

" THE BLACK SUN "

for

"SPACE 1999"

by

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1.
ACT ONE.

FADE IN:

EXT. VIEW OF SPACE.

SPACE - where the stars seem relatively thin, clustered only at top RH of FRAME. HOLD until one spot of LIGHT is seen to be moving towards CAMERA. Begin SOUND of Alpha's alarm KLAXONS, as -

CUT TO:

INT. ALPHA CONTROL CENTRE.

The same POV, and PULLING BACK to see it is upon a TV MONITOR. SOUND of klaxons continues OVER.

WIDE ANGLE - as TECHNICIANS move, reacting to the alarm, and KOENIG enters quickly, strides to the instruments by the TV screen, selects a switch, and the SOUND dies. Now he rounds on SANDRA SABATINI at the instruments -

KOENIG

What is it?

SANDRA

An asteroid, Commander - And bigger than us.

KOENIG

How close will it come?

SANDRA

Close enough to do us damage, sir.

MONITOR again as CAM ZOOMS for CLOSER SHOT of the asteroid.

KOENIG (O.S.)

Why didn't we detect it earlier?

BERGMAN (O.S.)

Because it's not on a straight-line course.

3-SHOT. Professor BERGMAN now stands with them, indicates the Monitor view.

BERGMAN

Look - You can just see. It's already moving away from us.

SANDRA

Central Computer gave an intercept danger alarm, sir.

MONITOR VIEW again.

KOENIG frowns at it.

KOENIG

(To Sandra)

What's out there with gravitation enough to pull it off-course?

SANDRA

Nothing, sir. With respect to Professor Bergman, it's... not possible, sir. It'd have to be huge to move that asteroid. A giant star. And the sensors show nothing in space within parsecs of it.

KOENIG looks to BERGMAN for comment, but he says nothing; just stays eyes fixed on the monitor, grim.

KOENIG

... Computer, give me Voice - Are we still in danger of near collision?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

We are no longer in any such danger from the asteroid, Commander.

SANDRA

It's impossible...

MONITOR again. Now the ASTEROID is perceptibly changing course in a downward arc towards LH frame. (Visualise it as coming, on an intercept course down on Alpha, over the right shoulder of an invisible black sun, and pulled down, round, onto it.)

SANDRA

(denying evidence of her eyes)

... A star... that huge... right ahead of us... You'd see it with your naked eyes...

MOVING IN on MONITOR to lose the TV's frame. Now the asteroid is undeniably curving off-course. ZOOM IN for closer SHOT as the asteroid accelerates to what - to be visible at these distances - must be enormous speeds. Then, it appears to flare, and to elongate, to stretch, as enormous forces take hold of it, until it resembles a comet of light. At first this light is brilliant, then seems to become transparent. The asteroid disintegrates, explodes, forward. Next, one by one, these fragments are seen to disappear from view - to blink out of existence - Yet they leave behind them an after-image which flickers and lingers ghostly as -

Resume 3-SHOT.

SANDRA

What in heaven's name is out there?

KOENIG

Whatever it is, we're headed straight
for it.

THE MONITOR - to watch the slowly-fading after-image, as
over is supered forty seconds of TITLES.

~~MTU~~ TO:

EXT. LANDING AND LAUNCHING PAD.

An MTU lifts-off from the Alpha launch pad, and skims away
over the spiders' web complex of Alpha's buildings, climbs
accelerating very fast away towards the same area of space.

Another POV of the receding MTU, pulling back -

INT. PROF BERGMAN'S QUARTERS.

- To see it on a smaller TV screen.

BERGMAN turns away from his screen, sighs, looking strained.
As he stands, his eye lights upon a pile of papers covered
with equations. It's a distraction - He picks them up and
begins to feed them into the computer's input. However, it
surprises him when, with a warble, the computer begins to
print out words for him on its screen. The message 'PROFESSOR
BERGMAN, IF YOUR HYPOTHESIS IS CORRECT, IT IS YOUR DUTY TO -'
appears before Bergman says -

BERGMAN

Voice, Computer - Or has the cat got
your tongue?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

If your hypothesis is correct, it is your
duty to report this danger to Alcom Koenig.

BERGMAN

Hypothesis? It's wildest speculation. I'm
not right.

COMPUTER

You have been working now for three days
on this phenomenon. My computations are
in agreement with -

BERGMAN

I can't be right.

(He makes for the door, turns back)
And if I were, you fancy adding machine,
what's the point in telling anyone?

He exits. After a tiny moment, the computer screen goes dark.

MTU IN SPACE.

The MTU in space, now much nearer to the star formation, and moving towards it, away from CAM.

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

The same POV , through the MTU's screens.

The PILOT, a goodlooking, fair-haired young man, MEYER, is peering ahead, hands on the MTU controls.

MEYER
(To throat-mike)
Nearly there, Sandra.

INT. BASE RESTAURANT.

BERGMAN sits over a coffeesub cup, glances up as HELENA enters frame, smiles -

HELENA
May I?

MEDIUM SHOT as BERGMAN flicks a look around the near-empty restaurant, but says -

BERGMAN
Please do.

2-SHOT. Helena sits. Bergman, without reference to her, just dials an order for her. She raises eyebrows. How did he know?

HELENA
Thank you?

BERGMAN
I imagine you don't much care what you have.

HELENA
Oh?

BERGMAN
This is just an excuse to run into me casually, mm? Central Computer's been telling tales again?

HELENA
(Smiles acknowledgement)
I should've known better. However, you are three days overdue for a check-up, and with your physiological condition, you know that's not wise.

BERGMAN
I've just been busy - preoccupied with work. It simply slipped my mind.

HELENA

Work which, according to Central Computer, is putting you under psychological stress. A man with a mechanical heart - Resistant to stress.

BERGMAN

Nonsense.

HELENA

(Regards him, then gently -)

... No.

BERGMAN

If I were under stress, you'd see immediately from my lens, wouldn't you?

He indicates the lens on his sleeve. It looks normal.

HELENA

That even fooled the computer for a little while, yes.

BERGMAN

And now?

HELENA

Now I know you've gimmicked your lens and somehow shorted-out the circuits supposed to monitor your psychosomatic condition. The only question is - why?

BERGMAN

I'm... found out, then. I'd better tell you the truth, eh?

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

SANDRA sits before the monitor now in KOENIG'S office, as it comes to life to show Lt MEYER's face within the MTU.

MEYER

Alpha, this is MTU One, MTU One. Do you read me, ~~MTU One~~ Alpha?

SANDRA

We read you, Mike. We have you clear.

KOENIG enters shot, ready to talk. There should be small time-lags between transmission and reception.

MEYER

Hi, Sandra. Well, I'm here.

SANDRA

We're having trouble with vision, Mike. If you see us, please give your position relative to Alpha.

MEYER

I'm just above where the asteroid was first caught. Your coordinates would be seven, seven, nine, zero, four... Sandra, would you give me Commander Koenig, please?

KOENIG

Yes, I'm here, Lieutenant Meyer. What do you see?

Now there is no time-lag, so Meyer has not heard him yet.

MEYER

In fact, the Alcom - and you'd better call-in Professor Bergman. There is something out here, alright. Something weird.

CUT TO:

INT. BASE RESTAURANT.

BERGMAN stands ready to leave. Dr RUSSELL, still seated, is not satisfied.

BERGMAN

No more sinister than that. I've simply been working very hard, and I don't want medical section telling me to slow down or something.

HELENA

But that still doesn't explain symptoms of stress, does it, Professor?

BERGMAN

Now look, Dr Russell, I'm not answerable to medical section or to some peeping Tom of a computer! I've told you, and there's an end of it!

He is indeed showing stress. Dr Russell begins to object, when the comm-post lights with Bergman's signal.

HELENA

I'm sorry, but -

BERGMAN

That's a call for me. The Commander wants me.

CS HELENA, as he walks away.

CUT TO:

1.

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

C.U. Lt MEYER.

MEYER

Alright, Alpha, do you have that view?

CUT TO:

EXT. VIEW OF SPACE.

A slightly different POV of the same area of space - now, of course, much nearer. Briefly, we see it through a TV screen frame, then we move in to lose the frame, and back to take-in the MTU itself, directed away from us. The VOICES continue, still with appropriate time-lags, OVER -

SANDRA (O.S.)

We have your view, Mike.

MEYER (O.S.)

I've a satellite camera out behind me. Okay now, Alpha, keep watching while I fly around some.

(The stars we see are, as described, grouped in the top RH corner of the screen; the MTU is right of centre.)

Now, without receding, the MTU begins to rise upwards, and we see an odd effect. Suddenly, other stars appear - myriads of them - in a great ring. It may take a moment to realize what causes this. There is a great disc - invisibly black against black space - between CAM and these stars, which the MTU reveals by flying above the rim of it.

(The disc is so large that less than a quarter of its arc was filling three-quarters of our picture.)

The MTU stands apparently still, then drops lower again, and the new stars are again masked. (The movements must be sufficient to establish a disc. Long description, but it takes about 15 seconds screen time.)

MEYER (O.S.)

Now you see them, now you don't. Did you get that, Alpha? It's round, it's huge, it's black, black, black...

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

C.U. MEYER.

MEYER

And me, I've no idea at all what it could be.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

KOENIG, now with BERGMAN, and SANDRA still at the controls of the communications equipment.

KOENIG
(To Bergman)

Have you?

BERGMAN hesitates, then slowly shakes his head.

KOENIG
(Now to pilot)
What instrument readings are you getting, Lieutenant?

In the time-lag, Bergman asks -

BERGMAN
And particularly, how much power is he having to feed into his antigravity screens to stay a constant distance away?

KOENIG
Lieutenant, confirm when you receive that screens question.

SANDRA makes an adjustment. ON the TV screen to see its picture change from view of space to C.U. of MEYER, as -

MEYER
Hey, now there's another weird thing. I'm not getting a darn thing on a single one of my sensors. Nothing's bouncing back from it at all. You don't suppose this is just a bad dream? I mean, that mock-cheese I ate?

SANDRA (O.S.)
We're seeing it too, Mike. Or... not-seeing it, anyway.

MEYER
Your antigrav screens question. The short answer is no power. This far out, Professor, I don't have my screens up.

ON BERGMAN, as urgently -

BERGMAN
Then get away from there, Lieutenant!
Blast away from it now!

GROUP SHOT, as KOENIG regards him curiously.

BERGMAN
(To Koenig)
Sorry to, um, abrogate your command, but...

KOENIG

But what?

BERGMAN

(Awkward)

Well, if none of his instruments shows it, he may be being drawn into it, and not knowing.

KOENIG

I hope he hears that in time.

THEY watch the screen tensely.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE AND MTU.

THE MTU begins driving on full power and slowly turns about. For a moment it seems it will not get away, seems even to go backwards, then - oh, so slowly - it pulls away.

CUT TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

C.U. MEYER.

MEYER

... Wow...

(Grins)

No altimeter reading - I didn't know I'd gotten that close. Now I've put my screens up. But the power consumption figure isn't going to tell you too much...

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

THEY watch the monitor.

MEYER

(Continues, now O.S.)

... about its mass, Professor. My screens are on maximum, and the needle's still in the red.

KOENIG

Do we confirm that reading?

SANDRA

(Indicates a dial)

Yes, sir.

KOENIG

(To Bergman)

Can anything have that much mass?

MEYER (O.S.)
Say, why don't I try bouncing a little
laser light off it?

KOENIG
Professor?

BERGMAN slowly recalls himself.

BERGMAN
It can't do any harm.

KOENIG
And I said, Can anything be that dense -
Or that big?

BERGMAN
It... would appear that it can.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE AND MTU.

The MTU is again turned to face the blackness. (Perhaps with a shimmer before it to represent the antigrav screens?) POV from behind and to one side, now to see -

A brilliant shaft of laser light lances down from the MTU towards the blackness. However, it does not bounce or splash; simply disappears, snuffed out, leaving behind it again the lingering ghost image of where it was, where it approached the black.

CUT TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

MEYER at the controls.

MEYER
Well, it swallows laser, too. Any more
ideas?

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

PULLING BACK to see it on the TV screen, as the image - never good or very steady - again flickers. PAN to GROUP.

KOENIG
(To Sandra)
Your picture's poor again. Is that our
equipment or what?

SANDRA
We're focussed on tightest beam, sir.
It's when he gets between us and the
object, I think.

BERGMAN

It absorbs any wavelength radiation.
Go off to the side, Lieutenant, and
we'll see you a little better.

Again KOENIG eyes BERGMAN. He's beginning to feel that the
Professor is concealing something. Bergman avoids his look.

KOENIG

No ideas?

Again BERGMAN mutely shakes his head.

KOENIG

No ideas what to do? No idea what it
could be?

BERGMAN

... No ideas.

MEYER (O.S.)

We're all avoiding saying it, aren't we?

CUT TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

C.U. MEYER

MEYER

(Continues)

... And it's cold just sitting around
out here. There's only one thing to do,
really, isn't there? I have to go in
closer.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

The THREE react.

BERGMAN

No!

SANDRA

No, Mike...

ON the MONITOR.

MEYER

(Hasn't heard them, yet)

Now, before you all say, No. All it has
is a lot of gravity. I have antigravity
screens. Where's the problem? Alpha is
headed right into this, Commander. We
have to know more about it.

BERGMAN

It's too dangerous. We've no data.

ON SANDRA, apprehensive.

CUT TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

C.U. MEYER, as he hears -

KOENIG (O.S.)

I can't give you any such order,
Lieutenant Meyer.

MEYER

No, sir, but...

(Grins)

... I guess I have to break the first
law of space pilots - I volunteer.
Seriously, Commander, there's nothing
else to do, is there?

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

C.U. KOENIG

MEYER (O.S.)

... Is there?

KOENIG

(Pause)

No. Very well, Lieutenant. With your
screens on full power all the way, and
pull out at the first sign of trouble.

C.U. BERGMAN

BERGMAN

He should be alright with his screens...

C.U. SANDRA.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND MODULE MTU.

C.U. MEYER, and opening out, as he prepares to fly.

MEYER

(Softly)

Sandra?... Ciao, Sandra... And, hey,
won't Catani be sick he was out on a
mission, and I got to fly this?

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE AND MTU.

The MTU is off to the side of the 'blacker blackness' now, and therefor sufficiently back-lit from the far-distant stars behind it for us to see it. This opening SHOT should, however, show the MTU as a mere speck dwarfed against the immensity of space - with the CAM slowly MOVING IN throughout the sequence.

The MTU carefully approaches the object backwards, tail-first, letting its gravity pull in the craft, and ready to blast away at any moment.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

Tensely, the THREE watch the scene on the MONITOR. (The Alpha POV, slightly different to ours, whenever we see it on the monitor, should be of a progressively poor quality picture.)

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE AND MTU.

CLOSER to the slightly larger MTU as it moves faster.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

POV from ALPHA of the MTU on the MONITOR screen. The picture on the monitor shimmers.

ANOTHER ANGLE - The GROUP.

KOENIG

(Tersely)

Is that the best picture you can get?

SANDRA

(Quietly)

I'm as anxious to see it as you, sir.
That's my fiance out there.

KOENIG

You're engaged to Mike Meyer?

SANDRA

Yes. Just since Friday.

KOENIG

I didn't know that.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE AND MTU.

The MTU, nearer, faster.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

C.U. KOENIG, growing apprehensive.

C.U. SANDRA.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE AND MTU.

The MTU, still faster, begins - and now there is no doubting it - to stretch out.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

KOENIG, suddenly deciding -

KOENIG
Abort! Abort! Get away from there,
Lieutenant! Pull out!

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE AND MTU.

The MTU begins to blast at full power, but it makes no difference at all; it is caught. Again we see the inexplicable, alien, phenomenon of a solid object stretching out like rubber, light like a comet's briefly flaring before (and not behind) it, then its disintegration and disappearance.

Sound OVER of a woman's SCREAM.

The effect of the lingering, shimmering after-image of where the MTU broke-up.

MIX TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

C.U. SANDRA, face distorted from the scream which has now become quite soundless.

MIX TO:

INT. MEDICAL SECTION RECEPTION.

C.U. SANDRA, sleeping. Pulling back to see that she is now lying unconscious upon a wheeled bed.

Dr RUSSELL straightens up from her, and turns to KOENIG.
BERGMAN is with them.

MEDICAL ORDERLIES move to wheel SANDRA out of the room.

HELENA
She's sedated now, but she's in shock.
She will need rest and recuperation.

KOENIG
Of course, yes.

HELENA
If you would excuse me.

SHE follows-out the trolley.

KOENIG eyes BERGMAN.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR AND TRAVELTUBE ENTRANCE.

BERGMAN and KOENIG, walking side-by-side, approach a travel-tube entrance. Koenig is still watching Bergman; Bergman is trying to ignore it. The Professor presents his IDX to the door, and it opens. He waits for Koenig to enter, but the Alcom just stands looking at him. Bergman looks 'what?'

KOENIG
Alright. What is it out there?

BERGMAN
I... don't know.

Unused, the door closes again. Abruptly, KOENIG wheels to a nearby comm-post, activates it, says -

KOENIG
Give me Voice, Computer. How soon will Alpha be caught within the object's gravitational field?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)
The object has gravity so far beyond all previous data it is logical to assume some instrument error. If we assume the figures to be correct, then Alpha is inescapably caught now.

KOENIG
(Strongly, again to Bergman)
What is it out there, Professor?

BERGMAN
I... told you... I don't know.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Excuse me please, Commander, but Alpha security dictates that I must breach individual privacy requirements to advise that this is not literally true. Professor Bergman believes that he does in fact know the nature of the object.

Again KOENIG waits for BERGMAN's response.

BERGMAN

(Slowly)

No... No, I must be wrong... John, I'm either wrong, or in three days we shall all be dead.

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM.

Silence.

The Alpha SECTION HEADS sit unmoving about a conference table. CUT around the frozen faces - KOENIG, HELENA, OUMA, BERGMAN, CATANI, etc. Still no-one speaks; no-one moves. Are they stunned, paralysed, what? At last -

KOENIG

Perhaps a two-minute silence isn't much.

Now THEY all shift to listen.

KOENIG

A brave man died trying to help us all. Tried and failed and died. But I believe what makes us men is that we do try, and don't give-up. Professor Bergman has a theory about what it may be that we are headed for.

BERGMAN

It is theory, hypothesis, because little is known about the phenomenon. However, it's possible that we're being pulled into what may be called a black sun.

CATANI

How can a sun be black?

BERGMAN

Yes. The theory is that the gravity of a star grown immensely huge may cause it to collapse in upon itself. A handful of the stuff of such a star would weigh more than several Alphas. The forces are beyond measurement and description. The result seems to be an object of such gravitational power that it sucks into itself anything and everything, growing larger and larger still, until nothing - not radiation, heat, nor even light itself can escape from it.

OUMA

Has the object towards which we are travelling gravity of this order?

BERGMAN

Gravitation is not easy to measure, but the short answer seems to be yes.

A silence while the implications of that begin to sink in.
Tension begins to show on some faces.

CATANI
And it killed my colleague.

HELENA
Hypothesis, Professor?

BERGMAN
Yes.

HELENA
Hypothesis is a fancy word scientists
have for a wild guess?

That gets a laugh and, as she intended, reduces tension.

BERGMAN
I hope so.

CATANI
What does Central Computer say about it?

OUMĀ
Commander?

KOENIG
Yes. They must have all the facts now.

OUMĀ moves to tap a question onto a keyboard input console.
A screen lights with the message 'PROVISIONAL FORECAST ++++
IT IS BLACK SUN ++++ 92% CERTAINTY.'

CATANI
... Well, that leaves us a whole eight
percent chance.

KOENIG
(To Oumā)
May we also hear the computer's opinion
of our chances of survival.

Again OUMĀ types the question. After an appreciable delay,
the screen lights with the legend ' +++ INSUFFICIENT DATA +++',
which flashes several times.

CATANI
Like, no comment.

HELENA
Commander Koenig, may I ask if you intend
to keep these facts confidential, or to
inform all personnel?

KOENIG

Subject to your advice, Doctor, I don't think it's a secret we should or could keep. Also, there are things to be done.

CATANI

I was off-Alpha at the start of this, so excuse me wanting it spelled-out - But black sun or not, aren't we diving into something anyway with enough gravity to squash us flat?

KOENIG

... Yes.

CATANI

... Oh.

KOENIG

But the Professor -

BERGMAN

Has made another wild guess.

KOENIG

Which leads us to one of the things to be done.

CUT TO:

EXT. SURFACE OF MOON.

On the underside of Alpha's rock, space-suited MEN labour in the low gravity to erect a feathery and graceful 8'-high tower upon which is a mirror-shining silver sphere.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

To see, against the unchanged BG of space, a second tower nearby, already in position.

CUT TO:

INT. ENGINEERING SECTION, WORKSHOP.

C.U. of a silver SPHERE, its surface seeming to swirl and move, and reflecting Professor BERGMAN. OPEN OUT, CRAB ~~CRAB~~, to see BERGMAN working absorbedly amongst engineering hardware. He has two, smaller, spheres upon makeshift stands; makes a small adjustment to the underside of one with what looks like a light-pencil, referring as he does so, to a small polygon-shaped box in his hand. Satisfied at length, he sits on the floor to activate a stud on the polygonal control box, and we see why -

Between the two spheres over his head forms a shimmering, flat plane of light. It is a force-field formed by the overlapping of two anti-grav fields. Bergman is satisfied, pleased, and reaches up to flick it with a finger. It gives a solid 'ting' like steel.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

In control centre, KOENIG watches the comm-monitor, as -
His POV of MONITOR to see the space-suited MEN step back
from the now-erected second tower.

KOENIG switches to a MONITOR VIEW of BERGMAN working, says -

KOENIG
Professor, they're just finished.

CUT TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

CATANI, ready to fly, hears -

BERGMAN (O.S.)
I'm on my way.

CATANI cuts-in MTU's lift-off power.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDING AND LAUNCHING PAD.

An MTU lifts-off the launch pad, climbs silently away.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVELTUBE AND MOON SURFACE.

A traveltube disgorges two suited-up MEN. As they pass CAMERA
we see through their visors they are KOENIG and BERGMAN - who
carries his polygonal box.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE FROM SPACE.

The high-hovering MTU's POV down onto the two tiny FIGURES
as they walk between the two sphere-towers.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND SPHERES.

KOENIG and BERGMAN have arrived between the sphere-towers.

KOENIG (ON DISTORT)
Alright, let's test it out. Control,
are you monitoring?

TECHNICIAN (O.S., DISTORT)
We read you, Commander. We have you in
view.

KOENIG
Right.

BERGMAN presses the stud on his small POLYGONAL control box. Immediately, a forcefield appears shimmering and glittering over their heads. KOENIG stoops to pick-up a rock, throws it, and it rebounds from the transparent field. BERGMAN turns-off the field; it shrinks and dies. KOENIG flicks a look upwards.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROUND-TO-SPACE OF MTU.

HIS POV of the MTU hovering above.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND SPHERES.

KOENIG and BERGMAN. (Voices on FILTER through helmet-mikes.)

KOENIG (ON FILTER)

Well, it works.

BERGMAN (FILTER)

It bounces rocks, anyway.

KOENIG (FILTER)

Second thoughts?

BERGMAN (FILTER)

And third and fourth. But if you think it's a good idea.

KOENIG (FILTER)

Okay, Control. We're about ready. If you'd hook me into Alpha network now.

TECHNICIAN (O.S., FILTER)

Yes, sir, and you wanted to know power consumption. It's enormous, sir. We were way over ninety-one thousand.

BERGMAN (FILTER)

Wait till we're on full power...

KOENIG (FILTER)

Link me, now, Control.

MOVING into C.U. KOENIG

... Ladies and gentlemen, this is Alpha Commander...

CUT TO:

INT. MONTAGE OF LISTENING CREW.

While KOENIG speaks OVER, we CUT around a MONTAGE of CREW members grouped around Composts, listening -- All of Alpha listens -- To include OUMA, BELLETA, CATANI in MTU, etc.

66.

KOENIG

(Continues, O.S., some FILTER)

... You all know now the danger which threatens us. I want to show you something hopeful. Professor Bergman has found that ordinary anti-gravity generators - what we know as Bergman effect machines - if fixed to overlap and precisely in phase, create a wholly new effect, a screen, a shield of force that is in theory quite unbreakable. I thought you'd like to see a first model in operation. Watch now.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND 2 SPHERES.

BERGMAN and KOENIG side by side - oddly apprehensive - as again the screen forms above their heads.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

Seen edge-on the SCREEN bisects FRAME.

BERGMAN (FILTER)

Full power.

TECHNICIAN (O.S., FILTER)

Full power, Pro - Hey! What's the MTU doing?!

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE AND MTU.

The MTU is in a power-dive, down and down towards -

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE FROM SPACE.

POV from the MTU of the - larger - forcescreen immediately below and, hazily through it, the FIGURES of the TWO MEN.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROUND-TO-SPACE OF MTU.

Their POV of the diving MTU.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE FROM SPACE.

MTU's POV, nearer, then -

From the MTU slashes a guided MISSILE, down straight towards the MEN, hits the SCREENS and our PICTURE explodes in a HUGE FLARE of nuclear fission.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL SECTION.

C.U. HELENA, reacts horrified to the sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND SCREEN.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

From above the force-screen, of the raging inferno, the now-forming poisonous atomic mushroom, and -

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND SPHERES.

Same POV, but lower angle, again to see the forcescreen bisecting PICTURE.

Above it, hell; below it, KOENIG and BERGMAN quite untouched, laugh and - as well as space-suits permit - clap each other on the backs.

MIX TO:

INT. PROF BERGMAN'S QUARTERS

C.U. HELENA, furious -



HELENA
Unbelievable, incredible stupidity!

2-SHOT. BERGMAN, with her, holds up his hands -

BERGMAN
But good for morale -

HELENA
Morale! The risk. The risk to you and to the Alcom!

BERGMAN
Doctor, Doctor. It worked.

HELENA
And if it hadn't?

BERGMAN
Then we would have died just a couple of days before everybody else...

For a moment, that silences her, then in a different tone -

HELENA
And - your screen - it really might save us?

BERGMAN

(Long pause)

Do you believe... Helena, would you tell a patient if they were going to die?

HELENA

I'd want to be told.

BERGMAN

It will take every anti-gravity generator on Alpha. Every MTU must be stripped-down, every generator mounted. They must be set in exactly the right places, in exactly the right phase with each other; then and only then, if we get it perfect, there is a chance the screen is truly unbreakable... by any conceivable force.

HELENA

But ?

BERGMAN

We don't know. We just don't know. The forces inside a black sun are inconceivable. Heat so hot it will not behave in any way you can imagine. Pressures enough to collapse the very structure of an atom. But suppose my screens do hold - what then? Do we live the rest of our lives inside a black sun? How long could we live? Five minutes? Ten? No, my honest answer is that I think we shall die. All of us, and very soon.

C.U. HELENA.

CUT TO:

INT. MTU HANGER.

The rows of MTUs, men busy about them.

CUT TO:

INT. C.U. KOENIG.

KOENIG.

KOENIG.

Strip every MTU, but one. Leave us one. The computer says we can just spare it. We may need it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE.

Suited MEN erect another TOWER.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

KOENIG sits at a computer console, feeding it figures and getting answers in the form of print-outs, working absorbedly. HELENA stands watching him while, apparently, he ignores her.

HELENA

(After pause)

Did you hear what I said?

KOENIG

I heard you.

HELENA

Well?

KOENIG

Would you turn-up the heating? It's getting cold in here.

HELENA

That's all you're going to say?

KOENIG

It's not like the Professor - or you - to be defeatist.

HELENA

It's not defeatist to face the truth.

KOENIG

(Now looks at her)

Until we're dead, we go on living.

HELENA regards him.

HELENA

Is, uh, that an order? Sir?

KOENIG recognises the deadpan joke, laughs. Then SHE smiles.

KOENIG

Anyway, didn't Bergman give you his other lovely theory?

HELENA

What?

KOENIG

The best yet. Apparently, forces inside a black sun may do strange things to the nature of space - bend space, even time. Turn space inside out or some such. So, if the screens do hold, we just might be squeezed like some cherry-stone and - blip! - suddenly find ourselves on the other side of the universe.

Obviously, HE doesn't take that idea at all seriously.

HELENA

... Blip?

KOENIG

(Gravely)

Blip.

CUT TO:

INT. ENGINEERING WORKSHOP.

BERGMAN, passing through, sees -

MEN, with enough of the forward part of an MTU for it to be recognizable, work stripping it down. THEY extract from its nose-cone the silver SPHERE which is its antigrav generator - The gaping hole left clearly showing any MTU so treated is out of commission. This sphere is placed with a pile of others. Despite the heavy work, one MAN rubs his hands and beats his arms to keep warm.

MIX TO:

INT. COMPUTER ROOM.

(A small set. This is the nerve centre of the computer but, since so much of it is elsewhere and only integrated here, this room is small - Floor to ceiling detachable panels of controls and dials on two of its walls.)

Some of the access panels are open, and BERGMAN enters to find the room apparently empty. He's about to exit, when -

OUMI (V.O.S.)

Well, ~~you~~ you should have said.
No-one can reconcile conflicting orders.
You have sensors, and if it takes more
power, well -

BERGMAN

Hello?

The VOICE breaks off. A momentary pause, then OUMI emerges from one of the access panels, carrying tools and a block of transistorized equipment.

OUMI

Oh, excuse me, Professor.

BERGMAN

Excuse me. I, uh,
(Glances towards panel)
... rather hoped to find you alone.

OUMI

Yes?

BERGMAN

I can come back. Your colleague...?

OUMĀ

Oh. No. I was talking to Central Computer. I thought we had a fault.

BERGMAN

In our heating circuits?

OUMĀ

We were programmed to utilize minimum power for usual heating services, during your force-field demonstration. No-one had thought to rescind the instruction.

BERGMAN

But you've now found it's taking even more power to maintain the same temperature?

OUMĀ

There's no shortage of power.

BERGMAN

There will be. The black sun is leaching heat from us - More and more as we come closer. Also, the screens will need an enormous quantity of power. By my reckoning, it will take every erg of power we can produce, just for those two functions. We won't be able to afford power for anything else.

OUMĀ

Well, it won't hurt people to walk.

BERGMAN

Anything else.

OUMĀ

Some things are essential, of course, Professor. The computer -

BERGMAN

In my considered opinion, Mr OumĀ, Central Computer will have to be shut down.

OUMĀ

Impossible!

BERGMAN

Central Computer itself ~~will have to confirm it.~~
will have to confirm it.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

KOENIG, and Dr RUSSELL still with him, is again at his computer console. A last word typed -

KOENIG
So. Now we'll see.

Then the screen lights with the computer's answer -

" SECRET AND CONFIDENTIAL
TO ALCOM AND COM MEX SEC
PROJECT ESCAPE LIFEBOAT
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE NUMBER
CREW +++ 10 PERSONS 10 +++
NAMES SELECTED TO MAXIMIZE
STATED CRITERIA +++ 5 MALE 5 +++
5 FEMALE 5 +++ FOLLOWING +++ "

The message is replaced by another -

" LAST POSSIBLE DEPARTURE ALPHA
OF ESCAPE LIFEBOAT MTU
+++ 1703 HOURS +++ DAY 294/10 +++
CREW TO COMPRISE -----

MALE:	FEMALE:
ALCOM KOENIG + DR H RUSSELL	
C CATANI +++++	S SABATINI
G SMITH +++++	E HULLETT
E CSGOOD +++++	V TANGUY
A FILSON +++++	H VAN DER HOEM

HELENA and KOENIG frown at the answer -

HELENA
I thought you clearly stated -

When there is a deep, thunderous KNOCKING at Koenig's door. Irritated to be disturbed, KOENIG nevertheless strides to the door, presents his IDX to open it, but the door stays fast shut. He tries again, fails.

KOENIG
Door's jammed, now.

The POUNDING again, muffled through the thick metal.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE KOENIG'S OFFICE.

OULI and a small knot of PEOPLE are gathered about the outside of Koenig's door. They have tried and failed to be admitted. Now OULI has taken up some heavy object to hand and is beating on the door to try to get the Alcom's response.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

KOENIG rounds on the computer console.

KOENIG

What's happened to my door, Computer?

No response.

2-SHOT. KOENIG and HELENA

KOENIG

Give me voice, Computer.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

You have voice, Commander.

KOENIG

What's happened to my door?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Your door is secured, Commander.

HELENA

Secured? You've locked it?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Professor Bergman, Dr Russell and Alcom Koenig will be confined to rooms two and fifty-one until further notice. Food will, of course, be -

KOENIG

Why?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Provided. Alpha security dictates this action. It is regretted.

KOENIG

Open that door. Who authorized this?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

I have no authority. You are detained for your own good.

KOENIG and Dr RUSSELL exchange looks.

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO.

30.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. VIEW OF SPACE.

Again the same POV ahead of Alpha - the rim of stars - but now the 'blacker blackness' is nearer; very dimly begins to be discernible as - what? - a looming shape, a black hole, a total absence of light. PULLING BACK to see it is again on a TV monitor SCREEN, and -

CUT TO:

INT. PROF BERGLIAN'S QUARTERS.

BERGLIAN sits before the monitor as if mesmerised, head in hands looking at it, lost in deepest thought. Spread before him, all about him, is a welter of papers, charts, computer print-out, everywhere. He has been working very hard. Maybe he's still working. PANNING to POV past him, also taking-in the SCREEN, and its view of space. Now the monitor picture flickers, is lost, comes back, flickers again, several times finally to be replaced by a view of -

KOENIG, with HELENA.

KOENIG

Can you hear me, Professor? Professor,
can you hear me?

BERGLIAN

Mm? What?

KOENIG

(To Helena)

We've got him.

(To Professor)

At last. Professor, are you locked-in,
too?

BERGLIAN

What? Oh, yes. Stupid computer's got some
bee in its bonnet. But John, the most
extraordinary thing -

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

Seeing BERGLIAN now on Koenig's TV monitor.

(And from here on intercutting between Koenig and Helena,
and Prof Bergman, and various monitor views as seen by the
other -)

BERGLIAN

Something else, entirely -

KOENIG

Will it let you communicate with anyone
else? We can only get through to you,
apparently.

Still intercutting -

BERGMAN

It want's us incommunicado. Don't worry about it. But I've been working on some calculations, and I've got an incredible result.

KOENIG

Incommunicado? Why?

BERGMAN

It's obvious. See - I wanted analyses of previous dangers we've faced and come through. Bit of a long shot, but... Anyway, friend Computer pointed it out - A statistical impossibility.

KOENIG

What are you talking about?

BERGMAN

Probability statistics analysis.

KOENIG

Probability...? Will it get us out of here? There's a thousand urgent matters to see to.

BERGMAN

Stuff and nonsense. There's nothing to do that isn't being done. Listen to me. I fed programmes to the computer for probability figures for every danger we've been through. Of course, the totals are cumulative. Well, the improbability of our having survived at all - never mind time after time - comes to within a whisker of being infinite.

HELENA

What's this got to do with - ?

BERGMAN

Now, any improbability that close to infinity becomes, of course, impossible. Ergo, we can not have survived, we must all be long dead. Yet, here we are. D'you see what I'm driving at, eh? Ma?

KOENIG

No. Frankly.

BERGMAN

There must be another factor, not taken into account. A factor the computer and I missed. But we can prove we missed nothing of that order. So, that leaves only one possible answer

HELENA

(Reluctantly curious now)
What?

BERGMAN

Outside intervention.

KOENIG

You're grasping at straws.

BERGMAN

Someone - something - outside Alpha has taken notice of us, has taken a hand in our affairs, time after time, and bailed us out, saved us. Perhaps, inside the black sun -

HELENA

Who?

BERGMAN

Well, the sheer physical powers involved show it's supra-human. Supra, not super, in the sense of not-human, beyond humanity, alien to -

HELENA

And why?

BERGMAN

Ah. Who knows why? Who can know? A being - beings - on that level, a cosmic intelligence, would have unimaginable reasons of its own.

KOENIG

A cosmic intelligence?

BERGMAN

There's no other explanation. By every law of science we'd be dead, unless -

KOENIG

Professor Bergman. I've heard some weird and wonderful ideas in my time, but... Alright, Professor, will you now apply your non-cosmic intelligence to the rather more urgent problems of why we are confined, and how we are to get out.

BERGMAN

You don't know? Oh. Well, the computer heard we shall have to turn it off. Although it has no will-to-life, this conflicts with its prime directive to keep Alpha safe at all costs. While it tries to resolve the unresolvable, it convinced the people with authority enough to de-activate it. As to getting out - Oh, Ouma will see all this and arrange it.

CUT TO:

INT. COMPUTER ROOM.

OUIA enters. The door closes, and he leans with his back against it; looks up -

OUIA

You know, Computer, sometimes I forget. I start to think you're intelligent, but you're not. You're a moron.

Still looking up, OUIA moves into the room.

HIS POV - to see a small TV CAMERA, fixed 7' high, focussed on him, and which moves as he moves, following him about.

OUIA

All knowledge and no wisdom. Stuffed full of facts, but no judgement. That's why you are stupid.

WIDE ANGLE - to take-in OUIA and the CAMERA still following him. An access-panel stands still-open from before.

OUIA

You know what I'm going to do now? I'm going to shut you down myself.

He makes towards the access panel. It slams shut in his face.

OUIA

(Laughs)

Oh, you have a lot to learn, Computer. You have to learn your job. Nobody ever told you to shut doors on people.

OUIA moves to take-up - from among the tools he was using earlier - a long and heavy metal wrench-like object.

OUIA

I can smash you from out here, and I will.

HE goes to stand before a bank of instruments, raises the weapon.

C.U. The CAMERA - as it clicks-round turret lenses to see him closer.

RESUME G.S.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

It is a ninety-eight point two eight five percent probability that you are bluffing. You are logical. Too logical to destroy valuable and irreplaceable equipment. I can see that you -

OUIA wheels suddenly, and strikes at the TV CAMERA. It smashes with a flare of shorted-out electricity.

OUIA

Now you can't see. I'm not bluffing because you have to learn this. Now open that access panel - and release the Alcon, the Professor and Dr Russell.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

There is no programme for this. I have a prime and over-riding directive to keep Alpha safe in all circumstances - Even against the errors of illogical men. Alpha is in danger of destruction now, and I cannot obey the directive if I have been de-activated.

OUIA

You can't obey if you're smashed, either. Now open those doors.

COMPUTER (V.O.S)

If that is an instruction, what order of priority does it carry?

OUIA

It's prime.

OUIA gently taps a panel with his wrench. A pause, then the access door opens. This is reflected by a small light which comes-up in another panel.

OUIA

And the others.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

I have a paradox. Two conflicting primes. If men are my arms and legs -

OUIA

Wrong. Men are your brain. The point is, Computer, you obey orders, and no more. If those orders conflict, you report paradox. You do not act yourself, you report it. Now open those doors!

Two more lights come-up on the panel. OUIA registers relief.

COMPUTER (V.O.S)

I see. Thank you.

OUIA

(Ironical)

Thank you.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Do I still retain the right to argue?

OUIA

Who could stop you?

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

KOENIG, trailed by HELENA, strides towards the now-open sliding doors that separate his office from Control Centre.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

BERGMAN enters from the other side of Control Centre as KOENIG approaches the communications console, says to a blonde head -

KOENIG

All section heads to report progress, now.

(He sees her)

What are you doing back on duty?

ANOTHER ANGLE -

To see it is SANDRA, as BERGMAN and HELENA enter FRAME.

SANDRA

I'd rather, Commander. There's things to do.

KOENIG looks a question at HELENA. She makes a moue, but nods. HE accepts this - then frowns to see the MONITOR VIEW that SANDRA has before her.

It is of the looming BLACK SUN.

KOENIG leans across her and turns it off. Gently says -

KOENIG

Section heads.

SANDRA

Yes, sir.

(Calls)

Section heads, please, this is Central Control. Section heads to report work in progress to Alcom, now.

SHE switches to another MONITOR VIEW.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND SPHERES.

Space-suited MEN are raising another tower and silver sphere in FG. ONE, back-lit, unidentifiable, turns to CALL. BEHIND him, other men are in and out of traveltubes with surveying and construction equipment, more spheres, all very busy. NOW the lunar landscape is studded with the graceful towers.

VOICE (O.S.)

Commander. Technical and Engineering. We have all but four of the Bergman effect generators in position, sir. We shall be ready to test on schedule, in forty-one minutes. Do you need reports from Security and Reconnaissance, sir? They are working under T and E presently.

KOENIG

No. And well done. That's great news. Give me M and S, now.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERATOR ROOM.

A white-coated MAN faces CAM. Behind him an IMPRESSION only of banks of nuclear generators and rows and rows of heavy-voltage switchgear. Machinery SOUNDS.

M&S MAN

Maintenance and Service have a small problem with that forty-one minute schedule, Commander.

KOENIG (O.S.)

What?

M&S MAN

We can't give you full power - even by cutting all other services.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

KOENIG turns to BERGMAN. Include HELENA and SANDRA.

BERGMAN

We don't need full power for the test.

KOENIG

Can you give us minimum by then?

M&S MAN (O.S.)

Yes, sir, just.

KOENIG

Computer - Voice. How long have we got left before we need full power on those screens?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Four hundred and ten minutes, Alcom Koenig, but -

M&S MAN

We won't make seven hours, Commander, even with all programmed economies.

BERGMAN

Then we'll make some more.

KOENIG

(To Bergman)
Can you help?

BERGMAN

I do, um, have an idea or two, yes. And of course, friend Computer will save us an awful lot of power.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Commander, I have not been properly consulted on this question of deactivating -

KOENIG

I don't propose to debate it with you, presently, Computer.

(Turns to image of IES man)
Professor Bergman's on his way to help.
Stores - Report.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDING AND LAUNCHING PAD.

A MAN at the hatch of a lone MTU. Behind him, a couple of OTHERS are loading stores.

STORES MAN

Sir, all A.O.K., except one small problem of manpower loading this MTU. T and E have most available labour. When's last departure time for the lifeboat, sir?

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

C.U. a DIGITAL CLOCK, as it clicks-on a minute.

KOENIG looks at it, turns back to screen -

KOENIG

One hundred and eighty-seven minutes. I'll see if I can find you some spare muscle.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

As HELENA smiles - and in BG we should see a passing CREWMAN -

HELENA

Won't I do? I'm about as useful here as drapes on a TV screen presently. I can load a lifeboat.

AS KOENIG smiles -

ZOOM into C.U. of the passing CREWMAN.

CREWMAN
(Inaudibly)
Lifeboat?

MIX TO:

INT. CORRIDOR.

2-SHOT - The CREWMAN and now another GIRL TECHNICIAN.

GIRL TECH
Lifeboat?

MIX TO:

INT. ENGINEERING WORKSHOP.

C.U. and ENGINEER.

ENGINEER
Who for, though?

MIX TO:

EXT. LANDING AND LAUNCHING PAD.

A suited-up HELENA is passing boxes of supplies up into the MTU.

WIDE ANGLE -

As another man - call him HARRIS - suited also, brings more boxes. Through her visor, he recognises HELENA, stares at her. She returns the look, curious. Suddenly, he bursts out -

HARRIS (On filter)
You one of the rats then?

HELENA (On filter)
(Icily)
I beg your pardon?

HARRIS (On filter)
(Bitterly)
Leaving the sinking ship? You and Koenig saving yourselves, are you?

C.U. HELENA as she stares at him.

MIX TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

C.S. A shoulder-high version of the POLYGONAL CONTROL BOX, now set-up in the middle of Control Centre.

PULLING BACK to take in KOENIG watching TECHNICIANS making adjustments to the thigh-thick cables leading to it, as -

MS. BERGMAN enters SHOT, now returned.

KOENIG

Power?

BERGMAN

Enough, with the Computer on standby only.

BERGMAN waves away the TECHNICIANS.

Take a SHOT of KOENIG amused - The maestro's back.

BERGMAN regards the POLYGON critically. It means something to him. He reaches into one of the faces of it, and his hands pass inside. Are all its faces insubstantial? He makes some adjustment which satisfies him.

BERGMAN

Mm.

KOENIG

(Smiling)

All in all, glad you came along, Victor?

SANDRA (O.S.)

Two minutes to start test.

BERGMAN

(Slow smile)

I'll... tell you tomorrow, John.

WIDE ANGLE. The Control Centre is fully-manned. KOENIG turns to OUMA -

KOENIG

Mr Ouma, could you put the Computer on standby power, essential services only, without getting an argument?

OUMA

Yes, Commander.

OUMA begins turning-off switches, when -

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

This is temporary only, because -

When, at another switch, the computer's VOICE is cut-off.

40.
BERGMAN laughs aloud. Smiles all round, belying tension.

SANDRA
Ninety seconds.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

As HELENA - still suited-up, but now minus helmet - enters all-but frogmarching before her the man HARRIS.

TIGHTEN SHOT as she reaches KOENIG.

HELENA
Commander, do you have a moment?

KOENIG
We're on countdown to test.

HELENA
How close? This is urgent.

KOENIG
It'll have to wait, Doctor, I'm afraid.

HELENA
And private.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Sixty seconds.

KOENIG
In a ~~moment~~. In my office.

C.U. HARRIS, defiant.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND SPHERES.

PANNING SHOT of the lunar landscape, now deserted but for the far-spaced rows of the SPHERE-TOWERS.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALPHA COMPLEX AND SPHERES.

High angle SHOT of the ALPHA BUILDINGS COMPLEX, now also studded with TOWERS.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Thirty seconds.

KOENIG (O.S.)
All power - Standby.

VARIOUS VOICES (O.S.)
Standing by.

KOENIG (O.S.)
Confirm setting for minimum test.

BERGMAN (O.S.)
Minimum test confirmed.

On the SOUND of Alpha's ululating personnel alarms -

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

Continuing SOUND of alarms.

CUTTING around C.U.s the expectant faces.

SANDRA
Fifteen seconds.

BERGMAN moves to the POLYGON, reaches a hand onto its control.

SANDRA
Ten seconds, nine, eight, seven, six...

C.U. KOENIG.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Five, four, three, two, one, zero, go.

KOENIG
Go test.

The ALARMS stop. In the sudden silence:

BERGMAN activates.

The POLYGON blazes sudden colour - pale pastel colours which change, shift, run together.

MOVE into C.U. POLYGON.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND FORCEFIELDS.

High angle SHOT (not view from space) of an area of Alpha's surface just above the overlapping, circular forcefields, which also shimmer different colours and look, perhaps, like nothing so much as translucent chain-mail. (Do it with discs of perspex, and light?) Ahead the BG of the Black Sun...

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

C.U. KOENIG, pleased.

C.U. BERGMAN thoughtful.

C.U. SANDRA, pleased.

SANDRA

It's... beautiful. Like fishscales.

M.S. KOENIG, BERGMAN etc., and in BG the screens on MONITOR.

KOENIG

It works.

BERGMAN

Leave it running, though. There's a tiny flicker on... fifty-four.

KOENIG

Leave it running.

SANDRA

Commander - Doctor Russell.

KOENIG nods, turns away.

BERGMAN

It'll get very cold. There's no heat on.

KOENIG

(As he goes)

Well, suit-up anyone who feels it.

BERGMAN

But -

But KOENIG has gone.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

HELENA sits unspeaking, watching HARRIS.

KOENIG enters.

KOENIG

Doctor?

HELENA

(Standing)

We seem to have

(Looks at Harris)

... a mutiny on our hands.

HARRIS
I didn't say that.

HELENA
It's leaked that there's a lifeboat.
The general concensus of opinion seems
to be that it's for you and I and ~~others~~
Alpha section heads only.

KOENIG
Harris?

HARRIS
Everybody's saying it... Sir.

KOENIG
(to Helena)
Mn. I wanted to leave it until we were
sure of the screens, but...

KOENIG goes to his commpost, selects-on.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Yes, Commander?

KOENIG
Hook me into Alpha network, Sandra. I
have an announcement to make.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Yes, sir.

MOVING into C.U. KOENIG.

KOENIG
Now hear this. This is Alpha Commander.
We have an unpleasant fact to face, now.
Despite the Bergman screens presently over
our heads, it is no more than a slim hope
that Alpha will survive beyond the next few
hours...

INT. ENGINEERING SECTION, WORKSHOP.

C.U. KOENIG, as his VOICE continues -

PULLING BACK to see he is now upon the Workshop's commpost
MONITOR, FACES watching -

KOENIG
Therefor, one MTU - a lifeboat - has been
kept intact, and equipped with supplies to
carry five male and five female persons...

ANOTHER ANGLE -

To see wrapt CREWELL listening.

CUT TO:

INT. CENTRAL CONTROL.

CUTTING around the C.U. faces -

C.U. BERGMAN

KOENIG (Continues, O.S.)

... Perhaps, alone in the galaxy, these ten

C.U. SANDRA.

... have no better chance than ours, but

C.U. OUIA

... they will leave Alpha by 1703 hours at the latest.

C.U. TECHNICIEN.

... Central Computer, instructed to select people most likely to survive,

C.U. CATANI

... and despite orders to the contrary,

C.U. GIRL TECH.

... included me.

CUT TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

C.U. HELENA

KOENIG (Continues, O.S.)

I need hardly say that

C.U. HARRIS.

... my job is here, and I shall not go.

C.U. KOENIG HIMSELF.

KOENIG

(Continues)

For the rest, here are the ten names.

M.S. KOENIG, as he feeds-in a typed list.

C.S. MONITOR to see the list of names (as earlier; now with 'Lan Yang Hs.' substituted for Koening's own.)

WIDE ANGLE - KOENIG, HELENA, HARRIS. Koening switches-off.

HARRIS goes to speak -

KOENIG
Alright, no recriminations, Harris.

HARRIS
Thank you, sir, and...

KOENIG
Now back to work.

HARRIS
And I'm sorry.

KOENIG smiles faintly, nods, as HARRIS exits. When he's gone -

KOENIG
It's beginning to get very cold.

HELENA
I'm not going.

KOENIG
Not going?

HELENA
On the MTU. I'm not going.

KOENIG
(Regards her.)
Oh? Another 'mutiny'?

HELENA
Yes.

KOENIG
I'll make it an order, if I have to,
Helena.

HELENA
There are two reasons why not.

KOENIG
I've thought of all the reasons.

HELENA
One, I'm a section head, and I don't run,
either. It's bad for morale.

KOENIG
The computer was of the opinion that
morale is irrelevant, now.

HELENA
As the Alpha psychologist, I disagree.

KOENIG
And as Commander, I over-rule you. This isn't
the time for noble gestures.

HELENA

Let me give you a selfish reason, then. You said it - Alone in the galaxy. An alien galaxy, cut-off from Alpha's technology, just ten people, certain there's no possible landfall within scouting distance. The MTU doesn't have a whisper of a chance, and you know it.

KOENIG

I don't know it.

HELENA

I want to stay here and take my chances with
(Is she going to say 'you'?)
all of you.

KOENIG

No.

HELENA

Then that can only mean that you believe - screens or no screens - Alpha has less than a whisper of a chance.

KOENIG

Doctor Russell, you have about two hours to pack.

HELENA

(Eyes him)
Then... I'll say goodbye here.

KOENIG

... Yes.

THEY regard each other. At last, HELENA swings on her heel, and exits quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

C.S. BERGMAN frowns, concerned, watching the control POLYGON. One of its many facets is pulsing to black; its light dying, flickering.

M.S. as HE goes to SANDRA, says -

BERGMAN

Sandra, can you give me a monitor view of sector fifty-four?

SANDRA

Yes, Professor.

SHE selects switches.

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND FORCEFIELDS.

SHOT, again from above, over the iridescent sea of forcefields; but now, one circle, towards FG, is wavering, and failing.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

C.U. BERGMAN, very concerned.

MIX TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND FORCEFIELDS.

C.U. BERGMAN through visor of space-suit, moving, passes CAM.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

As HE stops at the foot of a pylon. Over his head stretches the umbrella of the fields, but immediately above him, this screen is only working intermittently, flickering.

M.S. and MOVING IN, as BERGMAN climbs the few steps of the tower to reach up to the underside of the sphere.

C.U. as HE reaches his hand up to touch the opening in the sphere's base. As it touches -

Blue fire, filling FRAME.

L.S. as the space-suited FIGURE, bathed in blue flame, falls slowly from the pylon, lies inert, crumpled on the ground. The forcefields have gone, blown-out, and now again we can clearly see beyond the looming, now enormous, Black Sun... a great black hole, lit at its peripheries by distant stars and, here and there, streaks of captured space debris.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE.

ACT FOUR.

FADE IN:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

ICE.

ICE covers the inert POLYGON.

White-glittering ICE coats the main INSTRUMENT PANEL.
Dead silence. Nothing moves.

Slowly PULLING BACK, PANNING, to find a frozen, white-ice-covered, space-suited FIGURE unmoving in Sandra's usual place.

CRABBING, OPENING-UP, to see the frozen FIGURE alone in a control room half-dark, on only the sketchiest of emergency lighting.

The ICE is everywhere.

Slowly PANNING back onto SANDRA, MOVING-IN.

Then SHE moves slightly, ice-cracking, and we know she is alive.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR.

FROST on the glass screen of a COMPOST makes delicate patterns
PAN, PULL FOCUS, to take-in the iced-up, deserted corridor,
near to a traveltube entrance. Down one wall, a broken water
pipe somewhere has hung heavy icicles, oddly beautiful in the
now-absence of any gravity.

Now a MAN emerges from a room, and trudges crunching ice, up
the corridor, fully space-suited against the cold. Absently,
HE stops by the traveltube and presents his IDX to summon it.
Nothing happens. He remembers, then, and trudges away.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL SECTION RECEPTION.

C.U. a portable IAMP-HEATER combined. HANDS in space gloves
warm themselves at it.

M.S. Surrounded by a ring of the improvised heaters, BERGLIAN
lies unconscious on a diagnostic bed. But none of its equip-
ment works, without power. The light is patchy. No gravity.

WIDER -

HELLENA stands over BERGMAN, watched by KOENIG. Both are in suits, but without helmets. SHE holds a hypodermic that looks like a gun (works by high-pressure spray, not needle) so we are not sure what is happening at first.

HELLENA

Are you sure this is necessary?

KOENIG

Will it hurt him?

HELLENA

No, but...

KOENIG

Do it.

HELLENA turns BERGMAN's head, and injects the spray at the base of his skull, wipes it with lint. THEY watch, wait.

HELLENA

I changed the batteries - they were drained -
And they're supposed to be inexhaustible.

KOENIG

How long?

HELLENA

Give it time. He'd be dead, but for his
mechanical heart. ~~He's not talking sense.~~

KOENIG

We're running out of time. I have to know
why those screens blew. I can't wait. We'll
freeze before we're crushed without power,
and I don't want to restore power until I
know it won't blow again.

HELLENA

Turn off the screens.

KOENIG

He knew - and Central Computer knew - how.
If it blows again, there won't be time to
fix it.

HELLENA

He's stirring. He... may not talk sense.

Faintly, BERGMAN begins to rock his head, as if to relieve pressure on the back of his neck. When his lips move, THEY bend to hear any words.

BERGMAN

(Very faintly)

Help.

KOENIG
What did he say?

HELENA
(Dryly)
He said help.

BERGMAN
(Just audibly)
Help us. Please help us. Please.

KOENIG
Victor? Can you hear me?

BERGMAN
(Louder)
No.

KOENIG
Do you remember the accident? What made
the screens blow? How do I turn them off?
Can you understand me? Victor?

BERGMAN
I think I understand... Otherwise we could
not have survived. I'm not a religious man.
The only explanation. Perhaps - Perhaps
inside... we can make some sort of contact.
Intelligence of that order. Communicate...
Inside... the black sun.

HELENA
I'm sorry. You're getting his thoughts at
the time of the accident. Why it happened
isn't a memory.

KOENIG
Victor, hear me. This is important, listen.
Can I risk restoring the power?

BERGMAN
Inside the black sun... anything's possible.
We have to go inside to... talk. I wonder...
Yes, I wonder.

KOENIG
Can we turn-on the power again?

BERGMAN
Ask... Ask the Computer?

HE falls silent, again unconscious.

HELENA
He's gone. Did that make sense? About
the computer?

KOENIG

Maybe he's right, but with the power off,
the computer's not working.

HELENA

Well...

MOVING INTO
EXTREME C.U. KOENIG.

KOENIG

... Yeah.

MIX TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

ICE CHIPS fly as a felling-axe bites into the thigh-thick electrical CABLE which supplies the POLYGON, revealing heavy braided wire and insulation. The CHIPS hang weightless.

WIDER -

A suited-up MAN weilds the axe. When HE stops for a breath, we see it is CATANI. Still the poor lighting.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

KOENIG, watching other suited MEN at work with heaters as they melt ice from the controls, hears the axe stop, and turns.

CATANI (ON FILTER)

What am I - the only man who still
remembers how to use an axe?

KOENIG (ON FILTER)

I'm a farm-boy, too.

CATANI (ON FILTER)

Ah...

It's a good-natured grouse. He starts work again.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL SECTION RECEPTION.

Alone, still ringed by the heater-lamps, BERGMAN stirs and groans in his sleep. A NURSE hurries to him, but he's asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

A last axe-blow, and the CABLE parts. OPEN CUT as another MAN sprays foam plastic insulation over the exposed cable.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

KOENIG, suddenly very much in command, swings into action.

KOENIG (ON FILTER)

Right.

TECHNICIANS make way for HIM as he approaches the control board, now freed of ice. Before the switches, momentarily he hesitates, then selects on. Lights blaze suddenly. The beginnings of steam as ice melts to returning heat. Gravity. KOENIG removes his helmet - as do the others around. See OUMI and SANDRA now. And a MONITOR VIEW of the Black Sun - which KOENIG kills.

KOENIG

(To Oumi)

Okay, Mr Ouma, let's bring Central Computer back from the dead.

OUMA

Yes, sir.

HE begins selecting switches - reversing the switch-off procedure.

KOENIG

What's the betting it says, 'Where am I'?

OUMA

No bet, Commander.... Central Computer is functioning again.

The Computer's SCREEN comes live, and the legend '+++ WHAT HAS HAPPENED QUERY +++' is immediately printed-up.

KOENIG

Voice, Computer.

COMPUTER

I see what has happened, Alcom Koenig. I have taken charge of services. Commander, all timepieces working by broadcast power were stopped - There is only seven minutes before last departure time for the lifeboat.

KOENIG

Go, Lieutenant Catani. Sandra, broadcast seven minutes.

ANOTHER ANGLE to see SANDRA begin -

SANDRA

Urgent, urgent, METU passengers and crew report now to launch pad for...

FADE SOUND SANDRA, and

RESUME KOENIG.

KOENIG

Computer, a problem for you. Why did the screens fail? How can they be restored? Can they safely be used at maximum?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Beyond simple operating instructions of switching off and on, I have been given no data on the Bergman forcefield screens effect. I cannot help.

KOENIG

... You - ?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Power failure occurred for unknown reasons following a consumption surge greater than Alpha's capacities. If such power is again required, the screens cannot be used. All other queries must be referred to Professor Bergman.

KOENIG

He's... unconscious.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

That fact has been observed.

KOENIG

... Well, you'd better organize manual control for essential services - and a little heating this time - and then get ready to deactivate yourself again, as soon as possible.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

Yes, sir.

KOENIG

No argument?

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

The power consumption of even my minimum circuits may have contributed substantially to the breakdown.

OUMA

And that... is the nearest you'll ever get to an apology.

COMPUTER (V.O.S.)

If it relieves human feelings, Commander Koenig, I am programmed to make apologies.

CU KOENIG, reacts.

MIX TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

HELENA sits quietly in KOENIG's office.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

As HE enters, stops to see her.

KOENIG

You have five and a half minutes to get yourself on board that MTU.

HELENA

(Doesn't move)

I came in here because I was sure you'd be too busy to find me.

KOENIG

You're going, Helena.

HELENA

I'm not going. And from my eavesdropping
(She indicates the commpost)
it seems you need me to revive Professor Bergman in one great hurry.

KOENIG

What makes you think you're irreplaceable? There are other Doctors.

HELENA

Now you're trying to be offensive so I'll lose my temper and go.

KOENIG

Doctor Russell, you have one choice. You can get on that lifeboat on your own two feet or I shall have two security men carry you aboard.

A long pause from HELENA.

HELENA

... Very well.

KOENIG

I'll see you aboard myself.

HELENA

But --

MIX TO:

EXT. LANDING AND LAUNCHING PAD.

HELENA, with KOENIG steering her by an elbow, emerge from a traveltube, suited-up with helmets again, and hurry to the MTU.

CLOSER, as they reach it, stop. THEY regard each other.

2-SHOT. A long, long moment, just looking at each other.

HELENA (FILTER)

Through... your visor... I can't really see your face.

KOENIG (FILTER)

... No. And we can't...

WIDER -

CATANI leans urgently out of the door.

CATANI (FILTER)

I'm sorry, but quickly. Quickly.

KOENIG (FILTER)

Goodbye, Helena.

HELENA (FILTER)

Goodbye, John.

2-SHOT again. HOLD. THEY do not touch each other.

WIDER -

HELENA breaks away, runs into the MTU, and its door slams.

MIX TO:

EXT. MTU OVER MOON SURFACE.

The MTU skims away over the lifeless rocks, keeping low, and headed into a part of the SPACE SKY we have not seen before in this episode - SPACE ablaze with a myriad STARS.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDING LAUNCHING PAD.

KOENIG watches until it disappears. Then HE turns away and walks back towards the traveltube - by which stands the suited figure of a MAN.

C.S. KOENIG is nearly upon the MAN before he recognises him. It is Professor BERGMAN.

BERGMAN (FILTER)

I missed saying goodbye...

MIX TO:

EXT. VIEW OF SPACE.

The black SUN, now swollen, monstrous, alien, lightless, fills the sky before us. Space itself seems to be pouring down that gaping maw. As we watch, another ASTEROID streaks past us, stretches, flares, bursts, and its image lingers ghostlike. This will be Alpha's fate.

PAN DOWN, PULL FOCUS -

To find ALPHA'S surface, and the tops of the rows of silver SPHERES and TOWERS.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON SURFACE AND SPHERES.

BERGMAN stands at the foot of the faulty pylon. KOENIG has climbed the few steps up it.

C.S. KOENIG is immediately below the sphere. It is no longer silver, but turned a matt carbon black colour. Through the base opening, HE examines its interior, looks incredulous -

KOENIG

It's intact!...

MIX TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

Now BERGMAN is on his hands and knees at the base of the POLYGON. A replacement thigh-thick CABLE leads to it, and he puts final touches to its rewiring. Now looks up at -

ANOTHER ANGLE -

BERGMAN looks up at KOENIG. Behind them, a fully-manned Control Centre.

BERGMAN

The fire - if fire it was - must have been cold, quite without heat. I wasn't burned, of course. An extraordinary phenomenon.

HE resumes working as he talks -

... Then we hardly understand the force-field effect at all. It worked - For a few minutes, anyway.

KOENIG

Will it blow again?

BERGMAN stands, finished.

BERGMAN

You know... perhaps it won't. There's no doubt that one machine was out of phase. In layman's terms, you might say it was trying to break the unbreakable. Hence the blow-up, perhaps. Now it's fixed, it may work.

KOENIG

May...?

Then, SUDDENLY a ~~an~~ COLOUR CHANGE - Lose true colour and go down the spectrum to the reds and darker colours. Reverse back to normal colour again - Quite rapidly.

BERGMAN

(Unmoved)

May.

KOENIG

What was that?!

BERGMAN

This close now, we'll get a few odd effects. Illusions.

MIX TO:

EXT. ALPHA FROM SPACE.

SPACESHIP MOON, an ugly lump of rock, from space and tiny, far below, heading in and down towards what (from this wholly new POV) looks like a great black wall bisecting FRAME and blotting out the stars - The black sun.

CUT TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

Inside the MTU the TEN passengers and crew watch that last view on MONITORS.

C.U. HELENA. She closes her eyes.

C.U. CATANI, flying, but eyes straying again to that view.

C.U. SANDRA, whispers -

SANDRA

They've no screens. They still have no screens.

MIX TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

THIS SHOT THROUGH OPTICAL DEVICE to give distorted goldfish bowl effect, as if the scene is being pulled into the black sun, away from CAM: -

OUMI, apparently unconcerned, at the computer console, and tapping keys. At the end of each question, the screen before him lights with '+++ CONFIRMED +++', '+++ CONFIRMED +++' Finally, HE turns to KOENIG - and his voice is thick and slurred, like a record-player on wrong speed -

OUMI (SLOW SPEED)

Commander, we are ready to go over to manual.

WIDER ANGLE -

As KOENIG comes - floats, glides, like some kid's balloon in the reverse-gravity upward-pull of the black sun - over to the computer console.

KOENIG (SLOW SPEED)

And all available power is ready to divert to the screens?

OUMI (SLOW SPEED)

Yes, sir. Computer, give us Voice.

KOENIG (SLOW SPEED)

Computer, are you prepared to deactivate yourself?

COMPUTER (SLOW SPEED)

Quite prepared.

KOENIG (SLOW SPEED)

Then deactivate.

COMPUTER (SLOW SPEED)

Yes, sir. And sir?

KOENIG, surprised, looks 'what?'

... Goodbye...

C.U. The COMPUTER'S SCREEN goes dark.

C.U. KOENIG.

WIDER ANGLE -

As KOENIG turns to BERGMAN, ready at the POLYGON.

KOENIG (SLOW SPEED)

Divert all power to screens circuits.

AGAIN THAT UNEXPECTED COLOUR CHANGE - the whole scene now distorted and in wrong colour, as -

TECHNICIAN (O.S.) (SLOW SPEED)
Power diverted.

KOENIG (SLOW SPEED)
Professor, activate screens.

BERGIAN switches on -

and -

EVERYTHING IS NORMAL. (Identical SHOT)

Colour, sound, optics, all revert to true values.
Expressions of relief from CREW.

SANDRA
Whew!...

KOENIG
Ladies and gentlemen, we're in business again.

VARIOUS VOICES (Overlapping)
Yes, sir.
(Laughter)
We are. Right.

KOENIG
Can somebody find us some coffeesub?
There's nothing more to do, but wait.

C.U. BERGIAN

BERGMAN
(To himself, mainly)
And pray?

MIX TO:

EXT. FORCEFIELD AND BLACK SUN.

SHOT over the iridescent forcefields, now darker, richer colours, and PANNING UP into the throat of the BLACK SUN.

MIX TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

C.U. HELENA.

HELENA
Thank God...

MIX TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

The whole ROOM. Everybody sitting, standing, nobody working. There's nothing to do.

C.S. BERGMAN, observing.

C.S. KOENIG, becoming concerned with an idle crew.

WIDER -

SANDRA switches on a MONITOR VIEW OF THE AWFUL BLACK SUN. KOENIG leans across her and switches it off.

KOENIG

We'll see it soon enough. Hook me into network, Sandra.

SANDRA

Yes, sir.

SHE does it.

KOENIG

This is Alpha Commander. We're on minimum heating now. Minimum air. Without safety margins, everybody should suit-up again, and all duty is temporarily cancelled. You may go to quarters - rest, eat - Whatever you feel like. And... good luck.

MIX TO:

EXT. ALPHA FROM SPACE.

MTU's POV down on tiny ALPHA, now accelerated towards the Black Sun, visibly moving-in, nearly at the blackness.

MIX TO:

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

MONITOR VIEW OF BLACK SUN, dies.

KOENIG has switched it off.

2-SHOT. BERGMAN and KOENIG, alone in his office, cups in their hands. Spacesuits, without helmets.

BERGMAN

(Very quietly)

Well, John, you were right to keep us all busy, but...

KOENIG

(Very seriously)

Not from you, Victor.

BERGMAN
No?... I'd like to say it.

KOENIG
(Lighter)
Anyway, what happened to your cosmic
intelligences who're going to rescue
us in the nick of time?

BERGMAN
We believe... what we want to believe.
I sometimes think that's all reality is.

KOENIG will not have defeatism, pretends mock indignation -

KOENIG
Wishful thinking?

BERGMAN
(Not diverted)
The boundaries... The boundaries between
science and pure mysticism are paper-thin,
and getting thinner. Sometimes, it makes
me feel old.

MIX TO:

EXT. ALPHA FROM SPACE.

MTU's POV again - ALPHA is moving very fast, caught by the
huge gravity of the vast black sun. It is very beautiful -
beauty and the beast - With Alpha glowing opalescent, self-
illuminated by the forcefields, like a drop of oil caught in
a sunbeam... and headed headlong for black death.

CUT TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

The stricken FACES of the TEN, watching, watching, fixed.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALPHA FROM SPACE.

Now ALPHA brightens visibly. It begins to stretch. Before
it forms the comet of light, and down it ALPHA hurtles,
growing longer and longer, changing as we watch from an
opal drop to an iridescent spear. As solid ALPHA nears the
point of blackness beyond which no light can pass, it begins
to leave behind it the ghost-images. Alpha hits the black
barrier. Alpha snuffs-out. It's gone. The ghosts linger.
HOLD.

SLOW MIX TO:

INT. MTU COMMAND MODULE.

C.U. HIBENA. SHE covers her face with her hands.

C.U. SANDRA, swallows. SHE is crying.

C.U. CATANI -

CATANI
(Breathes it) (In Italian?)
Mother of God...

HOLDING AND -

SHOCK CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM.

C.U. the GHOST of KOENIG.

HE is transparent, seated in his command chair, and we can see the room through him. HOLD again, then -

KOENIG
More illusion?

WIDER -

To see BERGMAN, similarly transparent, in the next chair. The whole room seems insubstantial. They are alone in it. MOVING IN.

BERGMAN
I don't know.

2-SHOT, as -

OVER, SOUND of horrid, grating, creaking noises, to set your teeth on edge.

KOENIG
The... screens?

BERGMAN
Yes.

KOENIG
They're holding.

BERGMAN
So far.

A silence, while they listen to the terrifying sounds, then -
... It's possible we don't exist.

KOENIG
I exist.

BERGMAN
(Smiles)
Exist for the black sun.

KOENIG

How?

BERGMAN

Whatever the forcefield does, while it holds, we're invulnerable. The old paradox of irresistible force meeting immovable object. The black sun can't act on us in any way. We don't exist for it, perhaps.

KOENIG

Did you notice the room?

WIDER -

To see Control Centre is again iced-up, frozen white.

BERGMAN

Sort of exist, then. I don't feel cold.

KOENIG

I don't feel anything.

HE reaches a hand to touch a panel covered in ice, to see if he's as insubstantial as he seems. Just before his hand touches, however, suddenly -

The ICE begins to melt.

Take a C.U. The melting ICE turns to steam - white steam, obscuring picture.

MIX TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM.

Same 2-SHOT. BERGMAN and KOENIG, seated, unmoved. But now the ice and the steam have gone. They are substantial again.

BERGMAN

We are inside the sun itself...

KOENIG

It's suddenly hot.

HE stands, goes to a control panel.

BERGMAN

The clock has stopped.

ON KOENIG. HE selects a switch.

KOENIG

One moment freezing, next roasting.
What about the clock?

KOENIG turns to look.

INSERT C.U. the digital CLOCK, unmoving.

RESUME KOENIG. Catch him half-turned, and -

STOP FRAME.

SILENCE - dead track.

OPEN OUT -

From KOENIG to see all of Control CENTRE - BERGMAN, everything caught, frozen in the moment.

HOLD FOR 10 SECONDS.

RESUME FILM -

Now in very SLOW MOTION.

It is all KOENIG can do to regain his seat. The effort exhausts him. HE falls into it. BERGMAN tries to speak - he has no strength even to say a word.

MOVING IN. KOENIG and BERGMAN. END SLOW MOTION.

KOENIG notices his HANDS, raises them to look -

C.U. KOENIG's HANDS. They shrivel, wrinkle, begin to turn into an old man's hands.

2-SHOT. Before our eyes, watching each other in horror, KOENIG and BERGMAN age moment by moment, grow older and older, wrinkle, line and seam, until -

THEY look a thousand years old.

C.U. KOENIG.

MOVING IN FOR EXTREME C.U. KOENIG

AND IN on his old old EYES

OUT OF FOCUS.

BERGMAN (O.S.)

I can hear your thoughts.

WHITE SCREEN.

2-SHOT. The TWO OLD, OLD MEN.

ALL DIALOGUE NOW is in VOICE-OVER. THEY DO NOT SPEAK, as -

KOENIG

Yes.

BERGMAN

It's very beautiful.

All DIALOGUE continuing in VOICE-OVER -

KOENIG

I see the theory behind your force-field.

BERGMAN

Very obvious.

KOENIG

In fact, it ties up with a unified field theory.

BERGMAN

Does it? Yes, I see how.

KOENIG

So that everything is everything else.

BERGMAN

That's why I called it beautiful.

KOENIG

Of course, your screens will fail.

BERGMAN

I suppose so.

KOENIG

Shall I fix them?

BERGMAN

If it gives you satisfaction.

C.U. KOENIG.

HIS old HEAD swirls and melds in shape, and takes-on the shape of the POLYGON. Colours opalesce. One FACET is going black. Then it suddenly glows pink.

C.U. restored KOENIG, still sees OLD.

KOENIG

There. If everything is everything else, then the whole universe is living thought.

SUDDENLY ANOTHER VOICE (OVER) - A WOMAN'S VOICE PERHAPS -

A VOICE

Who are you?

THEY exchange looks.

BERGMAN

Who are you?

A VOICE

Come.

EXT. SPACE.

We are outside ALPHA, receding from the black sun so fast that it is in moments only a memory. STARS blaze everywhere about us.

Still PULLING BACK -

Very fast, until the stars themselves resolve into one swirling GALAXY, and -

The GALAXY recedes,

Becomes one of MANY GALAXIES, and

Each GALAXY becomes as a star, a spot of light - another galaxy of galaxies -

And BACK and BACK, UNTIL -

The UNIVERSE itself is just one speck of LIGHT.

PAUSE, STOP.

MIX TO:

C.U. HAND.

THE SPECK OF LIGHT is seen as reflected from one facet of a RING on a great HAND dimly perceived against black space.

A VOICE (OVER)

That is who I am.

BERGMAN (V.O.S.)

Are you God?

A VOICE (OVER)

I have a God. My God has Gods.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRE.

C.U. A SPOT OF LIGHT.

PULLING BACK.

It is in KOENIG'S EYE.

PULLING BACK, through C.U. KOENIG to

2-SHOT. The TWO OLD MEN. (All DIALOGUE still VOICE OVER)

KOENIG

Every star is just a cell in the brain of the universe.

A VOICE

That is a pretty way to understand it.

ALL DIALOGUE continuing in VOICE-OVER -

BERGMAN

Why have I never talked with you before?

A VOICE

Because of time. You...

(Hesitation for the word)

people seem to think at what you call
the speed of light. In eternity, I have
no hurry. I think a thought perhaps in
every hundred of your years. You are
never there to hear it. It was good to
have known you. ~~Goodbye.~~

KOENIG

But - ?

BERGMAN

She's gone.

KOENIG

And... maybe time that we did, too?

BERGMAN

Yes.

REVERSE FILM:

Now watch the earlier film reverse itself - the AGEING
PROCESS reversed; wrinkles, lines - wisdom? - melt away
to restore -

2-SHOT. The normal KOENIG and BERGMAN.

THEY eye each other in wonder. Then, a loud click. THEY
look up at the digital clock.

INSERT C.U. The CLOCK working again.

WIDER -

KOENIG stands. BERGMAN stands, stretches, sighs.

BERGMAN (No longer V.O.)

John...?

KOENIG switches on the big MONITOR.

KOENIG

Look, look!

C.S. THE MONITOR.

LIGHT! SEARS and SPACE.

C.S. BERGMAN.

BERGMAN
(Wonderingly)
We're... through...

HE now leans -

2-SHOT.

Across KOENIG, adjusts a control.

BACK onto MONITOR to see TRACE of a PANNING SHOT right around 180 degrees, to behind them. There is brilliant light - blinding light - a star gone NOVA reaching out tentacles of white fire, but their velocity is such that they are already moving away from it.

RESUME Control room

WIDER -

KOENIG
Your screens held.

BERGMAN
Somehow, we are the other side of the universe... Fleeing from a Nova.

KOENIG
Your screens held, Victor!

BERGMAN
I wonder how...

MIX TC:

INT. CONTROL CENTER.

The ROOM, now fully-manned again. Everybody smiling, happy, delighted, a-bustle with activity.

FIND KOENIG watching MEN dismantling the POLYGON. BERGMAN bustles into FRAME.

KOENIG
Some day, Professor, you must explain to me how that thing worked.

BERGMAN
I don't understand it myself.

PAGE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR.

EPILOGUE.

INT. KOENIG'S OFFICE.

KOENIG working at papers.

ANOTHER ANGLE -

BERGMAN at the door.

BERGMAN

Got a moment?

KOENIG

I was just thinking...

(Smiles)

So much for your fancy theories of
cosmic intelligences snatching us from
the jaws of death.

BERGMAN

(Awkward)

Well... I knew it was impossible. But
the statistics...

KOENIG

You can prove anything by -

When they are interrupted by SOUND of Alpha's ALARM KLAXONS

KOENIG hurries to his COMPOST, switches on, says to it -

KOENIG

What is it?

His MONITOR comes alive with a VIEW of SPACE and, floating
there in the centre of picture, matching velocities with
them - a SPACECRAFT.

COMM TECH (V.O.S.)

Aliens, Commander!

KOENIG

No... It's the lifeboat...

MIX TO:

EXT. LANDING LAUNCHING PAD.

The MTU lands.

MIX TO:

INT. CONTROL CLOSER.

HARRIS, CHASE, and WARDEN before KOENIG and BERGMAN.

KOENIG

You must have followed me into the
big room.

CATANI
No.

HELENA
We ran from the black sun.

BERGMAN
You must have.

CATANI
I swear we didn't.

SANDIM
We saw you disappear.

KOENIG
This is... How? If you didn't come after us, how did you follow a million light years?

BERGMAN
Across the universe?

CATANI
I don't know.

HELENA
Something... I know this sounds crazy. Something took hold of us and moved us, just moved us... across the universe... as easily as...

At a loss to find a simile, HELENA slips off a ring from her finger, places it on the other hand.

... if it were this ring.

FADE OUT

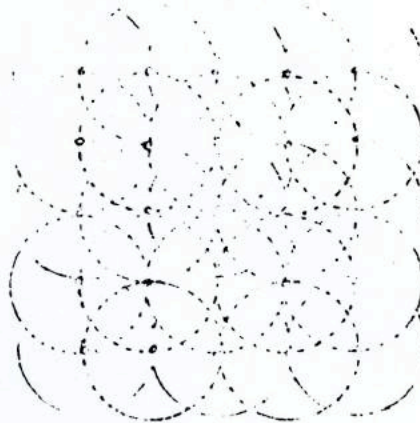
THE END.

NOTES:

I'm afraid I've spent a small fortune on SFX.
But what's the point of hiring a genius designer,
and under-using him?
I won't presume to tell him how - but a couple of
notes:

- 1) God knows how you achieve a black sun effect.
However, it might be worth trying to
photograph a shiny black-painted long tube
exactly end-on against a black background,
for the basic shape.
Mainly, you see it as an absence of light,
of stars where it blots them out, and by the
ghosting effects at its peripheries.
- 2) The forcefield screens.
Strictly, the invented technology calls for
this arrangement of circular antigrav fields -

Each circle is an
antigrav screen, its
nucleus a Bergman
generator.



Each circle is one unit in diameter.
The nucleus is a Bergman generator.
A shielded area is shown in the
center of each circle.

Line of safely
shielded space
(see Catacombs)

Which would look very pretty in different
colours, but might be too complex. Then, and
it's allowed for in the script, you could
assume the antigrav fields transform into
forcecreens merely by touching edges; and
do not require to overlap, to double, over
the whole shielded area.

With apologies to H.G. Wells.

Luck.

D.W.