE TRANSPORT FACILITY:

...Vance reaches the transporter and the chamber door opens, spilling light into the cavern.

MARBECK (O.S.)
Ready, Captain Vance?

VANCE
(on the communicator)
Ready.

MARBECK (O.S.)
Enter the chamber.

INSIDE THE TRANSPORTER:

Vance steps inside and the door closes. He stands cramped in the small, bright chamber, game face on.

ADA (O.S.)
Charging.

The vast dynamos of the Lang Transporter RUMBLE to life.

VANCE
Athena. Transit to Erix. Stand by.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Standing by.

The sound of the dynamos rise to a HOWL.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM:

The scientists watch as electrical arcs spatter across the transporter. The noise is incredible. Everyone is riveted by the machine kicking into high gear.

Calculations race across the monitors... graphically analyzing every centimeter of Vance's body, internally and externally.

INSIDE THE TRANSPORTER:

Vance closes his eyes against the light and noise. Sweat runs down his cheek.

The dynamos reach a SCREAMING PITCH and hang there.

MARBECK (O.S.)
Full charge. On your signal.

VANCE
Athena. Hit it.

BOOM. Blinding light.

Pure energy hammers through the transport chamber: for a split second, Vance is a human lightning rod...

...and then silence.

Vance stands stoically, wisps of smoke rising from his armor.

He climbs out of the gateway, a similar "closet" to the transporter on Earth's end but less technically developed.

He's in the...

CARGO HOLD OF A SHIP

He walks across the empty hold to a set of BAY DOORS and then stands before them. Takes a deep breath... he's about to see something no human has ever seen... another planet with the capacity for life.

He presses the button... and the bay doors grind open, not the slim door he expected but a MASSIVE SLAB OF ARMOR PLATE.

He looks out at...

THE PLANET ERIX:

Smoky yellow clouds race across a blood-red sky. Lightning flashes, and where it strikes a ribbon of fire twists and fades. Pockets of gas in the atmosphere flame intensely then burn out quickly. This happens constantly.

The landscape is a jungle out of a child's nightmare: everything is moving. There's no clear division between plant and animal. It howls and rages and feeds on itself.

Vance stares, transfixed...

VANCE
Jesus.

Vance steps out, and the ground crunches under his boots and the bay doors grind closed behind him.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK, revealing the ship that made the 20-year journey to Erix: *DESCENDANT.*

Then we notice: tread tracks. The four sets of tracks in the dirt move off in four different directions, laying highways of crushed vegetation and ruin from their massive wheels.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Athena, get me an eye in the sky.

Just like on the moon, a MISSILE fires off of the back of Vance's armor... rises rapidly before exploding... leaving a hovering SATELLITE.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Satellite system online.

VANCE
Tap into the transportation network so they can run visuals back home and then show me Crawler Three.

A blue marker on his visor display immediately points down the path to his left. Crawler Three is out of sight over the horizon. A readout gives the distance: 124 KILOMETERS.

Vance takes a step in that direction. VINES wriggle toward him across the ground.

Vance, wide-eyed, skips back from them. He laughs at himself, but then Athena's voice wipes the smile off his face...

ATHENA'S VOICE
Multiple targets incoming.

And right then, two gliding PREDATORS burst from the jungle - big and terrifyingly fast. They're more like boomerangs then animals, designed only to kill. Gleaming TUSKS jut from their shoulders.

Vance has his pulse rifle up in a flash and FIRES, sending ORANGE ENERGY BLASTS at the monsters.

The predators are cut down out of the sky, and they skid to a stop on the ground, flopping like fish out of water in the dirt.

Vance turns away from them, satisfied... then...

ATHENA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Incoming, incoming, incoming, incoming, incoming...

A second wave of predators erupts from the left side of the jungle... not two, but TWENTY!

Vance FIRES... taking out the first couple, but there are just too many of them...

They POUNCE... those tusks punching through his armor, piercing right through his abdomen and chest.

His pulse rifle fires convulsively but it's too late.

Vance's breathing catches in his throat. He drops to a knee, draws a last breath, and...

DIES!

Just one meter from the doors of the transporter.

The violence shocks the jungle into motion. Winged things explode into flight, trees claw at the air. It's a vision of Hell and as a tree ROARS... just then, we...

CUT TO:

THE TRANSPORTER FACILITY:

...where the chamber doors open and Vance steps out into the room.

He's untouched, his armor unmarked.

A few thin wisps of smoke rise from his shoulders.

VANCE
How are we doing?

HE'S REALLY ALIVE.

FROM THE CONTROL ROOM:

MARBECK
Time of death: 1 minute, thirty two seconds.

VANCE
What?!

BANNEKER
We didn't even have time to pull you out of the machine.

Vance is shocked...

VANCE
How far did he get?

MARBECK
One meter.

VANCE
Show me everything.

And with that, we...

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL ROOM - DAY

Vance is out of his armor and on a hospital bed, wired up and hooked up to a host of medical machinery.

Banneker, Marbeck and Ada are in here, along with some medical staff, including a rugged physician, DOCTOR ANDREWS.

DOCTOR ANDREWS
CBC and metabolic panel are normal. There's moderate elevation of your muscle enzymes and potassium, but that's consistent with the energy you absorbed. CT scans of the head, chest and abdomen show no evidence of trauma or internal damage. EEG shows no seizure activity. You look a little tired but everything's coming up stable.

Dr. Andrews adjusts the fluids going into Vance's arm.

VANCE
You do any medic work in the field, Doc?

DR. ANDREWS
I was in Asia. Saw my share of war wounds.

VANCE
(nods)
How long you been here?

DR. ANDREWS
Just over a month. You're going to need a little rest and a good dose of fluids.

VANCE
I'm ready to go again.

BANNEKER
Vance, you just died.

VANCE
Wrong. A copy of myself just died.
(beat)
I'm ready to go back. Right now.

Marbeck looks to Ada...

MARBECK
What do you think, Ada?

ADA
There are so many variables... the machine is exploiting quantum superposition to create virtual particles over space and time... I mean we're actually bending space for the first time...we just have no way of monitoring the physiological ramifications of sending an instantaneous copy of a human being twenty-two light years away.

VANCE
The doc says I'm good as new.

The doc shrugs.

Vance smiles a soldier's smile... like a boxer ready for the bell to ding. All eyes turn to Marbeck...

MARBECK
We'll charge up the machine.

CUT BACK TO:

THE TRANSPORTER FACILITY - DAY

Where Vance, in full armor, steps into the chamber again.

This time, his ID tag reads SHADOW 2. The door closes behind him.

MARBECK (O.S.)
Stand by... on your signal.

Again, the dynamos howl in unleashed fury.

VANCE
Athena. Hit it.

A BOOM and a blinding FLASH.

Lightning strikes inside the chamber and... WHAP... we're back to...

EXT. ERIX - DESCENDANT - DAY

...the hostile, hellish planet when the bay doors open.

Shadow Two emerges, trailing wisps of smoke. He gapes at the alien wilderness again, this time his eyes determined and the cannon rifle already shouldered...

ATHENA'S VOICE
Fatality. Shadow One.

VANCE
What?

And just then... he looks over to see the first copy of himself getting mauled by the predators, just two meters away...

VANCE (CONT'D)
(shocked)
Good god...

...and just as he sees the original copy of Vance fall to his knees and die...

ATHENA'S VOICE
Incoming. Multiple targets.

Shadow Two swings the rifle around just as three of the PREDATORS move off the dead copy and head for him. But before we see what happens, we...

CUT TO:

INT. TRANSPORTER FACILITY - DAY

...where Vance emerges from the machine and heads for the Control Room...

VANCE
How's he doing?

IN THE CONTROL ROOM:

BANNEKER
The signal's just coming through now...

And as Vance enters the Control Room and a video monitor comes to life, we...

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. ERIX - DAY

...where Shadow Two BLASTS gunfire into the predators... they stagger, raging against their injuries, and go down.

Shadow Two knows what's coming so he jumps away on his jets, as...

ATHENA'S VOICE
Incoming. Incoming. Incoming.

PREDATORS again erupt from the jungle. The leaders pounce as Shadow Two lands, running down the CRAWLER THREE PATH.

The predators stay with him, flanking him. Just as they attack he jumps out of their path over a tree. The predators refuse to follow and for a moment Vance seems safe...

...but before he can even hit the ground, a SABER TREE snatches him out of the air, piercing his armor with curved blades.

Shadow Two gasps, like he can't believe he got caught so quickly again, blood squirts out of his mouth and...

Shadow Two dies. Immediately, we...

CUT TO:

IN THE CONTROL ROOM:

...disappointment is etched on all the team's faces, watching a flat image from the eye in the sky on Erix.

VANCE
Goddammit!

BANNEKER
What happened?

Vance pounds his fist into a cabinet, and as he storms out...

VANCE
We need a battle plan. And I need better armor.

He's out the door...

BANNEKER
You heard him... let's get holographs of every move he's made. Every angle. None of this flat shit. Time to go to work.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Everyone stands around the holography table: Marbeck, Banneker, Ada, Vance and several others.

In Holograph: grainy satellite video of the planet Erix.

Banneker points at the landscape surrounding the *Descendant*...

BANNEKER
What's all this movement?

VANCE
The jungle.

IN HOLOGRAPH: Electrical energy erupts from the ship.

ADA
That energy discharge is the creation of a large mass. You.

THE IMAGE ZOOMS IN. A blurry figure emerges from the bay doors.

ADA (CONT'D)
Or rather... Shadow Two. And these are the native predators...

SHAPES try to maul him, but Shadow Two manages to kill a few of them... then flees. He's pursued, and impaled on the tree.

ADA (CONT'D)
Death at... three minutes, twenty-two seconds. Twice as long as the first copy.

VANCE
He saw it.

ADA
Saw what?

VANCE
Back it up... look.

They back it up and now we notice from this angle that the second shadow arrives just as the first one gets mauled.

VANCE (CONT'D)
He landed before the other one died.

BANNEKER
Christ.

ADA
It's a side-effect of bending space. We went back to Einstein's old theories regarding the space-time continuum. The bend must pull time with it. Dr. Lang thought something like this might happen, but there's no way to control it... we just don't know enough...

Banneker points to the predators in the holograph.

BANNEKER
Then let's concentrate on what we do know: it was the same type of predator after him both times. He was on the defensive before he could even get going. Then he gets impaled on some sort of vegetation...

MARBECK
The only data we've received from the crawlers told us there was twice the biomass on Erix as on Earth. We knew that meant a better chance of success with our terraformers, but we never got up a localized satellite to see this before now.

VANCE
We need to overhaul the armor. Something that withstands a hell of a lot more force than what we've got. Get me a ten-gauge plate on a heavy-planet chassis. One Kehlor R-10 railgun. Ten thousand armor-piercing rounds.
(MORE)

VANCE (CONT'D)
One hundred Mark-Six field grenades. Extended flamethrower with a signal ignition.

Everyone stares at him.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Is someone writing this down?

The APPRENTICE SCIENTISTS in the room all spring into action.

MARBECK
I guess everyone should know...

The holography table turns into a satellite image of the moon -- specifically a crater where a GIANT MACHINE is in the early stages of assembly.

MARBECK (CONT'D)
...they've laid the foundation for the Hellfire weapon on the moon. They're moving faster than we thought.

VANCE
How much time?

A clock appears on the bottom of the image... *16 days, 13 hours, 25 minutes...*

VANCE (CONT'D)
Sixteen days? Jesus. Let's get going on that armor.

The CAMERA PUSHES IN on Vance, his eyes hard, determined.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE VANCE'S QUARTERS - DAY

Vance moves out of his quarters and into a corridor, bouncing that rubber ball as he goes... off the floor, off walls... his hand-eye coordination is perfect.

He approaches the door to...

ADA'S OFFICE

...and stands in the door frame for a second, just watching her from behind.

After a moment, she feels eyes on her and spins around...

ADA
Yes?

VANCE
I'm not sure these copies are capable. Maybe my Shadows fail because they're flawed in some way.

ADA
What the transporter sends is you. The process is detailed down to the smallest elementary subatomic particle. The man on Erix is as much you as you are. What you know, he knows. What you can do, he can do.

VANCE
Yeah... you say that, but I've walked away from over two-hundred combat missions; I've taken everything the Hedge has thrown at me short of walking into a Hellfire beam and I'm still here. These shadows are missing something...

ADA
Or maybe you're just lucky you're here and they're there.

Vance's eyes settle on some photographs on her desk. One is a TEENAGE ADA sitting on top of a horse.

VANCE
Is that you?

ADA
Yeah. I used to show. Before the virus killed them all.

Another photo is Ada standing with an OLDER MAN. He nods at it:

VANCE
Is that Dr. Lang?

ADA
Yes. He's... he's also my father.

Vance waits for an explanation...

ADA (CONT'D)
I used my mother's name in school. I didn't want to get by as the daughter of anyone.
(beat)
(MORE)

ADA (CONT'D)
After I finished my post-grad work, he convinced me to come to the continent to work with him, but my mother refused to leave her home in Tokyo...

Vance nods, his mouth a thin line...

VANCE
A lot of people refused to leave.

ADA
Yes.

VANCE
The people we're fighting... they don't think like we do. They figured out how to kill massive amounts of people while preserving the land and resources and they did it without blinking. They're cowards.
(beat)
The only way to stop a force like that is to meet it with a greater force.

ADA
Or to change the way it thinks. Through better ideas. Through compassion.

VANCE
"Compassion" never ended a war. Fighting did.

Ada shakes her head. After a moment...

ADA
(changing the subject)
How's the new armor coming?

VANCE
Banneker's already moving to prototype. You want to go take a look?

ADA
Sure.

He bounces the ball again, catches it in a flash, and she joins him to move back down the corridor...

IN THE CORRIDOR:

He keeps bouncing the ball and catching it as they head toward Banneker's quarters. Bounce, catch... bounce, catch...

Bounce... he goes to catch it... we hear a small CLICK... and Vance misses. The ball just hits off his fingers and rolls down the hallway away from him... Vance stares at his hand like this is the first time he's ever missed catching the ball.

He looks from his hand to the ball, puzzled, trying to figure out what that CLICK sound was he heard...

BOOOOM! The hallway in front of them explodes as a BOMB goes off inside the building, just down from where they stand.

Vance swings Ada around, protecting her from the blast, but it's just far enough away to not hit them with any force.

VANCE
(quickly)
You okay?

Ada nods, seeing Vance in a new light for the first time... as a protector... It shows on her face.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Stay here!

Instinctively, Vance races toward the smoke and fire and confusion until he is standing outside...

BANNEKER'S QUARTERS:

...where a lot of the damage is done. The steel door that opens into his room is warped and smoldering from the explosion.

Vance can see into the room through the twisted metal, where a bloody Banneker is lying prostrate on the floor. Flames are licking the walls around him.

VANCE
Warren!

Vance tries to move the door but it won't budge...

VANCE (CONT'D)
Warren!

INSIDE THE ROOM:

Banneker shakes the cobwebs out, realizes he's in deep shit as the room continues to go up in flames.

IN THE CORRIDOR:

Vance scrambles to find something with leverage to get the door open...

He kicks away at a row of pipes until one of them breaks free... then as fast he can, he wedges the pipe into the door frame... as Banneker crawls over to the other side of the door, now choking on the thick smoke in the room....

Vance strains with everything he has, putting all his weight into the pipe as Ada tries to help. They both watch as Banneker passes out just out of reach on the other side of the door.

Vance summons strength he didn't know he had and puts everything he's got into the pipe...

...the door moves, just enough for Vance to get his arm in there...

...and punch a BUTTON marked FIRE CONTROL.

A fire snuffing GAS sprays from nozzles on the ceiling, instantly killing the fire.

INT. MEDICAL ROOM - DAY

Dr. Andrews tends to a bruised and blackened Banneker while Vance, Ada and Marbeck confer.

MARBECK
You're sure it was deliberate?

VANCE
(nodding)
I heard the pulse grenade click just before it exploded. I'd know that sound anywhere.

MARBECK
Are you saying there's a saboteur inside the Science Agency?

BANNEKER
Isn't that obvious?

MARBECK
It's just... I can't see how... we have special clearances...

VANCE
It's someone on the inside. Someone with the right papers and access to military hardware.

MARBECK
It just doesn't make sense. Everyone with access to that part of the building has been with us for years. They could have ended this operation long before...

VANCE
How come the gassers didn't go off until I hit the override?

Marbeck is flustered...

VANCE (CONT'D)
Someone wanted that room on fire... I suggest you start by looking at who has access to the emergency mainframes...

Realization and fatigue spread over Marbeck's face.

MARBECK
Yes, okay.

BANNEKER
(to Vance)
What about the new armor? Did we lose it?

VANCE
(nods)
We'll have to start over. But don't worry about that. You get better. Just do it quickly.

BANNEKER
I'm fine.

DR. ANDREWS
He will be. Just needs a little rest.

VANCE
(to Marbeck)
Get me a blowtorch.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

Sparks fly as Vance welds extra AMMO PODS on to the armor.

Nearby, apprentices unpack more AMMUNITION and hand it to him as he continues to modify his suit, making up its new design as he goes. The apprentices are also trying to watch the broadcast as they do.

But Vance is focused. Sparks fly off the suit as Vance welds, and those sparks become...

EXT. ERIX - DESCENDANT - DAY

...a FANTASTIC ELECTRICAL DISPLAY erupting from the station, as lightning stabs into the clouds pouring from the giant machine.

SHADOW THREE steps out in his modified armor, RAILGUN in one hand, MISSILE LAUNCHER in the other.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Fatality. Shadow Two.

Three looks down the road just in time to see Shadow Two leap up and get impaled on the Saber tree.

He watches, sickened. He clenches his jaw and his eyes squint in grim determination at the jungle reflected in his visor.

The badge on his helmet reads SHADOW THREE. He takes a step down the path, then another, then speeds up into a full sprint, running right at the predators that were chasing his last shadow, he raises his gun and we...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

Two armor ID plates are bolted to the wall next to where his armor waits: Shadow 1, and Shadow 2.

Then Vance steps into the frame and bolts a new plate up: Shadow 3. He looks pissed.

INT. GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Ada peers into the map table as Vance watches from the other side.

IN HOLOGRAM: the satellite map of Erix we've come to know. Shadow Three's fatality marker blinks, a lonely star in the alien wilderness. It's much further along the trail then the two previous fatality markers.

VANCE
Shadow 3 did five-point-three kilometers before he died. Shadow 4 carried more missiles...

IN HOLOGRAM: Shadow 4 emerges from the transportation chamber and blazes down the trail.

VANCE (CONT'D)
...which he runs out of here. At two point five hours, he visits the body of Shadow 3.

ADA
Wouldn't he know something there killed Shadow Three and he'd then go out of his way to avoid it?

VANCE
Shadow 4's a soldier. He's going for more ammunition.

BANNEKER
Right...

VANCE
At five hours, he stops shooting. I think his pulse rifle failed. It'd be red-hot by then... after the rifle quits, he doesn't last thirty seconds. He did seven kilometers.

The image freezes.

ADA
That's progress.

VANCE
It's still a failure.

BANNEKER
And a long way from Crawler Three. Nearly a hundred kilometers short.

VANCE
The whole planet is like one giant anthill. Everywhere a shadow turns, he's stepping on a mound of insects and getting stung.

ADA
We've realized Erix has twice the background radiation of Earth. That means a higher mutation rate which means faster evolution.
(MORE)

ADA (CONT'D)
It's a natural arms race... the same evolution that produces tiger claws and turtle shells and porcupine quills on Earth...

VANCE
Produces killing machines on Erix.

ADA
Yes. To put it simply.

BANNEKER
I'll tell you one thing... I won't be sorry to see that crawler up and running so we can give that god-forsaken hellhole a Biblical flood. Wipe 'em all out.

Vance agrees...

VANCE
I don't think we can follow the trail through the jungle any more. It's just too slow...

Banneker nods...

VANCE (CONT'D)
What if we move here... through the highlands.

He taps on a remote.

ON THE HOLOGRAM: A new trail plants itself across the landscape: scaling the cliffs to the highlands, traveling many kilometers out of the way, and descending again near Crawler Three.

BANNEKER
It's an extra 20 kilometers and one beast of a climb...

VANCE
But there are less biomass readings.

They look at that trail on the map, registering the new path... away from the fatality markers.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHLAND PLAIN - DAY (ERIX)

A dry flatland studded with rocks and low, twisted trees.

SHADOW 5 flees across the plain, donning new reflective armor, firing into the sky while in a full sprint.

The shadows of winged creatures spiral around him on the ground.

Suddenly, A WINGED RAPTOR falls from the heavens like a guided missile and smashes him to the ground, its talons piercing his armor.

Vance chokes on his own blood, and dies. Other raptors land. They squabble over the body, and just then...

...THE CAMERA WHIPS BACKWARD ACROSS THE PLAIN, KILOMETER AFTER KILOMETER...

...to where SHADOW 6 is watching through binoculars the demise of Shadow 5. Watching himself die never loses it's effect... he narrows his eyes into slits, pissed.

He watches the RAPTORS as they finish with the body and take off flying in a different direction.

Shadow 6 starts running as fast as he can in a slightly different direction than his predecessor, and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

...the SATELLITE IMAGE of the lunar weapon being assembled. It looks like the Hegemony has made quite a bit of progress and the machine is over half-way completed.

The clock reads: *10 days, 13 hours.*

Vance, Ada, and Banneker aren't looking at it; they're sitting at the large HOLOGRAPHY TABLE, reviewing the progress of a new Shadow: Shadow 9.

Dr. Andrews is there, working on Vance, drawing blood. He inserts a needle into Vance's arm.

IN HOLOGRAPH: Shadow 9 struggles through the highlands, a tiny, indistinct figure. Swarming shapes pursue him. Flashes of light as he fires his rifle, his grenade launcher, his jump jets.

He stops moving and a fatality marker pops up on the display.

BANNEKER
Seven hours, forty two minutes.

ADA
How many times are we going to watch this?

VANCE
(rubs his eyes)
Every choice he makes is a message. Every mistake is a lesson. Shadows 7, 8 and 9 each got a little further. What I know, my next shadow knows, right? Then I need to know everything.

Ada watches Vance watch his Shadow... Vance winces from the doctor jabbing his arm again.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Ow. Shit.

DR. ANDREWS
Your veins are constricting. The energy from the transporter is burning your body from the inside out.

VANCE
So fix me.

DR. ANDREWS
You need rest.

VANCE
(to Banneker)
I need some of those nanobot capsules.

DR. ANDREWS
I know the Science Agency was close to developing those here... before everything shut down and went into Prometheus.

BANNEKER
Figures.

Just then, Marbeck comes into the room, looking very grave...

MARBECK
It's happening.

CUT TO:

A 3-D HOLOGRAPH VIDEO:

The leader of the Continent, LAWRENCE BRODY, looks gravely into the camera, giving the speech of his life. Surrounding him are his family and some dignitaries.

A banner at the bottom lets us know he's the President of the United Continent.

BRODY
...no choice but to begin negotiations of an unconditional surrender to the Hegemony. I will assure you good, people, that neither I, nor my family, nor any member of my government, will be among those randomly selected to enter Prometheus. As a society, as a nation, what binds us together is decency...

The CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS out of the holograph screen to show us that we are in...

THE TRAINING ROOM - DAY

...where Vance, Ada, Marbeck, Banneker and almost all of the Science Agency staff are crammed in, watching the holograph of the President.

BRODY
I ask for that decency now, that you not panic, that you show our enemies what separates their barbarism from our freedom...

And then we cut to...

A CITY SQUARE:

...filled with CROWDS OF PEOPLE from the Continent, surrounding a similar holograph in a circle, which is projecting out to them like a theater in the round. No matter which side of the holograph they face, it looks like the President is talking directly to them. He is trying to remain stoic, but fighting back emotion...

BRODY
...that we prove to them we have been fighting for what is just and right and good. And that what happens here... my God, what happens here matters.

There are citizens openly weeping, and yet... another emotion is unmistakable: pride.

And we cut back to:

THE TRAINING ROOM:

BRODY
God bless you all. And God bless the United Continent.

Vance looks from the holograph to Ada...

VANCE
I don't have time to rest.

ADA
(softly)
No.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR IN THE SCIENCE AGENCY - DAY

...Vance, Banneker, Ada and Marbeck move quickly down the hallway, refocused...

VANCE
How's the data coming on the biological life?

ADA
Better. We're running simulation software to sort the aliens into types using size and behavior, watching the way they think. Species A defends its territory but won't leave it. Species B won't attack you if you hold still. Species C will follow you in ones and twos, but only attack in groups.

BANNEKER
If we can run game-theory analysis on their movements, I might be able to plot a new route.

MARBECK
Whatever you guys need, you'll have it.

VANCE
Good. I refuse to watch another one of these Shadows go down. I need to --

BOOOOMMMMMMM! A huge bomb goes off in front of them, knocking them all to the floor. Emergency lights kick on and the fire controlling GAS SPRAYS...

Vance is dazed... his ears ringing. He slowly climbs to his feet, trying to regain his senses but everything is foggy, there is smoke and fire everywhere... then he hears...

MARBECK
Prometheus!

Fuck... he scrambles to his feet, helps the others up and they hurry to...

HANGAR ONE:

...which holds the Prometheus ship. Workers and apprentices are scrambling in every direction...

...but thankfully, the ship is still completely intact, although there has been some major damage to some of the servicing equipment.

A large TRANSPORT TRUCK rests on its side, blown apart...

...and while Vance, Ada, and Banneker all go to help the victims...

...Marbeck hurries over to an apprentice, LIVINGSTON, who is trying to regain his wits...

They have to yell over the commotion...

MARBECK
What happened?

LIVINGSTON
I don't know! I don't bloody well know. Darden was delivering thermal protects in the big rig when he accidentally tipped a rail cart. Three guys went to put the cart back on its track, must've seen something, started yelling 'Bomb! Bomb! Bomb!' and... the rail cart blew up all over the place!

Another apprentice, REYES, hollers over the noise...

REYES
If Darden hadn't 'a knocked that rail car over it would have parked right under Prometheus...

While this is going on, Vance, Ada and Banneker are helping anyone they can find.

Vance kneels over a MAN who looks like he took the worst of the explosion in the face and chest...

VANCE
Where's the medic?! Where's the goddamn medic?!

...he's clamping his hand over the blood pouring out of the man's chest, but when he looks down again, the man's eyes roll back in his head.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Damn it!

CUT TO:

INT. DIRECTOR'S CHAMBER - DAY

Vance, Banneker, and Marbeck watch a 2-D holo of the accident and explosion...

ON THE HOLO: A truck delivering goods to the giant space ship accidentally backs into a rail cart.

Three men go to right the rail cart, get spooked by what they see, run, and BOOM! The truck takes a lot of the explosion, saving the ship from a great deal of damage. It's just lucky it was there.

VANCE
(re: the holo)
Can you back it up? Get the reverse angle?

MARBECK
We tried, but the holo camera wasn't turning on its axis for some reason. That's why it's 2-D.

BANNEKER
He must've tampered with the camera. So we can't see who planted the bomb.

VANCE
(pissed, to Marbeck)
There are two war fronts now. One on Erix and one here.

MARBECK
What do you recommend?

VANCE
You should have hourly explosive sweeps around Prometheus. Contain the staff to a manageable 100 men and have every single person working on that ship searched on the way in and on the way out. People with the longest service time here chosen first.

Marbeck nods, vigorously.

MARBECK
Done.

Vance looks at the satellite feed of the Hegemony lunar weapon being assembled. *7 days, 1 hour.*

VANCE
And get a list of everyone who hasn't been with the Science Agency for at least a year.

Just then, Ada comes in.

ADA
Prometheus is still fully functioning. We can launch on schedule. A few tiles need to be replaced but all in all, we got really lucky...

MARBECK
Thank God.

BANNEKER
When's the launch?

ADA
Five days.

VANCE
It won't matter unless we give them a place to arrive where they can breathe air and drink water.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNGLE - DUSK (ERIX)

SHADOW 12 races through the undergrowth, a gun in each hand. Whistling SPINES like arrows tear through the jungle around him, skipping off tree-trunks.

He emerges into a clearing... and stops short. SCORPION-LIKE CREATURES wait for him there: monstrosities whose tails hurl deadly spines.

Pursuing alien Scorpions burst from the jungle behind him. Shadow 12 is caught in the middle; he leaps to the top of a round rock.

Scorpions swarm out of the jungle, surrounding him. He pivots in place, guns raised. Hope drains from his face.

He starts shooting as a storm of spines flies at his face in answer, and we...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. WORK STATION - MORNING

Ada is fast asleep on top of a pile of papers, computer print-outs... she didn't even make it back to bed, just passed out on top of her work station.

She wakes to see Vance's face, distraught. He's looking at a holograph of Erix.

ADA
Didn't make it?

He shakes his head, doesn't want to talk. Disappointment is apparent in every crease on his face.

With that, she turns on the light, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes.

VANCE
I don't understand what's wrong. Why I can't... why they can't complete the mission...

ADA
Maybe your force is being met with a greater force.

Vance looks at her, chewing on that.

VANCE
Maybe so.

ADA
I can tell you one thing. I was wrong before, when I thought we didn't need a soldier. I'm thankful they brought you in.

VANCE
Yeah?

ADA
What you provide is in short supply right now.

VANCE
What's that?

ADA
Hope.

Vance nods.

VANCE
Come with me. I want to show you something.

ADA
Where are we going?

VANCE
To the surface.

EXT. CONTINENT STREETS - DAY

Ada and Vance walk through the urban sprawl of the continent while airborne trolleys race overhead.

There is a sadness on each face they pass... but also pride and resolve. No one is panicking. There is no anarchy.

Vance leads Ada around a corner to...

A CHINATOWN STREET:

...where all the signs change to Chinese characters and Asians move around, also calm and peaceful.

ADA
Where are you taking me?

VANCE
Just follow me.

They make their way down a...

CHINATOWN ALLEY:

...and finally make it to a small black door. Vance knocks on it and waits.

After a moment, an old CHINESE MAN opens the door. Vance talks to him in Chinese for a moment, and then the Old Man turns and hollers back over his shoulder.

Soon, a young man, WU, opens the door and lights up when he sees Vance...

WU
Conrad!

VANCE
How you doing, Wu?

WU
About like everyone else. Just in a daze.

VANCE
Yeah...

WU
Shit, what am I saying? Come on in... I'm sure you want to see her.

He opens the door for them and as they step in...

ADA
Her?

VANCE
Just wait...

...and the CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM INTO...

A GIANT WAREHOUSE:

...converted into a large animal pen, with a huge dirt area in the middle. And as our eyes adjust to the light... Ada can make out something in the pen... and finally, we see it...

...a beautiful jet black HORSE, pawing at the dirt, standing by herself.

ADA
Oh my God.

Vance beams at Ada. Wu joins them at the railing...

WU
She's been doing great. Eats like, well...

Just then, the horse trots over to where they stand and Ada reaches up to touch its muzzle, her eyes shining.

ADA
How...?

VANCE
Wu's father was a breeder before the wipe-out. Somehow, Ruby here managed to survive the virus...

ADA
But there's only like...

WU
...five left on the Continent. I know...

ADA
We have to...

VANCE
I've already done it. There's a place for her on Prometheus. And for you, Wu...

WU
I don't want special favors...

VANCE
It's already done.

Wu leans in and strokes Ruby, his eyes filled with tears...

WU
Thank you. Thank you so much.

Ada continues to stroke Ruby's muzzle.

ADA
She's so beautiful...

WU
Would you like to ride her now?

Ada's eyes light up...

INT. GIANT WAREHOUSE - LATER

Vance watches as Wu helps Ada into the saddle. She looks absolutely stunning on top of the horse... with her hair down and a genuine smile on her face...

Vance can't help but grin at the scene in front of him, a small respite from a world of increasingly little hope...

Ada waves at him as she guides Ruby around the pen, Vance waves back, grinning.

EXT. STALLS - DAY

Vance and Ada lead Ruby back to a horse stall.

ADA
I never thought I'd see one again. Thank you.

VANCE
You looked like a natural up there. I was glad to see...

But his sentence stops as she abruptly spins around and kisses him. Hard.

Surprised... he wraps his arms around her and lets the kiss happen naturally, meaningfully.

After a moment, they pull back...

VANCE (CONT'D)
I think we should...

ADA
(interrupts)
I think we should do what we may never get a chance to do again.

She pulls him into her.

She leans back against the wooden rails of the stall, kissing him harder, more passionately, more physically until the world and all its problems completely fall away.

DISSOLVE TO:

CHINATOWN STREET:

They exit out of the warehouse, hand in hand. And there is something fresher, more hopeful on their faces.

ADA
When we get back, I'd like to try running a simulation of...

But she stops, because Vance is not looking at her. He's fixed on <u>someone</u> up ahead in the crowd.

ADA (CONT'D)
What is it?

VANCE
I think that's the doctor...

ADA
Andrews?

VANCE
Yeah.

ADA
What's he doing up here?

VANCE
That's a good question. Come on...

Vance and Ada follow discreetly as Andrews, oblivious to the fact he's picked up a tail, hurries on. One thing is obvious... Doctor Andrews is nervous.

DOWN THE STREET:

Andrews ducks around a corner that leads to a seedier neighborhood.

Vance and Ada continue to follow, trying to stay in the shadows.

ADA
Didn't he say he was new to the Science Agency?

VANCE
(grimacing)
Yeah. A month.

Vance peeks around the corner and spots Andrews, just as he turns and moves up into an APARTMENT BUILDING.

VANCE (CONT'D)
You head on back.

ADA
No way. If he's the bomber, I want to know.

VANCE
If he's the bomber, this could get ugly. I don't want you...

ADA
...to get hurt?

Vance shakes his head.

VANCE
To see what I'm going to do to him.

The look on his face says he is deadly serious. Slowly, she nods.

ADA
Okay.

She kisses him, and then walks off quickly, not waiting for more, not looking back over her shoulder.

Vance narrows his eyes and ascends the landing to the dingy apartment building.

INSIDE THE BUILDING:

...he waits for his eyes to adjust to the light. The place looks like a junkie haven... ...a place where people have been coming to avoid reality long before the world was about to end.

A JUNKIE approaches Vance with his hand out...

JUNKIE
You got some shutter? Gimme some shutter...

Vance hands over a couple of bills...

VANCE
(whispers)
You see a guy, red-head, goatee, just came in here?

The Junkie points up the stairwell...

JUNKIE
Triangle.

Vance peers up the stairwell into the darkness.

ON THE THIRD FLOOR:

He looks at the doors which are each marked with a different shape... circle, square, rectangle, star...

...and then he sees one marked with a faded RED TRIANGLE.

Vance moves to it, and can hear voices coming from inside it... angry FOREIGN VOICES -- and the doctor's voice too -- yelling at each other.

Vance reaches behind his back and pulls out a HANDGUN. He positions himself so he can take a good kick at the door, gets the gun ready...

And WHAM!!!

INSIDE THE ROOM:

...the door explodes inward from Vance's kick, leaving him to fill the door frame.

The doctor is in the middle of a transaction with some low-life BLACK MARKET guys... he's handing over some money and taking some equipment... what looks like explosive devices.

VANCE
You shouldn't have been so careless, Doctor...

He raises his gun...

DR. ANDREWS
Wait!!

...and before he shoots, we...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

Ada's head swings up as Vance steps into the room. A wave of relief passes over her face.

But Vance's eyes are on fire, like he just got his hands dirty and he's got his game face on.

VANCE
I'm ready for another jump.

Scientists and apprentices scramble to get ready as Vance heads over to his armored suit. Ada stands and goes to him, keeping her posture professional...

ADA
Are you okay?

VANCE
Fine.

ADA
What about...?

VANCE
I did what I had to do.

Ada nods, like she wants to say more but can't.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Don't say anything to the director. We can't let anyone relax. Not until this is over.

She nods, understanding.

The CAMERA FINDS VANCE'S face, and pushes in on it, eyes fierce, severe, until his face becomes...

EXT. JUNGLE OF ERIX - DAY

...SHADOW 13'S FACE as he crouches down next to the dead body of SHADOW 12. He looks at the dead face, his own face, distraught. This is really affecting him now.

He quickly switches out weapons packs, reloading his rifles and checking around him for animal life.

Just as quickly, he's up and running through the jungle...

...until he reaches...

AN OPEN PLAIN:

...glad to leave that jungle behind. It's definitely unchartered territory. He stoops down, produces a laser cutter, and carves into the rock: "Safe Zone. - Shadow 13."

That done, he takes a quick swig of water and heads out across the barren plain.

SHADOW 13
Athena, give me status.

ATHENA'S VOICE
Forty kilometers to Crawler Three.

SHADOW 13
Vitals?

ATHENA'S VOICE
Stable.

SHADOW 13
Biomass readings?

ATHENA'S VOICE
Two kilometers ahead.

SHADOW 13
What are we looking at?

ATHENA'S VOICE
Unidentified lifeforms.

SHADOW 13
Is there a way around them?

ATHENA'S VOICE
Charting new course.

Shadow 13 nods and takes off running across the plain...

...from behind him, we NOTICE something moving just under the soil, like a burrowing animal, following him.

That something is joined by another 6, then 12, all burrowing in the direction Shadow 13 is moving, burrowing faster and faster in his wake, like underground sharks homing in on chum.

And as the sheer speed of these underground creatures registers, we...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

...where that string of armor ID plates are bolted to the wall next to where his armor waits: now numbering Shadows 1 through 12.

Vance steps into the frame and bolts up the plate for Shadow 13.

He then joins Ada and Banneker at the holography table. Marbeck is on a com-link in the background...

ON THE HOLOGRAPH:

...a fatality marker for Shadow 13 shows us that he's made it over halfway to the Crawler. But still not far enough.

IN THE FACILITY:

VANCE
Thirteen times. That's thirteen times I've been killed.

ADA
Not you. Just copies.

BANNEKER
I guess we're lucky someone finally figured out how to feed the war machine without actually killing anyone.

VANCE
But someone is dying.

It's getting to Vance, it's obvious.

BANNEKER
How many times have you had to order men to their deaths to achieve a greater good? Ten times? A dozen? This is no different.

Vance nods, tries to shrug it off.

VANCE
You're right. It's the way of the grunt. Follow orders, complete the mission, try to get out alive.

BANNEKER
Look, buddy. Here's the solution: let's get number fourteen through safely this time.

VANCE
What Fourteen needs isn't a better way to get there, but better equipment.

BANNEKER
We're using the most advanced weaponry the Continent has available.

Marbeck cups a hand over the com-link's receiver...

MARBECK
Actually... as of thirty minutes ago, that may not be true.

All eyes move to Marbeck.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROLLEY - DAY

A trolley shoots across the city at breakneck speed... with Marbeck, Ada, Vance and Banneker on board.

MARBECK
...she was shot down over Newcastle trying to circumnavigate our elliptical sensors and fly an attack mission into the city. No one on board is alive...

VANCE
...but the equipment?

MARBECK
(nods)
Four Hegemony light infantry Rucker skill suits loaded with the most advanced weaponry we've ever captured.

BANNEKER
Nanobots?

MARBECK
Unfortunately no. But I still think you'll like what you see...

...the trolley comes to a rest at a MILITARY BASE TERMINAL.

They all climb out on to a...

LANDING PLATFORM:

...where John Randall from the DOD is waiting for them, just like before.

RANDALL
Gentlemen... right this way...

He leads them around the side of a walled off area, past some GUARDS, and right up to...

A CRASH SITE:

...where a HEGEMONY SPACESHIP has been shot down and has crash-landed in an open field.

CREWS are excavating everything they can get from the crash site.

ADA
Why the hell are they still flying attack missions? They're going to blow us off the globe in another week...

VANCE
Because mercy is not in their nature.

Randall continues to lead them over to where an entire weapons cache has been salvaged from the wreck: GRENADES, CANNONS, ARMORED SUITS...

VANCE (CONT'D)
And now it's going to cost them.

He focuses in on one particular RED SUIT OF ARMOR and we...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

Vance walks out wearing the crimson red armor loaded with weapons. Banneker and Ada walk with him...

BANNEKER
It's weird seeing you in a Hedge suit.

Vance nods, weakly.

ADA
We've spent eighteen hours calibrating the transporter to handle your new arsenal...

BANNEKER
Milburn 20 Railgun. Hegemony Valkyrie Laser Rifle with ten thousand discharges from a single cell. Antimatter grenade launcher. And the Hedge suit we've revamped with Athena's monitoring system. Of course we've disabled the Hegemony Universal Positioning Unit. Last thing we need is you on Erix broadcasting to the universe where you are and where we're headed.

VANCE
Okay. You got the route coordinates?

BANNEKER
I'll go upload 'em now.

He hustles off. Ada looks at him tenderly.

ADA
Good luck, Vance. I think this may be the one.

She starts to move away, but...

VANCE
I need one more thing...

He holds a remote up to Ada's mouth.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Say hello to Athena.

ADA
(into remote)
Hello, Athena.

VANCE
Athena. System check.

Athena speaks - and her voice sounds just like Ada's now, with an electronic burr.

ADA'S VOICE
Power at one hundred percent. Sensor array online and nominal. No weapons rigged...

Ada smiles, getting it...

VANCE
I'll take all the help I can get.

With that, he heads toward the transporter... and we...

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

ON ERIX: Vance cuts his way through the jungle, only to have a tree suddenly swing sideways by itself and knock him off a cliff...

IN THE TRAINING FACILITY: He puts up another metal plate: SHADOW 14.

AT THE HOLOGRAPHY TABLE: Banneker and Ada help chart a new course.

ON ERIX: Vance is running balls out firing a flame thrower right at the CAMERA as SHAPES rise up from the ground all around him.

IN THE TRAINING FACILITY: He puts up another metal plate: SHADOW 15.

IN VANCE'S QUARTERS: Vance is studying feed-back data on a couple of monitors, charting a course on a map...

AT THE HOLOGRAPHY TABLE: A fatality marker shows us Shadow 16 is dead, but has made it over two-thirds of the way to the crawler.

ON ERIX: Vance, wearing a tag that says "Shadow 17," launches his jump jets to leap over a series of rocks... the earth is serrated, so he's jumping from rock to rock, over canyon after canyon. Suddenly... something snags him in mid-air and drives him down into the canyon, where he disappears...

IN THE TRAINING FACILITY: He puts up another metal plate... there is already one for Shadow 17, so this one reads SHADOW 18.

ON THE WALL: The satellite feed shows the lunar weapon is damn near completion. The clock reads: *2 days, 11 hours.*

And finally...

AT THE HOLOGRAPHY TABLE:

Vance is staring at the holography monitor, showing that death marker for Shadow 18.

Banneker and Ada look up at him.

VANCE
How far this last time?

BANNEKER
Only two kilometers short.

ADA
Prometheus leaves tomorrow morning at 8 AM. The lunar weapon is expected to be operational the day after.

BANNEKER
It's going to take at least 30 hours for Shadow 19 to get to the crawler. That gives us...

VANCE
Only enough time for one more chance.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

The entire Continent has turned out into the streets... making downtown into what looks like a giant parade.

People are openly weeping as they lay flowers down at the gates of the Science Agency.

Crowds of people are being ushered into the gates of the building, along with species of animals... while others cheer them on...

There is something beautiful about the way the Continent's citizens are handling this... no one is rushing the line or sneaking in through the gates or rioting...

...they are a proud people doing their damndest to show the Hegemony that they haven't given up.

In the cluster of citizens allowed to enter, Wu leads Ruby the horse. Both horse and trainer have their heads held high; Wu waves to the onlookers cheering them on.

The CAMERA MOVES AWAY FROM THE CROWD, up and over to a...

SCIENCE AGENCY BALCONY:

...where Vance and Ada watch the gathering.

They head back inside, through a conference room, and over to...

A GIANT ATRIUM:

...where they can look down four floors and see the crowds heading to Hangar One and the Prometheus ship in preparation for the imminent launch.

And in...

HANGAR ONE:

The crowds make their way slowly up into the belly of the giant ship.

Scientists and apprentices cheer them on... as well as the Continent's President and his family.

AT THE TOP OF THE ATRIUM:

Vance and Ada watch the masses.

VANCE
I want you to listen to me. I want you... I want you to go on that ship. Remember when you told me the Science Agency would let me have my family on Prometheus? Well, I've already talked to the director and he's going to speak to...

ADA
No.

VANCE
You said it's not about fighting force with a bigger force. It's about changing the way we think... winning them over with ideas. You were right...

ADA
I'm not going. I'm going to make sure you make it into the transporter for the last time and then I'm going to be here when you walk out of it.

He starts to open his mouth but she interrupts...

ADA (CONT'D)
Look, maybe we surrender and they blow us away, or maybe they give us a chance at life inside the Hegemony and we can bring it down from within, but one way or another I'm not giving up on <u>this</u> world until they kill me. You wouldn't, and I won't...

He starts to say something again, but she interrupts again...

ADA (CONT'D)
Don't ask me again.

And with that, she walks off.

CUT TO:

HANGAR ONE:

Twenty-story high doors open up as the Prometheus ship is pushed and pulled out of the hangar.

She looks absolutely majestic.

INSIDE PROMETHEUS:

Families sit in their cabins, praying.

Others gather on a giant deck where they can watch the launch through windows.

IN COMPARTMENTS:

...giant seeds and grain are being stowed, along with a veritable menagerie of animals. Like this really is a 22nd Century Noah's Ark.

And...

IN A HOLDING PEN:

Wu strokes Ruby's muzzle, transferring his nervous energy into each stroke.

BEHIND THE SCIENCE AGENCY BUILDING:

Prometheus is pulled away from the building to a giant launch pad.

IN THE CITY:

Crowds gather to watch the launch on holography streams everywhere.

AT THE LAUNCH PAD:

Marbeck, Banneker, Vance and Ada all watch the launch from a walled off section.

MARBECK
God help them.

And with that...

We hear a countdown begin:

SCIENTIST
Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two... one. Prometheus, you are clear to launch. God be with you.

The SOUND of twenty-five rockets being lit at once fills the air and we watch as...

The Prometheus ship slowly climbs off the launch pad like a great beast awakening... and then gathers speed... shooting up into the sky...

The crowds shield their eyes trying to keep the ship in sight until it disappears and then... replacing the sound of the rockets...

IN THE CITY:

...the entire Continent starts APPLAUDING at once, screaming, laughing, overjoyed to see the ship get away.

IN SPACE:

We see forty other SMALL FIGHTER SHIPS leading Prometheus as it breaks through the atmosphere.

The fighter ships engage three bulkier Hegemony WARSHIPS which are hovering over the Continent... drawing their fire and creating the perfect diversion, as Prometheus whips past them.

The Hegemony ships try to send missiles after Prometheus, but she's just moving too fast, picking up speed, and leaving the missiles, and our planet, behind.

AT THE LAUNCH PAD:

An S.A. ENGINEER looks up from a monitor, excited...

SA ENGINEER
She's through! She's through!

Marbeck hugs the scientists next to him, and...

IN THE CITY:

The crowds go into even wilder jubilation. Finally, we...

CUT TO:

INT. VANCE'S BARRACK'S - DAY

Vance sits on his bed, watching that video of his sister and niece again.

It finishes; he turns it off, just as...

AT THE DOOR:

...Ada steps into the room. She looks desperate, vulnerable.

ADA
I thought we could... I thought it might be nice if we...

VANCE
Come here.

She moves over to his bed and he folds her into his arms. They lie there, worry on their faces, holding on to each other with everything they have and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

Vance inspects his armor, while Marbeck, Banneker and Ada examine the holography table. Many other scientists and apprentices are setting up the final attempt.

ON THE WALL MONITOR:

The lunar weapon is basically complete. The timer says: *1 day, 4 hours.*

ON ANOTHER MONITOR:

The president of the continent speaks:

BRODY
...at midnight last night, we received our last report from Prometheus as she left our solar system. She is on course, functioning properly, and everyone is alive and well. Our thoughts and hopes are with them all.
(beat)
At twelve-oh-one, we made contact with Hegemony Leadership. They have agreed to meet with us to discuss a surrender. I will keep you informed every step of...

IN THE TRAINING FACILITY:

Just then, ARMED GUARDS enter the room, dragging Dr. Andrews by the arms.

Ada is stunned to see him alive!

VANCE
What's all this?

ADA
Dr. Andrews?
(beat)
Vance?

VANCE
What are you doing, Banneker?

BANNEKER
He's the bomber. He's with the Hegemony. Security spotted him in Chinatown meeting with Hegemony handlers.

VANCE
How do you know?

BANNEKER
He's new to the SA, has access to military explosives, and has conveniently disappeared since the second explosion until today. I've had the staff on full alert to drag him here if he set foot in the building. Now that Prometheus is away the bastard's here to take one last stab at sabotaging the Lang Transporter.

DR. ANDREWS
Go to hell.

Banneker looks at the guards...

GUARD ONE
We checked him. He's clean.

BANNEKER
Let's check his quarters.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. ANDREW'S QUARTERS - DAY

The guards along with Banneker are tossing his room. Dr. Andrews just sits there, calmly, watching.

Banneker is frantic, overturning bookshelves, cots... looking for the stash.

Ada, Vance and Marbeck watch from the doorway.

Finally, Banneker pushes some tile away from the roof and finds what he's looking for: a SILVER PACK. He brings it down to one of the doctor's beds and opens it: the pack is filled with military explosives.

BANNEKER
Military grade explosives. Available to any Marine.

Vance walks over the doctor, menacingly, like he's going to go off on the guy...

...then he coolly spins and looks at Banneker.

VANCE
It was you...why didn't you just put a pulse in me?

Banneker stares back.

BANNEKER
What?

VANCE
You're just like the rest of the Hegemony. You'll press a button from a mile away but you'd rather not be there to see the bloodshed.

BANNEKER
What're you talking about?

VANCE
You knew I was the only one they had time to send through the transporter. You could have killed me and ended this for good.

Banneker looks at Vance like he's lost his mind.

BANNEKER
I don't know what that machine's doing to you, buddy. Maybe the stress is getting to your brain...
(points at Andrews)
He's the guy! You can see the bombs right there! He was meeting with Hegemony handlers...

VANCE
He was building nanobots! He was working on his own to finish what the Science Agency gave up on when they started building Prometheus.

Dr. Andrews reaches into his pocket and hands a SMALL PILL to Vance...

DR. ANDREWS
I only had time for one. I'm not sure this'll work, but it's the best I could do under the circumstances. It'll pass out of your system in a day, so save it for when you really need it...

Banneker just looks back and forth at Vance and Dr. Andrews, confused...

VANCE
I caught him buying equipment on the black market. He took me back to his lab and showed me the truth.
(beat)
I never imagined it was you, Warren.

Banneker starts to shift nervously...

VANCE (CONT'D)
You dropped my team into the wrong spot on the moon.

FLASH: Banneker in the opening scene pointing out on the map where Vance's team is going to drop.

VANCE (CONT'D)
And when you found out about Prometheus, you bombed your own quarters to throw the scent off you... destroying my armor in the process.

FLASH: Banneker sets a bomb to go off in his own quarters, then hides behind a steel desk when it detonates... boom!

VANCE (CONT'D)
Then you tried to sabotage Prometheus...

FLASH: Banneker manipulates the camera in Hangar One so it won't rotate, then sets up a bomb on the rail cart.

BANNEKER
Christ, what's wrong with you?

All eyes have shifted on to Banneker.

BANNEKER (CONT'D)
You don't seriously mean...

But before he finishes his sentence, like a flash he grabs one of the guns off of an armed guard and BLASTS him in the head, then blows the other guard away with a chest shot- WHAM!

He turns the gun on Vance, but Vance and Ada race out of there.

IN THE CORRIDOR:

Marbeck and Andrews sprint one way while Vance and Ada go the other.

Banneker stumbles out of the doctor's quarters and takes a pot shot at the fleeing Vance and Ada and then hustles after them as they round a corner.

IN AN ADJACENT CORRIDOR:

A couple of ARMED GUARDS hurry to the scene, but Banneker kills them in cold blood before they can even level their weapons. Bam! Bam!

Vance uses the distraction to come out of nowhere and tackle Banneker off his feet. Whap!!

The gun goes sliding down the corridor and they both leap for it at the same time... but it comes to a stop just out of their reach...

Vance ends up on top of Banneker and punches him once, twice in the face, but Banneker is able to get his arms up and his hands into Vance's neck...

He head-butts Vance hard, BAM! and then knocks Vance off of him, flipping him back into the wall.

Banneker gets to his feet, and hurries over to the gun... but when he spins around with it, Vance is already gone.

IN THE TRAINING ROOM:

Vance dashes in while Ada is preparing the armor.

ADA
Quick... get into the armor!

VANCE
What?

ADA
We only have one chance at this...

He steps into the armor as Ada runs over and fires up the controls to the Lang Transporter. As the sound of the machine warming up starts to build...

...the CAMERA MOVES to the...

HALLWAY:

...just in time to see Banneker coming with that gun up and a clenched jaw...

...and right when he reaches the door to the...

TRAINING ROOM:

...he sees Vance stepping in full armor as quickly as he can to the transporter in the adjacent room.

IN THE TRANSPORTATION ROOM:

Vance heads for the machine, just as Banneker shoots his way into the room. But he's too late... Vance is already inside the machine...

As Vance watches, Banneker sets his sights on the main control board, levels the gun, fires...

ADA
Vance!

She dives in front of the gun's pulse, taking the hit directly to the chest, killing her.

VANCE
NOOOOOOO!

Banneker spins and aims the gun at the Lang Transporter, and FIRES...

Vance sees the blast coming, just as the ROAR of the machine reaches its climax. He knows this is it, he's going to die but...

EXT. ERIX - DESCENDANT - DAY

...Vance's Copy - SHADOW 19 - backs out of the TRANSPORTER ON ERIX, his face stunned, like he can't believe what he just saw.

SHADOW 19
No, no, no, no, no...

This is building into a final, furious...

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
NOOOOOOOO!

And right then...

ADA'S VOICE
Fatality Shadow 18.

It's Ada's voice, which freaks him a bit...

SHADOW 19
What?

ADA'S VOICE
Incoming. Incoming. Incoming.

And with that, PREDATORS LAUNCH FROM THE JUNGLE. But Shadow 19 snaps out of it just in time to fire his big cannon...

...RIPPING bullets into the predators and leaving their corpses to flounder on the ground.

The battles of 18 Shadows have transformed the terrain: a cratered field strewn with broken armor and alien bones.

He surveys this, still stunned by what he witnessed before the machine made this final copy.

SHADOW 19
He killed her, Athena. He fucking killed her right...

ADA'S VOICE
(interrupts)
More targets incoming.

Nineteen reacts with razor-sharp senses, exploding into movement, running for higher ground as more PREDATORS break from the jungle to give chase.

He strafes them with his laser rifle: CRACKLING BEAMS of white light. Predators fall dead and trees topple from the jungle.

EXT. WOODS - LATER (ERIX)

Shadow 19 is on the run, hounded by SPIDERS that slash at him with curved blades.

His armor shows damage: shallow notches and cuts. He's exhausted, panting, drenched in sweat.

He turns and faces the spiders, raises his grenade launcher.

BOOM. BOOM. The antimatter explosions are blinding.

Two blasts tear holes in the jungle, annihilating the spiders. But more keep coming... their numbers are incredible.

ADA'S VOICE
Targets inside minimum range.

SHADOW 19
Goddamn!

He strafes the nearest spiders with his rifle and runs.

He splashes into a STREAM, and the spiders rear back, HISSING, unwilling to enter the liquid.

Nineteen looks down. The stream is full of TRANSLUCENT WORMS, big as rattlesnakes. They suck at his armor.

He lifts a worm in his hand, experimentally. It bites harmlessly at his armor. After a moment, he drops it.

Spiders leap over his head to the opposite bank. They slash at him from both banks, nearly reaching him.

He SUBMERGES HIMSELF in the stream. Under the surface, he watches the spiders search for him and finally straggle away.

Shadow 19's breathing slows. He settles into a more comfortable position on the stream bottom. The eerie worms slide past, ignoring him.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Athena. Mission time.

ADA'S VOICE
Six hours, forty-nine minutes.

SHADOW 19
What information do you have about the transportation chamber on Earth?

ADA'S VOICE
I'm unable to establish communication with the transportation chamber.

Vance knows what this means.

SHADOW 19
How much food do I have?

ADA'S VOICE
Two energy packs.

SHADOW 19
We have to make that last a few days. I'm going to rest. Keep watch.

ADA'S VOICE
Yes, Captain Vance.

Nineteen closes his eyes. For a few fleeting seconds, we just get...

BLACKNESS

...and then a...

SERIES OF IMAGES

...rips at us quickly, including:

Vance's sister and niece on the monitor.

His team on the moon all standing in that defensive position before they get blown away.

Marbeck welcoming him to the Science Agency.

Ada when they first lock eyes.

Ada drinking at the bar.

Ada kissing him.

BAM... Ada being shot by Banneker...

...that last shot of the transporter getting taken out, and...

EXT. STREAM - DAY (ERIX)

...Shadow 19 slams awake in the alien waters.

A SPINED SERPENT coils around him... it bites at his visor, etching the glass.

Nineteen frees his machete and hacks through the serpent's coils. Worms swarm to carry away the serpent's corpse, giving it an eerie look of life as it disappears away in the murky water.

Enough rest... Nineteen struggles out of the stream, the Spiders are now gone.

CLIFFS - DUSK

He reaches the base of a sheer cliff. The body of Shadow 10 lies on the rocks, broken by a devastating fall.

He stands staring at the shattered body.

Nineteen looks up at the towering wall, a thousand meters of sheer rock.

CLIFF FACE - NIGHT

He ascends in a series of climbs and rocket-assisted jumps. A STORM begins: fierce wind and viscous black rain. He climbs on as darkness falls.

Exhausted, Shadow 19 comes to a ledge in the cliff where previous Shadows have burned their signatures into the rock: SHADOW 11, SHADOW 12... on up through SHADOW 18.

He looks down at the awesome sight of the churning jungle far below.

He's about to resume climbing when he turns back, burns his name on the stone, but this time, it reads, simply: CAPTAIN CONRAD VANCE.

EXT. CLIFFTOP - MORNING

Shadow 19 climbs into view, panting, to find a...

HIGHLAND PLAIN

...covered with pale green waving grasses: serene and beautiful. Winged creatures wheel gracefully overhead.

He pauses there and catches his breath: a moment of peace.

Then he takes a step forward - and the GRASS itself clutches at him, scratching his armor. He leaps back, tearing himself loose. He spots a MESSAGE BURNED INTO THE ROCKS:

GRASS KILLS. BURN IT.

SHADOW 15

Nineteen nods his thanks to the rock and then turns his FLAMETHROWER on the grass. It withdraws into the ground, baring a circle of earth that expands across the plain like ripples in a pond, revealing:

A litter of alien bones and a SUIT OF RAVAGED ARMOR whose ID plates read SHADOW 12.

Suddenly, the grass sprouts anew. Doubling its height. Tripling it. The long blades beat at Shadow 19. He flees along the cliffs.

ROCKY WASTE - NIGHT

A wasteland of cracked clay studded with stone outcrops. Lightning flickers overhead.

Shadow 19 crosses the waste at a run, his armor's FLOODLIGHTS feeble in the vast darkness. He carries his RIFLE and GRENADE LAUNCHER, breathing hard, dripping sweat.

ADA'S VOICE
Incoming, five o'clock.

Nineteen spins, fires a grenade high. It EXPLODES, a white sunburst. WINGED CREATURES fall away in flames.

For a moment, the wasteland is illuminated. Strange shapes moving through the darkness.

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Seven grenades remaining.

Shadow 19 turns and runs on. Passing a rock formation, he slides into a long, skidding stop. Turns his light on the rock.

A message is burned above a crevice: "SHELTER."

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Incoming, eight o'clock. Ten o'clock.
Four o'clock.

Nineteen scrambles for the crevice.

CAVE UNDER THE ROCK

He squirms inside: a tight fit.

Turning to survey the tiny cave, Shadow 19 gasps in shock: a DEAD SHADOW sits in his floodlight beams. The ID tags on the battered armor read SHADOW 15.

Shadow 15's eyes stare through a broken visor. Dried blood paints the cave floor.

Then Shadow 19 hears it: a SCRABBLING NOISE. Something outside is trying to get in. Scimitar CLAWS probe the cave entrance, right where the lifeless eyes of Shadow 15 are staring.

Shadow 19 FIRES: blasting the creature off the side of the crevice. It falls, CRYING into the night.

Shadow 19 turns back to S-15's corpse.

SHADOW 19
Thanks.

Shadow 19 reaches into his pocket and extracts an energy pack, along with that Nanobot pill.

He looks at the pill, thinking, before putting it away.

Then he replaces a pack on the outside of his helmet with a new energy pack. It HISSES and locks into place. He then feeds himself through a tube.

With that, he leans back and settles in for a nap. After a moment...

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Athena?

ADA'S VOICE
Yes, Captain Vance?

SHADOW 19
Nothing. I just wanted to hear your voice.

OUTSIDE - LATER:

The sun starts to rise and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHLAND WOODS - DAY (ERIX)

Shadow 19 stalks at high alert through the undergrowth. He is weary, whiskered.

His battle-suit motors grind and whine.

SHADOW 19
Athena. Mission time.

ADA'S VOICE
Two Days, seventeen hours.

SHADOW 19
Do you think the Continent still exists?

ADA'S VOICE
I do not understand.

SHADOW 19
Neither do I. I don't understand any of it. How long was Banneker with the Hegemony? From the beginning? How much damage did he do? How many lives?

ADA'S VOICE
I do not understand.

SHADOW 19
I know you don't.
(beat)
Hit me with a stimulant.

ADA'S VOICE
You have exceeded recommended dosages...

SHADOW 19
Override.

There's a HISS. His pupils dilate sharply. He takes a ragged breath and stands up straighter.

HIGHLAND MAZE

The red sun beats down on a valley of fissured stone.

The report of Shadow 19's rifle echoes distantly. Far off a flock of WINGED RAPTORS bursts into the air, screaming.

A sudden EXPLOSION as an ANTIMATTER GRENADE detonates in the distance. Another BLAST. And ANOTHER.

Nineteen, barely seen, works his way through the rocky maze, his movement betrayed by a trail of smoke and ruin.

An EXPLOSION resounds. The echoes reverberate and fade, and silence falls on the valley.

ROCKY HOLLOW

Shadow 19, moving stealthily, rounds a rock outcrop.

A message has been scrawled into the rock:

SAFE ZONE.

SHADOW 16.

Nineteen smiles, rounds the corner, and disturbs a giant armored WORM with no eyes and a complex mouth full of blades, feeding on its kill.

The Worm doesn't budge. A long moment passes.

SHADOW 19
So much for safe.

Nineteen takes a slow step toward the shelter of the rock outcrop. The Worm slithers toward him - frighteningly fast.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Oh, hell.

He raises the grenade launcher.

ADA'S VOICE
Too close.

Shadow 19 fires PAST the head of the Worm. The grenade arcs over its head and explodes the worms midsection, severing the worm in two...

...and just like an earthworm, both halves come alive!

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Grenades depleted.

SHADOW 19
Shit.

BOTH WORMS now charge Shadow 19.

Nineteen drops the empty grenade launcher and shoulders his rifle and fires...

He hits Worm 1 twice, inflicting terrible wounds, but it doesn't slow down.

Its jaws close on the rifle: the rifle CRACKS loudly, spewing white plasma into Worm 1. The Worm, scorched, leaps back SCREAMING: a hideous, unearthly sound, the rifle lodged in its mouth.

With a CRUNCH the worm destroys the rifle, which then EXPLODES in a sunburst of white light, disintegrating Worm 1.

Nineteen then turns to face Worm 2, drawing his MACHETE - too late. The Worm SLAMS into him. They tumble over the ground, grappling, and the machete goes flying.

With his armored hands, Shadow 19 strains to prevent the Worm's mandibles from closing on him.

Pinned under the Worm, Nineteen plants his feet against its body and fires his JUMP JETS. Flames ROAR from his boots and the Worm recoils, shrieking.

Nineteen rolls to his feet.

Unarmed, howling in rage, he meets the Worm head-on and deals BLOW after BLOW with his armored fists until black blood coats his gauntlets and the Worm lies slain.

He keeps throwing punches even after the thing is dead, breathing hard, weary, emotionally drained.

Finally, he stops himself, gathers his wits, and continues on...

EXT. CLIFFTOP

Nineteen stands combing through data, scanning maps.

SHADOW 19
Athena. Show me the body of Shadow 16. I need a weapon and I need food.

In Shadow 19's visor, a glowing marker springs up across the landscape, marking the death-site of Shadow 16.

Beside it, a distance indicator reads 3.6 KILOMETERS.

EXT. WITHERED PLAIN - DUSK

Nineteen, crossing hard dried clay and sparse plant life, warily approaches a huddled shape. His visor display labels the shape: SHADOW 16.

As he gets closer, Shadow 19 discerns a fantastic sight: a MENAGERIE OF ALIEN CREATURES sitting around a HIDDEN LIGHT, like it has drawn them in and captivated them. Most appear dead. A few breathe but do not move.

Still closer. He sees an ARMORED MARINE squatting among the beasts: SHADOW 16. A rifle discarded at his feet.

Thin NEEDLE TENDRILS have emerged from the ground at Shadow 16's feet, crept up his legs, and found entrance through his armor's chest plate. A skull stares out of the helmet.

All the creatures are snared and pierced by these tendrils.

Shadow 19 shields his eyes from the light, and gropes toward the fallen rifle.

Getting close, he glances up at the dead marine - and sees the LIGHT reflected in the dead man's visor.

Entranced by the reflection, he lowers his hand. A BRIGHTER light tugs at the corner of his eye, and he looks at the true source. A BEAUTIFUL GLOWING ORB atop a vegetable stalk.

Nineteen approaches it. He steps into the ring of creatures, staring, hypnotized.

He drops into a crouch, just like Shadow 16. Fine needle-tips grow from the soil around his boots.

EXT. WITHERED PLAIN - LATER - NIGHT

Shadow 19 hasn't moved.

ADA'S VOICE
Captain. You're dehydrated.

His drinking tube nudges his lips inside his helmet but Nineteen doesn't drink or respond. Water drips down his chin.

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
You are suffering muscle cramps, Captain. Injecting muscle relaxant.

A hiss. His lips move.

SHADOW 19
(barely a whisper)
I failed, Ada.

ADA'S VOICE
Captain?

SHADOW 19
I didn't give 'em any place to go.

ADA'S VOICE
Captain?

SHADOW 19
There aren't going to be any more Shadows coming. I'm the last.
(beat)
Nineteen. I'm Shadow Nineteen. I don't want to die.

He stares into the light.

Fine tendrils wind around Nineteen's legs and quest upward. Their needle-tips search for weak points.

Across from Shadow 19, an alien corpse collapses, gutted by the vampiric tendrils.

And over the alien corpse...

...an impossible APPARITION stands:

A BLACK-CLOAKED FIGURE - as if the Angel of Death itself has come to watch Shadow 19 die.

But Shadow 19 doesn't even notice.

WITHERED PLAIN - LATER

He is still crouching in the ring of aliens. His lips are cracked, his eyes bloodshot. He breathes in shallow gasps.

There is no sign of the mysterious cloaked figure who stood watching before.

ADA'S VOICE
Captain. You must wake up. Captain. Captain Vance. Injecting stimulant.

A HISS. Shadow 19's pupils dilate. His breath catches, but resumes its shallow rhythm.

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Captain...You must...

Athena trails off - as if even she is surrendering hope.

The tendrils entangling 19 grope at the chest plate of his armor. They have found a way in, and already buried in his skin, eating away at his flesh...

Still Shadow 19 just stares at that light.

Suddenly SHADOW 16 collapses: the tendrils have stripped his skeleton and gutted his armor. He falls apart with a horrible CLATTER of metal and bone.

Nineteen's eyes flicker to the fallen figure. He reads the name on the armor.

SHADOW 19
Shadow 16... He's dead... I'm dead.

A precious moment of lucidity.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
(huskily)
Athena...
(beat, struggling)
Blackout.

His visor goes OPAQUE. As soon as it does, 19 falls to the ground, the spell broken. Slowly, he tears free of the tendrils, his limbs in agony.

In the suit, the broken tendrils wither, but this just causes his body to start bleeding profusely from their wounds.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Athena, you see the light?

ADA
Yes, Captain.

SHADOW 19
Don't let me see that light. Tell me when I'm facing away.

He turns on hands and knees.

ADA
The light is behind you now.

Nineteen crawls a few feet, attempts to get to his feet. He's too weak.

SHADOW 19
Help me stand up.

His armor's motors WHINE. Mechanically, like a puppet, 19 stands.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Let's walk.

Nineteen trudges away, his steps stiff and robotic.

ROCK OUTCROP - DAWN

He sits shaking in the shelter of stones.

SHADOW 19
Water.

His water tube extends, and he drinks.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Stimulant.

ADA'S VOICE
Negative.

SHADOW 19
Override. Stimulant.

ADA'S VOICE
There is no more stimulant.

SHADOW 19
Goddammit.

Nineteen sits there, trying to figure out what to do. He's just so goddamned weak.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Medical scan.

ADA'S VOICE
Superficial injuries to the midsection. Internal hemorrhaging from the spleen, stomach and kidney. Blood pressure below acceptable limits. Brain perfusion increasing.

SHADOW 19
I need some food... an energy pack...

ADA'S VOICE
You have already used both.

He's reaching into his armor like before, knowing it's hopeless...

...when he pulls out that pill that Doctor Andrews gave him.

Nineteen sticks the pill inside a pack and then feeds the whole thing into his helmet system. The food tube moves to his mouth and we follow the pill...

INSIDE HIS BODY:

...and down into his digestive tract where it lands and immediately... NANOBOTS pour out of the pill a million at a time...

...they bore their way into his blood stream and as THE CAMERA PULLS OUT OF HIS BODY...

...we see wounds on his body start to heal rapidly, the nanobots restoring the damage.

Even some cuts on his face heal right as we watch.

ADA'S VOICE
Captain?

SHADOW 19
Let's find that Crawler.

A pointer appears on his visor display: the distance indicator reads 4.1 KILOMETERS.

EXT. CLIFFS - DAY

Nineteen reaches the clifftop: a sweeping vista of the jungle below. For the first time he sees CRAWLER THREE.

His visor magnifies the image: a metal monstrosity squatting in the jungle. Winged creatures circle it like crows. His visor gives the distance: 1.1 KILOMETERS.

SHADOW 19
Athena. Display last locations of Shadows 17 and 18.

His visor displays two MARKERS on the road in front of him.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
(musing)
Something between here and there.

CLIFF FACE

Shadow 19 climbs down. Losing his grip, he slides down a sheer face. He fires his jets and lands safely on a lower ledge.

ADA'S VOICE
Jump jet fuel low.

A GREEN ROAD

Lungs heaving, Shadow 19 stumbles out of the jungle into a wide track left by Crawler Three.

In the beaten track, GREEN EARTH-LIFE GROWS, a mossy highway through the alien forest. He follows the trail toward the Crawler in peace.

He passes ALIEN CREATURES dead at the green road's edge, their skins overgrown with green patches like a plague.

THE GREEN ROAD - HILLTOP

Cresting a rise, Shadow 19 sees CRAWLER THREE, a half kilometer away. The giant machine is frozen in its tracks, halfway up a hill.

GREEN ROAD:

Shadow 19, at high alert, has about 200 yards to go to reach the crawler.

Following the green road, he sees something very strange:

A LINE OF POLES are mounted into the ground, and they line up across the landscape, like they are forming a boundry.

Mounted atop the poles are the skulls of various bizarre creatures. The skulls are inscribed with symbols and alien characters.

SHADOW 19
Athena, do you recognize these symbols?

ADA'S VOICE
Negative.

Where the green road crosses this border of poles, several poles lie crushed and flattened in Crawler Three's tracks.

Shadow 19 inspects one of the skulls, but can make no sense of the writing there.

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Marines down.

A marker appears on his visor display. Nineteen drops the skull and approaches a dark shape on the ground.

Side by side, SHADOW 17 and SHADOW 18 lie in the green muck. Arms and legs outstretched. Their weapons lie beside them, broken to pieces.

But then Shadow 18 twitches his leg! Holy shit! He's alive!

Nineteen rushes over to him.

He looks down into his own face... Shadow 18 is barely lucid. His eyes find Nineteen's...

SHADOW EIGHTEEN
(struggling)
This world... will kill you. And you will kill this world.

SHADOW NINETEEN
I'm not going to die here.

SHADOW EIGHTEEN
You are a circle of death.

Eighteen's eyes flutter back in his head... and he's gone. Dead. Vance stares at those lifeless eyes, struggling, lost...

And just then:

ADA'S VOICE
Target, twelve-o'clock.

He looks up. A BLACK-CLOAKED FIGURE stands in the green road, barring his way. Shadow 19 freezes, looking at this human-like, improbable sight.

SHADOW 19
Who's there?

The Cloaked Figure cocks its head at him. With its foot - hidden under its cloak - it draws a LINE across the ground.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
What are you?

It SPEAKS. A guttural clatter of sound. But clearly a language.

Shadow 19 stares, trying to make sense of what he's seeing. The figure seems to be communicating with him.

He POINTS down the green road toward Crawler Three.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
I need to get to that Crawler.

The Cloaked Figure simply shakes its head.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
(amazed)
You understand what I'm saying?

The creature nods. It redraws its line in the earth, cutting a deeper furrow.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
How is that possible?

The creature doesn't answer, just stands there waiting.

Nineteen taps his own chest and again points down the road.

In answer, the cloaked figure opens its cloak to reveal, it has covered itself in some sort of ancient, BATTERED ARMOR...

...that it is a warrior, like Vance.

It has claws for hands, which are adorned with ornaments of twisted wire, glinting with jewels.

It has large eyes which are strangely beautiful: iridescent like opal, colors playing across them. It wears a battle-helmet forged from some strange metal.

The Alien raises its arms and unfurls two sharp metallic blades, like long-swords, and it crosses them in the road - as if to say, *stay back*.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. But six hundred thousand people are counting on me.

Shadow 19 raises his gun, but the ALIEN moves quickly, too fast to hit.

All Shadow 19 can do is break into a sprint. He RUNS toward Crawler Three as the Alien moves to cut him off.

ADA'S VOICE
Incoming, three o'clock.

Shadow 19 spins and aims, but the Alien veers away.

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Incoming.

Shadow 19 bounds off the ground on his jump jets. The Alien leaps up beside him and swings his swords, but barely misses, as 19 spins out of the way.

Nineteen levels his gun again but the Alien spirals away quickly, just too fast to hit.

Nineteen lands and runs on.

He reaches Crawler Three and rockets up the side of it, gunning for the top.

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Incoming, five-o'clock.

He twists in the air, starts to fire...

...but his jets SPUTTER OUT, leaving him short of the top of the crawler.

ADA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Jet fuel depleted.

He clings with one hand to the Crawler's side.

Quickly, he slaps his rifle into its clamps. With both hands, he climbs desperately.

The Alien is shouting at him - strange syllables carried on the wind.

ATOP THE CRAWLER

Shadow 19 reaches the top and scrambles onto the deck.

The top of the Crawler is covered with ALIEN WRITING: unreadable pictograms scratched into the armor plate.

Shadow 19 has no time to take this in before...

ADA'S VOICE
Incoming.

Shadow 19 spins to face the Alien but it's too late. He doesn't have time to get his rifle up-

- before the Alien SLAMS INTO HIM like a living missile, and the rifle clatters away.

The Alien locks its barbed legs around him and THRUSTS its sword right through Shadow 19's helmet into his neck.

Shadow 19 SCREAMS and pushes at the powerful body. Slowly he forces the sword out of his neck. Blood spatters his visor from the inside.

Unable to free himself from the Alien's spindly arms, Shadow 19 locks his arms around the creature's body - and SQUEEZES with all his might.

His armor's motor's WHINE. He squeezes harder and harder until...

...there is a ghastly CRACK, and the Alien falls away, off the side of the crawler and lands in the dirt, gasping for breath.

Shadow 19 struggles to his knees, choking on blood.

He swings his helmet back in the toxic atmosphere. In one motion, he applies an EMERGENCY PATCH to his helmet and locks the helmet back on.

SHADOW 19
Purge.

Jets of white gas HISS from the suit. Wind whips his hair inside the helmet.

Shadow 19 inhales greedily, as nanobots seal up the wound on his neck. Fully recovered, he takes in the area.

For the first time, he sees the WRITING on the Crawler. He stares with bloodshot eyes and can't make sense of it.

The beetle-like COMMUNICATIONS MODULE looms above him.

Instead of the ragged tear from the mock-up on Earth, the armored dome carries a row of TRIANGULAR PUNCTURES, surrounded by hex signs and inscriptions. The Alien's work.

He pulls back the punctured dome to reveal the familiar repair job.

ADA'S VOICE
Multiple targets incoming.

He spins. Holy shit.

A dozen Aliens are emerging in the road, surrounding the vehicle. Their fallen comrade CHITTERS at them, and one drags him back out of the way where he can tend to his wounds. These guys fucking care for each other!

Suddenly, three of them jump up impossibly high and land atop the Crawler. They immediately brandish their swords and shout at him in their strange tongue.

Shadow 19 snatches up a sword that the first Alien dropped in their struggle.

SHADOW 19
(hoarsely)
Stand down and clear out.

The Aliens stand their ground, flicker closer.

Shadow 19 sees the Aliens are standing atop the hatch-covers of the Crawler's MISSILE WELLS.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Athena, toolkit.

His TOOLKIT extends from his armor. He kneels down, keeping his eyes on them, and begins the repair.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Athena. Running range to nearest target.

ADA'S VOICE
Four meters.

Shadow 19 works feverishly. Panting. His hands shake.

SHADOW 19
Let me know if they get...

ADA'S VOICE
Three meters.

SHADOW 19
Shit.

He clenches his hands, shakes them loose and keeps working. More and more Aliens leap up on to the crawler in front of him as the others move closer, ready to attack.

ADA'S VOICE
Two meters. One meter...

He pulls his sword at the last moment to parry the first attack... But the Aliens keep coming, relentlessly...

With one hand he hacks and slashes at the aliens, keeping them at bay. With the other he works at the repair.

Sparks fly from his battered armor as he battles the aliens one-handed.

One Alien gets a sword in where he's working and fucks up everything that he just did...

SHADOW 19
Goddammit! I didn't want to have to do this...

He raises his rifles into both hands and is about to fire, when...

WHAM! One of the Aliens kicks him off the crawler!

Shadow 19 lands on his back in the grass below, and the Aliens all jump down to surround him. They move in for the kill with their swords up, ready to run him through when...

BAM!!! Vance fires his energy rifle, BLOWING THE ARM off the nearest Alien.

It screams in PAIN, lurching backwards. The Aliens all get looks on their faces that are unmistakable and somehow quite human: fear.

It's the first time they've seen a gun fired. Vance rises to his feet, the rifle out in front of him.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Stand down! Now!

He swings the gun around at all of them and the Aliens all rear back and fall into a DEFENSIVE POSITION, trembling.

Vance stares at them... something familiar here...

FLASH: His own troops fall into a similar DEFENSIVE POSITION on the moon right before the Hegemony super-tank blows them away. The defensive position he ordered them into!

BACK TO THE SCENE: and Vance is trying to make sense of this. He looks down at his rifle.

He looks at the Alien holding his claw over his severed limb... the other fallen Alien being tended to by his comrades.

A terrible realization comes to him...

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
(slowly, to himself)
No, no, no, no... no...

He looks at the Aliens still huddled together in that defensive pattern...

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
(screams)
I'm not the Hegemony!

Yet here he is, in their colors, his enemies pleading for their lives... He looks down at his uniform...

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
I'm not the goddamn Hegemony, all right?!
I have to...

The Aliens fidget nervously...

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
I have to...

He doesn't know what to do. Slowly, he lowers his rifle.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Christ.

The Aliens look around, like they can't believe this guy isn't going to blow them away. They CHITTER at him, but he doesn't raise the rifle again.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
(more to himself,
than to them)
I need to think.

The Aliens continue to fidget.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
Just give me time to think!

But they just continue to fidget in front of him. Then one steps out from the rest and tosses something at his feet.

He stoops down and picks it up: it's a PENCIL. Not a crude reproduction of a pencil. But a real pencil from Earth. What the hell?

Nineteen looks up, clearly puzzled, and the Alien who threw it at him signals, as if to say, "follow me."

The others CHITTER at their comrade, but the one who stepped out CHITTERS BACK at them harshly and they all fall silent and lower their heads.

Again, the Alien signals Vance to follow him. Then they all start to leave through a path in the jungle...

Vance watches them go, then looks back at the crawler... then the Aliens retreating again...

He blows out a deep breath and... follows from a distance.

IN THE JUNGLE:

The Aliens walk through a worn path in the jungle, as Vance trails behind... The jungle encroaches all around him, the path barely visible.

And then suddenly, the foliage opens up to reveal an OPEN PLAIN under the jungle canopy, holding what can only be described as...

AN ALIEN VILLAGE:

...with stone buildings, huts, walls, streets, and more and more Aliens, moving around and going about their business. It's not quite human, but a civilization nonetheless.

Vance can't believe it... all he fought through to get to this place was like a prehistoric nightmare... and here, there's creativity, and education, and society... and life.

The creatures he's following all take out their swords and rest them against a wall that marks the city line. No weapons in the city.

As 19 approaches the wall, the aliens point to it...

Nineteen nods and places his rifle there. There is a peace agreement between them that is unmistakable.

He follows them through the...

ALIEN STREETS:

...as more and more creatures gather to get a look at him. He's like a zoo creature being lead through city streets.

All he can do is follow where the Aliens lead, in awe of his surroundings.

Finally, they reach an...

ALIEN BUILDING:

...and disappear inside. The building is large, like an old Viking mead hall. With stones and masonry and angles and design.

Nineteen breathes deep and crouches to move through the doorway.

There is a small foyer... lit by torches...

And all the Aliens move through an inner doorway without looking back.

Again, 19 has no choice but to follow into...

A MUCH LARGER ROOM:

The first thing Nineteen notices is writing on the wall... in fact, advanced calculations are covering all the walls... and here's the amazing thing...

<u>The calculations are all with English numerals</u>.

Nineteen is trying to make sense of this...

...and then his eyes fall on a human figure wearing an orange astronaut suit at the front of the room. Not the sophisticated armor Vance uses, but more of a minimalist version. The man has his back to them and is scribbling on a blank part of the wall... mumbling figures to himself...

The Aliens have all moved around the figure... like students around a teacher.

After a moment, the man senses something is going on and turns. His eyes fall on Vance...

Nineteen looks at the gaunt face... staring at it, mystified...

...then recognition seeps into his eyes...

SHADOW 19
Doctor Lang?

A broad smile spreads across the man's face.

DOCTOR LANG
Well, more of a shadow, right?

CUT TO:

EXT. ALIEN STREET - DAY

Lang and Shadow 19 sit on some benches laid out in the street. Aliens watch curiously from rooftops and various doorways.

Lang has a twinkle in his eye.

DOCTOR LANG
Tell me. My daughter, Ada. Is she okay?

Shadow 19 doesn't know what to say...

...so he lies.

SHADOW 19
Yes. She's fine. She's the one who got me here.

Lang nods happily.

DOCTOR LANG
I knew she would. She's quite a girl that one.

SHADOW 19
Yes she is.
(beat)
How did you...

DOCTOR LANG
Survive? I didn't last long after transporting through the gateway as you can imagine. Or I should say, I wouldn't have lasted long. I managed to stay inside the transporter watching through the glass as hell itself unfolded outside.

FLASH: DR. LANG looking out through the Transportation Chamber windows as A DOZEN PREDATORS try to claw their way in.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
Those predatorial creatures outside our landing site fought ferociously to get in, to get to me, day in and day out. I thought when my food supply exhausted after a week I would starve to death.

FLASH: Dr. Lang collapsing, starving, miserable. He manages to look out the window again... and instead of the creatures, he sees one of the Aliens standing there like the angel of death.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
I thought an angel of death had come to take me... I was barely lucid. But it was these sentient creatures; they had driven the predators away. I didn't have a choice... So I opened the door... and they took me in. Like one of their own. They even found a plant with nutrients I could digest. It tastes like sewage.

They share a smile.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
In exchange, I've been helping them design improvements to their city.

SHADOW 19
But the Crawlers? Prometheus is on its way right now.

Lang nods, concerned.

DOCTOR LANG
It is a predicament, I know.

He looks down, then back up at Nineteen, locking eyes with him.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
I helped them stop the crawler. I couldn't bring myself to devastate a place with so much life just for our own benefit.

Nineteen processes this...

SHADOW 19
We can't have it both ways. We can't allow this planet to exist in its current form and also have a safe place for our people to live when they arrive.

DOCTOR LANG
No, we can't, can we?

The paradox of this is overwhelming. Shadow 19 rubs his hand over his face, exhausted emotionally and physically.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
But scientists revel in mystery. And fortunately, I've had some time to think about that question.

Then Dr. Lang does a curious thing. He picks up a nearby stick and draws circles in the dirt.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
How many times did you travel through my teleportation machine to reach this planet?

SHADOW 19
Nineteen.

DOCTOR LANG
And when you came through each time, did you notice anything with regards to the construct of time?

SHADOW 19
Yes. I would arrive before the last copy was killed.

Lang smiles. He points to various parts of the circle...

DOCTOR LANG
The process of getting you here instantaneously, of crossing so much space, meant we had to compress space...
(beat)
You see, time and space are various points on a cylinder, not a straight line.

He draws it crudely it the dirt.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
So to cross so much distance from Earth to a different "where" in space, we had to send you to a different "when" as well.

SHADOW 19
So if you can control "where" you send someone through the gateway, you also could control "when" they'd arrive?

DOCTOR LANG
Theoretically. But there are two problems: one, with the universe ever expanding, I have no way of telling the gateway exactly where this planet is to use as a reference point.

SHADOW 19
And two?

DOCTOR LANG
The transfer would likely be deadly.

Nineteen nods.

SHADOW 19
What if I could tell you exactly where we are? Would that solve problem number one?

Nineteen flips open a compartment on his suit, where a screen sits dormant.

DOCTOR LANG
What's that?

SHADOW 19
A Hegemony Universal Positioning Unit. The world's most advanced sextant and compass.
(beat)
You let me worry about problem number two.

Doctor Lang smiles...

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAINS OF ERIX - DAY

A CARAVAN moves out across one of the plains of Erix, wheel carts being pulled by these Aliens... as hundreds of warriors stand guard.

The planetary life that was so threatening to all the Shadows stays at bay... they don't want to mess with this caravan of sentient hunters.

EXT. ERIX - DESCENDANT - SUNSET

The Alien Warriors form a semi-circle of protection around the now open cargo doors.

IN THE CARGO HOLD:

The Doctor moves over to the huge machine and flips a SWITCH. A panel slides open revealing a row of electronics and computer screens.

He furrows his brow and gets to work, while Shadow 19 waits.

ERIX GROUND STATION - LATER

The doctor has the innards of the machine out, has wires going all over the place, and is calculating advanced algorithms on the monitors.

The red Universal Positioning Unit from Vance's suit is out and hooked up to the gateway as well. It is still turned off.

Nineteen is standing a little bit off, taking in the Aliens as they hold the perimeter. They look like just another army, their behavior so humanistic. Some are eating, some are on watch, some are catching naps.

Then...

DOCTOR LANG
We're ready.

Shadow 19 joins him as he's about to turn on the Positioning Unit.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
As soon as we flip this on it's going to tell us exactly where and when we are. But it's also going to broadcast our location to the universe. In twenty years the Hegemony will know where to come look for us.

SHADOW 19
If this works, it's not going to matter.

Lang nods and turns on the unit, which lights up and has a touch screen on its face.

DOCTOR LANG
We now need a broadcast of an exact time and place on the other end to look for.

Shadow 19 taps information into the screen.

SHADOW 19
There will be another Hegemony UPU at this exact location and this exact time. Can the gateway find it?

DOCTOR LANG
I think so. Yes.

Nineteen moves over to the machine.

DOCTOR LANG (CONT'D)
About that second problem... a radical shift in time will have immense negative effects on the body.

SHADOW 19
What can I expect?

DOCTOR LANG
Well your shadow might survive, but you won't. This gateway was never meant as a point of origin and will radiate you, even through the suit. For that matter, the shadow'll be lucky to be breathing too... probably internal injuries...

SHADOW 19
Tell you what, doc. Don't tell me any more.

Nineteen steps into the machine, and through the glass, faces Doctor Lang.

SHADOW 19 (CONT'D)
You know if this works, it means Prometheus isn't coming here. You're going to be alone.

Lang nods, sweetly.

DOCTOR LANG
I know. But to change history...
(beat)
When you get back, find my daughter. I made a recording I'd like... I'd like it if you would...

SHADOW 19
I'll give it to her.

He hands Nineteen a small device.

DOCTOR LANG
Thank you.

They nod at each other as Lang fires up the machine and we hear a massive ROAR, uglier and more painful than ever before.

The ROAR reaches it's highest pitch and Shadow 19 writhes in his suit in pain. And just like that it's over...

...<u>and Shadow 19 is dead</u>.

SMASH CUT TO:

BATTLESHIP WAR ROOM:

Find ourselves inside the battleship war room, the same place we started the movie! Vance is talking to his men, the same way as before... everything looks the exact same.

VANCE
This is it, men. We don't do this, the moon falls, and everyone on the Continent and everything we've fought for will disappear within weeks.

The men nod, fired up.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Fight like the future is up to us.
(beat)
Now get to your capsules and lock in.

The Marines head to a series of individual DROP CAPSULES, which close and sink into LAUNCH TUBES.

As Vance approaches his capsule...

BANNEKER
Get back here safe, Conrad.

VANCE
One thing we do know for sure, Warren. I always make it back.
(beat)
There's a bottle of scotch in the galley. Don't touch it because I'll be drinking it tonight.

And with that... he puts on a helmet and drops into his capsule... the clock hits 12:00 and FWOOM, the capsules are gone.

But this time, the CAMERA STAYS ON THE SHIP with Banneker.

He moves back over to a closet and punches a code into the keypad which opens the door. He pulls out a bag and inside a hidden compartment is a red Hegemony UNIVERSAL POSITIONING UNIT! He presses a button and speaks into the unit.

BANNEKER
Tubes away.

He clicks off and a bead of sweat rolls down his temple... he's nervous.

FOOTSTEPS behind him get him to spin around.

He can't believe what he's seeing... it's Vance...

BANNEKER (CONT'D)
What the hell?

Banneker sees the red Hegemony suit.

BANNEKER (CONT'D)
Where'd you get that suit? Where'd you come from?

His face falls as he sees Nineteen raise his pulse rifle...

BANNEKER (CONT'D)
Conrad, what is this?

SHADOW NINETEEN
I know what you are, Warren. What you did...

...but then Nineteen falters, his body failing him! He clutches at his chest, his heart giving out! The rifle clatters to the floor.

Banneker's eyes go wide, realizing he's somehow been found out. He looks down at that rifle between them...

He leaps for it, but Nineteen summons his energy and rushes into Banneker, sending them both reeling into a console.

A monitor above them shows the drop capsules heading for the moon... about halfway there. Nineteen sees this just as...

...Banneker spins and gets his hands on Nineteen's throat, just like when they fought previously... but this time Nineteen knows what's coming...

...and so he headbutts Banneker before Banneker can do it to him.

Banneker staggers back and Nineteen goes for the gun, but his heart is fluttering and he just doesn't have the energy to sustain this fight much longer...

ADA'S VOICE
Heart failure.

Banneker hears this too and his eyes light up... Just as Nineteen reaches the rifle, Banneker is on him and...

...they struggle for the weapon. They're both using all their strength to wrench the rifle from the other's hands...

It looks like Banneker has the advantage... he's starting to twist the rifle away... Nineteen is getting weaker... he can't hold on...

SHADOW NINETEEN
Athena... jump jets...

Immediately, FWOOOOM... Nineteen's jump jets kick in... sending him flying back, but also tearing the gun out of Banneker's hands...

And as he is propelled backwards... BAM! Nineteen fires the pulse rifle...

...A PURE ENERGY PULSE flies through the air and finds its mark: right in the middle of Banneker's forehead. Thwump! He crashes to the ground, a look of tremendous pain on his face.

Nineteen is unable to stop himself and CRASHES HARD into a console on the far side of the room.

But he can't quit now, after he's come so far, his eyes immediately move to the monitor across the room... the drop capsules now three-quarters of the way to the moon.

ADA'S VOICE
(repeats)
Heart failure.

Nineteen's body jerks but he gets to his feet and wills himself toward that monitor and the console supporting it. Every step is painful... every breath determined...

He reaches it, and starts pecking away at a keyboard, barely able to type.

ON THAT MONITOR:

We see those capsules heading for the moon... only Nineteen has changed their trajectory.

Satisfied, he grabs up a COMM-LINK off a console.

SHADOW 19
(pained)
Listen to me. There's been a change to the drop point...

IN THE CAPSULES:

Nineteen's voice comes through...

SHADOW 19 (V.O.)
...it was a trap. The Hedge defenses are in a different place.

IN VANCE'S CAPSULE:

Vance rides the G-forces down, listening to this.

VANCE
Who is this? Where's Banneker?

IN THE WAR ROOM:

Shadow Nineteen doesn't answer. He can't. He drops the comm-link and falls down into a sitting position, breathing hard. From where he sits, he can barely make out that monitor, those drop capsules heading to the right spot.

Breathing hard, he takes out the device Doctor Lang gave to him and holds it in his hand...

SHADOW 19
(to himself)
I'm... I'm you.

And with just a hint of a satisfied smile, he dies. His chin sags, his hand drops and that device rolls down next to his body.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCIENCE AGENCY - DAY

...where a living, breathing Ada comes walking out of the building, buried in a stack of notes.

It's a sunny day, optimism contagious in the air, and...

VANCE
Ada Kildare?

Ada stops, turns, looks up. Vance stands a few feet away.

ADA
Yes?

VANCE
Hi. Um... hello.

She stares at him, trying to make out his face...

ADA
I'm sorry... do we know each other?

VANCE
No. No we don't.

ADA
Can I help you with something?

VANCE
I'm not sure. Well, actually, this is going to sound crazy... but I think we have a mutual friend.

ADA
Who's that?

VANCE
A guy who was a lot like me.

Ada stares at him, a bit of concern washing over his face.

VANCE (CONT'D)
(beat)
You know what? Would you like to go get a cup of coffee? I think there's something you're gonna want to see.

She stares at him... is something familiar there?

ADA
Okay...

They start to walk off... He hands her the video device Doctor Lang gave to him.

ADA (CONT'D)
What's this?

And as they walk away, the CAMERA RISES UP, UP, UP... to get a bird's eye view of the Continent no longer under siege.

And with that, we...

FADE OUT.